



## **Statement from the Government of The Netherlands**

**Delivered by Bram Van Ojik, Director of the Department for Social  
Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

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Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with pleasure that I say a few words on behalf of the Minister for European Affairs and International Cooperation from the Netherlands on the occasion of this Pledging Conference for the Global Partnership for Education.

The Netherlands has been one of the founding fathers of GPE. This dates back to the organization of a conference in April 2002, together with the World Bank, which led to the establishment of the Education for All Fast Track Initiative.

This conference in 2002 took place against a background of strong interest from our Parliament to increase the share of education of Dutch development aid. As a result, investment in education has grown significantly. According to UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report, the Netherlands was the fourth donor in education over the last ten years - and even the second donor in basic education. We are proud to have contributed to the impressive progress on MDG2.

FTI benefited from the increased funding for education, as we strongly believe in FTI's philosophy of supporting credible education plans in close cooperation with national governments and other donors. The Netherlands disbursed 470 million dollar FTI. With close to 25 per cent of all available funding, we are still the largest donor. In addition, the Netherlands has been closely involved in the development

of the Fast Track towards the current partnership. We were co-chair at the time when FTI still had a Steering Committee. In addition, we were the first to take up the role of Supervising Entity as an alternative to the World Bank. Currently we are on the Board of Directors and the Financial Advisory Committee on behalf of a constituency with Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland.

However, Dutch aid policy has changed. Although the Netherlands is still committed to reserve 0.7 per cent of its GDP to development aid, we are faced with major budget cuts and a lower prioritization to education in favor of food security; water; peace and stability; and sexual and reproductive health and rights. This does not mean that we will entirely stop our investments in education, but we will be less focused on basic education and reduce the number of countries with which we have bilateral education programs. In that regard, we attach major importance to the GPE. As the global education fund, it can play an important role in meeting the financing gap which may be left when the Netherlands will withdraw from several partner countries.

We are therefore happy to pledge an amount of 120 million euros, for the period 2011 to 2014. Against the current exchange rate, that will translate to around 40 million dollars per year.