

## **Statement from the Government of Spain**

**Delivered by Salvador Muñoz Martínez, Director of Sectorial, Gender and NGO Cooperation, Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation**

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Dear friends,

On behalf of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID, [www.aecid.es](http://www.aecid.es)) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, I want to thank the Global Partnership for Education and the Danish Government for the organization of this event, which we expect will help to reach the goal of reducing the number of people without access to basic education of quality thus enabling gender and social equity.

It is not a secret that Spain is a generous country that has always shown solidarity to those people and countries less favored, not only in times of emergencies and natural disasters, but also in cooperation for development. Our contribution to the Fast Track Initiative, now Global Partnership for Education, was €60 million in 2008, €60 million in 2009, and €60 million in 2010, with a grand total of €180 million (approximately US\$248 million) in the past 3 years. We were not giving our surplus neither our leftovers. We were sharing what we had, not giving the remaining of our wealth. An overwhelming majority of the Spanish people support public policies on development cooperation, which are considered as a moral obligation. However, this positive perception has decreased in the past 3 years, mostly because of the economic crisis, but also for other reasons, being a very important one the increasing sense that multilateral contributions are not as efficient and transparent as they should be. It is hard to explain to our taxpayers, in a country with a 21% of unemployment rate, that continuing our efforts in development cooperation is as important as having a social welfare system in a democratic state. Surveys estimate that 67% of our population supports our efforts in

cooperation aid in low-income countries. Although it remains a majority, 6 years ago there was an estimate of 95% of support to cooperation policies among the Spanish people.

Unfortunately, the Government's pledge to maintain the economic provisions to development cooperation was not fulfilled. In 2010 our Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation suffered a budget cut of €700 million, and our salaries, the salaries of all public servants in Spain, were reduced in a 5% average. Such cut didn't affect our contribution to the GPE in 2010. But in 2011 the economic situation has worsen and the cuts have also affected our contribution to multilateral organizations and regretfully to the GPE. We are very concerned that some multilateral organizations that receive funds from AECID do not execute or do not spend our contributions in the expected time neither according the Paris Principles for Aid Effectiveness. It is particularly serious and discouraging that once Spain makes its disbursement to some organizations, it takes these multilateral organizations more than expected to execute the funds. We hope that our contributions to the GPE will never face such a situation, which would be unfair to the children whom we are willing to help.

Taking into consideration all of the above, our Council of Ministers has approved a pledge in 2011 for the Global Partnership for Education of €20 million (about US\$27.5 million). It is a significant contribution, although much lower of what we have provided in the past 3 years. Nevertheless, in these times of restrictions we also offer another valuable contribution to the GPE: our people and our facilities. We have technical cooperation offices and specialized staff in 14 low-income country partners, and we believe that the GPE must take advantage of this situation to maximize efforts and meet the principles for aid effectiveness, in order to be aligned to the priorities and needs of the partner country, harmonized with the activities of other donors, while encouraging mutual accountability between governments and promoting a focus on managing for results. We also believe in the Code of Conduct for better division of labor between the European Union donors in low and middle-income countries. The Code is based on eleven principles designed to reduce administrative formalities, use the funds where they are most needed, pool aid, and share the work to deliver more, better, and faster aid.

As you probably know, in less than two weeks there will be general elections in Spain and we cannot make a pledge in this forum for 2012. The combination of this general election and the economic restrictions that we are suffering prevent us to make a pledge for 2012 or upcoming years. However, we can assure you that, providing that GPE will continue to improve its excellent performance in terms of management, the future Spanish Government will continue to support the Global Partnership for Education in 2012 and future years at least in the same proportion of the Spanish income as in our 2011 contribution. We believe in solidarity and we believe that reaching our goal, education for all, is an obligation of humanity.

Thank you.