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A Fast Track to Education: EFA FTI Countries are Making Progress in their Education Sectors

COPENHAGEN, April, 20 2009 – Almost all countries endorsed by the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA FTI) are on track to achieve a primary school completion rate of at least 80 percent by 2015 as stated in the latest EFA FTI publication entitled “*Sounds from the classroom*” launched here today.

“*Sounds from the classroom*” features five EFA FTI countries (Ghana, Guyana, Madagascar, Mongolia and Yemen) focusing on how basic education programs supported by the EFA FTI partnership have impacted the lives of children, parents and communities positively.

It tells the story of a nine-year old girl from Madagascar who will be the first of her family’s eight children going beyond fifth grade and hopes to continue to high school. It is about a grade two student of an elementary school in Accra, Ghana who just loves to go to school everyday to learn and eat her bowl of boiled ‘yam and ‘kontomire’ which keeps her going for the whole day. It is also about a herder in Mongolia’s remote steppe who takes his young son to a mobile pre-school by horseback – something that was unimaginable when he was a child.

The past decade has seen unprecedented gains in access to education in developing countries. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, the countries supported by the EFA FTI, an international partnership established in 2002 to help achieve universal primary education, saw a net gain of 15 million primary school students over a six-year period. Despite these high enrollment rates, much more remains to be done, but this is real progress, catalyzed in part by the EFA FTI which has seen the allocation of over US\$ 1.4 billion through its main Catalytic Trust Fund.

The Education for All Fast Track Initiative is an international partnership that connects donors with low-income countries on the basis of countries’ national education plans. These plans are ambitious and will send many more children around the world to school and give them a chance for a proper education. The EFA FTI manages, among others, a USD 1.5 billion trust fund to support countries in achieving their education goals. It currently endorses the education programs of 37 developing countries, and hopes to help around 18 million more children who are still out of school by 2010.

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For more information about the Education for All Fast Track Initiative and to download the publication, visit: <http://www.education-fast-track.org/>