

***Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,***

*Check against delivery*

*(417 words – 4 minutes)*

*Investing in education can be a real game changer in the fight against poverty. In particular, investing in girls' education gives the greatest returns.*

*Never before has the world seen such a rapid increase in the number of children attending school.*

*Still, in many countries, millions of children and young people are being denied their right to quality education and the opportunity to fulfil their dreams of a better life.*

*The Norwegian Government has made education a top development policy priority. We are scaling up our support to global education.*

*We will focus on girls, quality of learning and skills for work.*

*We will focus on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children.*

*We will encourage innovation and the engagement of new partners in the private sector.*

*And we will seek to take full advantage of new technology. This offers major opportunities for reaching more children and improving the quality of learning.*

*Our priorities are similar to the strategic direction of the Global Partnership for Education. We therefore consider GPE a key partner.*

*I am happy to announce that, over the next three years, we will gradually double our support to GPE, from 290 million kroner this year, to 590 million in 2017. This means that our contribution to GPE in 2017 will be close to 100 million US dollars.*

*However, this contribution will be subject to a successful replenishment of GPE that ensures a robust scaling up. Our partner countries are showing that they are committed to increasing their funding for education. Donors should do the same.*

*At the same time, we expect GPE to continue to implement reforms and increase its effectiveness. GPE needs to document its results better – both in terms of learning outcomes and in terms of reaching the children most in need. And it needs to be more ambitious and to increase its support in the countries that are furthest from reaching the education goals.*

*We also have to ensure that the support provided is integrated into national planning, implementation and monitoring. This means better coordination and division of labour at the country level.*

*Let us not forget that GPE is all about building partnerships. GPE must not be a substitute for the mobilisation of national resources. It should rather act as a catalyst to eliminate bottlenecks and stimulate local investment.*

*Today is the start of an ambitious replenishment process. We must ensure its success. Millions of children around the world depend on this.*

\*\*\*