Education Commission Report – GPE Secretariat response

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) welcomes the report of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, titled "The Learning Generation". The Commission presents groundbreaking new data and analysis and a bold vision of all young people learning within a generation. It makes the case for urgent action recognizing that education is transformative and the foundation for a world that is prosperous, peaceful, equitable and future-ready.

We commend the compelling case for increasing investment in education through a new Financing Compact that is rooted in national governments committing to education system reforms and increased domestic financing, bolstered by increased and improved international support. We strongly endorse the step-change in ambition that this report signals, with the call for an order of magnitude increase in education investments to truly put the Sustainable Development Goals within reach.

We also endorse the Commission's recommendation to dramatically increase funding for GPE, aligning with the call to prioritize low income countries (LICs), which face the greatest financing challenge in education. Together, LICs currently receive less than one quarter of all education aid. The Commission proposes that today's LICs receive two-thirds of external funds by 2030. GPE's partners are among the poorest countries in the world with some of the greatest needs, which could be dramatically reduced if GPE were to able provide $4 billion annually in funding by 2030.

We will work closely with the Commission to promote the new Financing Compact and lay the groundwork for achieving the ambition of a Learning Generation within a generation. We will advocate for the adoption of the Commission's recommendations by political leaders, multilateral partners, donors and developing countries, civil society, teachers, the private sector and foundations.

We embrace the findings and recommendations that apply directly to GPE. The fundamental reforms to our operating model and management over the last three years, together with the imminent adjustments to the way we raise and deploy funds, make GPE ready to lead an urgent, new global drive to improve education outcomes in the lowest income countries.

In December 2015, GPE adopted a new five-year strategy in support of the new global goal for education. GPE 2020 has a clear mission: "to mobilize global and national efforts to contribute to the achievement of equitable, quality education and learning for all, through inclusive partnership, a focus on effective and efficient education systems and increased financing."

The four transformations that underlie the Commission's agenda for action align closely with GPE 2020 and our financing and operating model. We are ready to deliver on the Commission's recommendations (* Noted in italics below):

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On Performance: ***"To succeed, the first priority for any reform effort is to put in place the proven building blocks of delivery, strengthen the performance of the education system, and put results first."***

- GPE is focused on reaching global goals through country-led action. Strong results-driven national education systems are the foundation for lasting change. Improved learning outcomes, greater equity and stronger systems are the three strategic goals of GPE 2020
- Linking financing with tangible results, GPE uses a results-based funding model that incentivizes efficiency, effectiveness and cutting waste
- Supporting countries to set standards, track progress, make information public and invest in what delivers the best results. GPE's operating model sets clear roles and responsibilities, and accountability for all, based on an inclusive partnership
- Evidence-based investments are critical. Promoting the collection and use of better data is a requirement for GPE education sector implementation grants and we invest in improved national data strategies
- GPE has a new partnership-wide Results Framework reflecting our common focus on performance, and monitoring and tracking progress.

On Innovation: ***"Successful education systems must develop new and creative approaches to achieving results, capitalizing on opportunities for innovation in who delivers education, where and how, in order to meet the education challenges ahead."***

- GPE's inclusive partnership approach – both globally and nationally – brings the skills and creativity of many partners together behind national education programs; objective 5 of GPE 2020 is to build a stronger partnership in order to leverage the comparative strengths of diverse actors in education
- For GPE and its partners, innovation is particularly important since we know that there is an urgent need to find solutions to national education challenges that are unlikely to be addressed through traditional approaches and policies
- Working across sectors, GPE is exploring joint work with organizations such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and Girls Not Brides to build on the mutual benefits of investments in girls' education, stronger health outcomes and improved learning
- GPE is exploring innovative approaches to mobilize and deploy finance, including the potential for a risk financing mechanism that would unlock a new source of contingent financing for countries facing crises to sustain gains made and more quickly rebuild their education systems.

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On Inclusion: ***"Successful education systems must reach everyone, including the most disadvantaged and marginalized. While the first two transformations will help to ensure more effective learning systems, they will not close the learning gap unless leaders also take additional steps to include and support those at greatest risk of not learning – the poor, the discriminated against, girls, and those facing multiple disadvantages."***

- Prioritizing low income countries, and the poorest and most marginalized communities within countries, is the central tenet of GPE's approach
- GPE also incentivizes countries to spend more on expanding primary education as a proportion of their overall education budgets when there are still high numbers of out-of-school children
- 28 of GPE's 65 developing country partners are considered fragile and/or affected by conflict and 50% of GPE's disbursements are to such countries. GPE has developed flexible and rapid response policies to ensure that countries facing crises have access to financing for immediate emergency priorities.
- Increased equity, gender equality and inclusion is a key goal of GPE 2020
- GPE 2020 introduces a new focus on early childhood development and pre-school recognizing its importance for addressing disadvantage, improving learning and childhood development outcomes.

On Financing: ***"Successful education systems will require more and better investment. This investment must be based upon the primary responsibility of national governments to ensure that every child has access to quality education, free from pre-primary to secondary levels. It must be supported by the resources and leadership of international partners, prioritizing their investment in countries that demonstrate commitment to invest and reform."***

- Increasing domestic revenue and education's share of public expenditure are core elements of GPE 2020. GPE tracks domestic education spending through a new database compiling financial information from partner countries. In 2015, 22 GPE countries, out of the 47 for which data was available, the share of education expenditure was at or above 20 percent of the total public expenditure.
- Increasing or maintaining a high level of domestic finance for education – together with a data improvement plan – is a requirement for securing GPE implementation grants in support of national sector plans
- GPE support for national sector plans focus further on results with 30% of each grant contingent upon meeting targets in equity, learning and efficiency
- GPE welcomes the recommendation for a multilateral development bank mechanism to leverage substantial new financing to the sector and will be an active partner with these organizations in generating more concessional financing in countries that need it most.

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The Commission's report presents a clear way forward for achievement of a major transformation of education on a global scale – by following the path that the world's top performing countries have chosen with success. The markers on this path reflect closely the GPE strategy and financing and operating model: focus on strengthening the education system as a whole, invest in what delivers results, cut waste, harness the power of partnership with governments, communities and businesses, focus on those missing out, particularly the most vulnerable and the poorest, and invest more and invest better.

As the only global development organization solely focused on education, GPE brings together the strength and talent of a broad partnership. We stand ready to build momentum to transform education at global and national levels. The GPE replenishment campaign, which will culminate with a pledging moment in late 2017, provides the opportunity for leaders of developing countries and donor countries to demonstrate the strength of their resolve to ensure that *all* children have the opportunity to experience the power of a great education.