REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
June 9-11, 2020
Via Videoconference

INTRODUCTION

The agenda and documents for the Board meeting can be found on the Global Partnership for Education's (GPE) website. A list of participants can be found in Annex 1.

This report presents a high-level summary of key outcomes and decisions made.

TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2020

The Board Chair, Julia Gillard, called the meeting to order at 6:05 am Washington time.

1. WELCOME, AGENDA SETTING AND APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1.1 The Board Chair confirmed there was quorum and welcomed meeting participants.

Announcement on Contribution

1.2 She announced that USAID had made an additional contribution to GPE for 2019 in the amount of US$15 million, increasing its pledge for the current funding period from US$75 million to US$90 million, which represented a very significant increase from US contributions in previous funding periods. She thanked Board member Julie Cram and her colleagues for their efforts in securing this additional contribution.

Opening of Board Meeting

1.3 The Board Chair opened the meeting and reviewed the objectives for the day, these included the approval of the Consent Agenda; an update from the CEO; approval of language on the proposed GPE vision, mission and goals, and; a decision on the GPE rallying cry. She noted that any comment posted on the chat function would not be included in the formal record of the meeting.

1.4 She thanked the government of the Netherlands for hosting the meeting and welcomed the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, on behalf of Minister Sigrid Kaag who was unable to attend and sent her regrets.

Welcoming Remarks from Host

1.5 Vice Minister Van der Heijden welcomed Board members to the meeting. She highlighted the importance of education as a fundamental right that leads to growth and development, and encouraged GPE to continue to ensure better access, especially for the most vulnerable, noting that flexibility to achieve this should be front and center. She emphasized three key steps for this: 1. GPE should consider the COVID reality in terms of rethinking how to achieve SDG4 and how to boost resilience; 2. Innovative

financing mechanisms such as the International Financing Facility for Education should be considered to close funding gaps for education in middle-income countries, and; 3. Increased financing for education with increased coordination and a joint narrative for increased visibility. She argued for more complementarity and synergy in financing rather than competing for the same funds for greater effectiveness. She noted that the Netherlands had been a strong supporter of GPE from the start due to its pivotal role in enabling access to education to the most vulnerable.

1.6 The Chair thanked the Vice Minister and voiced her support to the idea of SDG4 as a foundational goal which requires more efficient and effective investment in education, especially in the context of COVID.

Consent Agenda (BOD/2019/12 DOC 02)

1.7 The Board Chair requested comments on the Consent Agenda, which included the December 11-12, 2019 and March 31, 2020 Board meeting reports, the Operating Expenses Budget and Work Program: July 2020 – June 2021, the Trustee Budget, and the Independent Summative Evaluation of the Global Partnership for Education.

Discussion:

- A Board member requested that next year the budget and workplan be reviewed by the Finance and Risk Committee (FRC) and discussed by the Board in a separate agenda item, while understanding the exceptional circumstances that had led to its inclusion on the Consent Agenda. The FRC Chair concurred noting that this is the usual process but that the circumstances had dictated otherwise this year.

- One Board member noted the importance of considering the Independent Summative Evaluation (ISE) in the discussions on the strategic plan and operational model while noting that there had not been sufficient time to determine whether the ISE represents value for money and requested the related decision point removed. The SIC Chair seconded the proposed amendment to the decision language as the SIC had not conducted a systems analysis. He was hopeful that value for money would be demonstrated, particularly if the strategic plan draws on the ISE.

The Board Chair accepted the requested amendment to the decision language on the ISE.

Decisions:

1.8 The following decisions were approved:

BOD/2020/06-01—December 11-12, 2019 Board Meeting Report: The Board of Directors approves the Report of the Meeting of the Board of Directors in Nairobi, Kenya from December 11-12, 2019 as set out in BOD/2020/06 DOC 02 Annex 1.

BOD/2020/06-02—March 31, 2020 Board Meeting Report: The Board of Directors approves the Report of the Meeting of the Board of Directors held via videoconference on March 31, 2020 as set out in BOD/2020/06 DOC 02 Annex 2.

BOD/2020/06-03– Operating Expenses Budget and Work Program: July 2020 – June 2021: The Board of Directors:

1. Approves an incremental amount of US$40,972,000 to fund the FY21 Operating Expenses Budget as set out in BOD/2020/06 DOC 02 Annex 3 for the period July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 including US$800,000 for the fifth-year budget of the Monitoring & Evaluation Strategy.
2. Authorizes the GPE Secretariat to carry over any unspent FY20 funds related to multi-year initiatives and Secretariat administered program activities.

BOD/2020/06-04—Trustee Budget: The Board of Directors approves of the estimated administrative expenses of US$761,000 for trustee services for the period of July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021, and a supplementary budget of US$199,400 for the period of July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020 to cover higher investment management costs resulting from a larger than anticipated average fund balance and a higher level of Trustee activities as set out in BOD/2020/06 DOC 02 Annex 3;

B**OD/2020/06-05—Independent Summative Evaluation of the Global Partnership for Education**: The Board of Directors:

1. Formally received the Independent Summative Evaluation Report at its meeting;
2. Welcomes the findings and recommendations of the Independent Summative Evaluation Report and expresses appreciation for the work completed by the Independent Evaluators and the Independent Evaluation Committee as set out in BOD/2020/06 DOC 02 Annex 4.

2. REPORT-BACK FROM MINISTERIAL MEETING

2.1 The Vice-Chair recalled that the Advisory Ministerial Group had been formed to enable partner country input and steer to strategic plan development. Two meetings had taken place since its establishment resulting in two aide-memoires that were shared with the Board. A third meeting had taken place in May to exchange on the impact of the pandemic on education, the memo of which was also shared with the Board. The conclusions of the aide memoires would guide the DCP contributions to the strategic plan discussions.

2.2 Minister Sengeh thanked the Secretariat for its work with the ministerial meetings. The meetings allowed developing country partners to learn from each other. The meetings had three key messages: the learning crisis, the need for innovation in education, and protecting the vulnerable. He noted that the strengths of the Partnership need to be leveraged in an unparalleled manner to drive these interactions, share global public goods and tools, and create a voice for partner countries.

3. REPORT FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (BOD/2019/12 DOC 03)

3.1 The Secretariat Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Alice Albright, presented her bi-annual report to the Board as set out in DOC 03. The presentation is available on the GPE website.

Discussion:

3.2 During the discussion, the following key points were raised:

- **Gender mainstreaming**. Two Board members noted their appreciation for the Secretariat's efforts to mainstream gender and the need to operationalize the commitment further.

- **Implementation of World Bank-GPE Hosting MOU**. A Board member commented on the progress report on the World Bank-GPE Hosting MOU included in the CEO report, noting the need for the World Bank to be held accountable for its grant agent role, particularly with regard to issues around timeliness of grant implementation. In response, the Board member representing the World Bank noted that the Hosting MOU should only be used to hold the World Bank responsible for its host function. Its role as grant agent should be assessed via the Grant Performance Report. The Secretariat confirmed that the timeliness of all grant agents was reviewed via the Grant Performance Report and noted that the hosting arrangement is scheduled to be reviewed again in 2021.

- **Budget increase**. Responding to a question from a Board member on the stated increase in the budget from last year to this year, the Secretariat responded that it was an issue of how the budget was presented. The overall budget is US$44 million while some items are already approved. Therefore, the request for new funds is US$41 million. Last year, the request for new funds included US$39 million so overall there is a 2.7 percent increase. The Secretariat added that it would discuss this input with the FRC at its October meeting.

4. STRATEGIC PLAN: VISION, MISSION, GOAL AND RALLYING CRY

4.1 The Board Chair turned to the Chief Technical Officer, Jo Bourne, who presented options on Vision, Mission and Goal for GPE's strategy and the next steps for the strategic aspiration. Board members welcomed the Secretariat's efforts in gathering the input from the consultation stage and expressed their support for Option B as a baseline for Vision, Mission and Goal.

Discussion

4.2 The following points were discussed:

- Board Members emphasized the need to highlight the following issues: pre-primary education, gender, domestic financing, equity and inclusion, alignment with SDG4, comprehensive approach to education. They also welcomed the inclusion of the concept of resilience in the light of the current COVID situation.

- **Positive and bold aspirations**. Board members stressed the need to convey ambition and bold aspirations in the Vision, Mission and Goal. Inspiring and positive language was deemed more likely to create momentum around GPE's strategic plan. To reflect the urgency of the learning crisis and the Partnership's ambition, Board members favored bold statements, particularly on gender and the transformative agenda.

4.3 In the light of the number of edits and contributions from Board members, the Board Chair asked for the decision language to be revised and considered again later during the meeting, stressing the need for broad consensus and clear language.

4.4 At the end of the meeting, the Board Chair turned to the External Relations Manager, Charles Tapp, to present on GPE's rallying cry and introduce the session to be continued on the second day of the meeting.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2020

The Board Chair welcomed Yasmine Sherif, the Director of Education Cannot Wait, who addressed the GPE Board of Directors to convey ECW support, and underlined the close collaboration between the two organizations including joint efforts to address the current crisis. The Board Chair thanked Yasmine Sherif for her commitment and welcomed ECW as an observer of the meeting in the spirit of close collaboration between GPE.

5. STRATEGIC PLAN: VISION, MISSION, GOAL (continued)

5.1 The Board Chair stressed the need to reach a consensus that will take the Partnership forward at this most crucial juncture while conveying an easily comprehensible message to audiences beyond education practitioners. She turned to the Chief Technical Officer, Jo Bourne, who presented a revised version of the Vision, Mission and Goal drawing from the discussions on the previous day.

5.2 Board members commended the Secretariat for its work overnight and indicated some difference of views regarding the proposed wording. The following points were discussed:

- **Child/youth/adolescent/for all**. While some Board members suggested that "child" might be too narrow a word to capture out of school or overaged learners, others challenged the inclusion of "youth" or "adolescent" in the light of the previous discussion in Nairobi regarding the scope of GPE action and the decision language highlighting the focus on 12 years of schooling and one year of pre-primary. The Secretariat specified that the reference to "child" was based on the UN definition, that is up to age 18.

- **Inclusive and equitable.** Some Board members suggested that the words inclusive and equitable should be included in the vision statement. A majority of Board members supported this addition.

- **Access.** Some Board members emphasized the need to include the issue of access up front in the proposed goal. A majority of Board members supported this mention.

- **Holistic education.** Although a majority of Board members welcomed the reference to comprehensive education embracing all the dimension of learning, including social emotional skills and 21th century skills, there was some concern on the communicability of the term outside of education audiences. A majority of Board members were comfortable with the use of holistic.

5.3 As there was no clear consensus on the revised language, the Board Chair asked for it to be revised and circulated to the Board for its consideration the next day.

6. STRATEGIC PLAN: RALLYING CRY (continued)

6.1 The Board Chair turned to Board members for a discussion on the rallying cry previously introduced by the External Relations Manager, Charles Tapp. A majority of Board members expressed their support for this work and a further presentation to the Board in September. Underscoring the importance for such a cry in the current context, a Board member suggested that the campaign be aligned with the global campaign for education. The Board Chair indicated that we should not bind the decision

language to timeframes over which GPE has not control. The Secretariat concurred with the Chair's assessment and reiterated the need to abide by the original timeline while welcoming the opportunity to engage with others.

Decision

6.2 The Board approved the following decision:

BOD/2020/06 06—<u>Rallying Cry:</u> The Board of Directors:

Rallying cry

- Affirms the usefulness of a GPE Partnership Rallying Cry and notes that this should be developed to be included in the Case for Investment and as part of the forthcoming replenishment campaign, while aligned with the strategy.

Next steps- Rallying Cry

- Requests the Secretariat to develop options that are measurable, aligned with SDG4 indicators, gender disaggregated and inspiring. The Secretariat should bring options to the Board for decision in September.

7. STRATEGIC PLAN: OBJECTIVES

7.1 The Board Chair turned to the Secretariat for the discussion of the options on the objectives. The Results and Performance Manager, Nidhi Khattri, presented on the rich body of evidence to inform the discussions on the objectives and the implications for the operating model. Jean-Marc Bernard, senior education economist, introduced the options for decision on the three country level objectives and the enabling objective.

Discussion

7.2 The following points were discussed:

- **Country-level objectives.** Board members expressed their preference for Option B and reiterated their support for the 6 priorities proposed by the Secretariat. They emphasized the need for strong language on gender, the importance of policy dialogue, nationally defined priorities and capacity building.

- **Enabling objective.** The SIC Chair, David Archer, suggested to revise the mention of "local partners" to "national partners", which was supported by Board members.

7.3 The Board Chair asked for the decision language to be revised based on the suggestions from Board members and for it to presented alongside the Vision, Mission and Goal on the following day for a better sense of the overall strategic aspiration.

THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2020

8. STRATEGIC PLAN: VISION, MISSION, GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

8.1 Prior to the discussion on the strategic plan, a Board member inquired on the timeline for the governance review as presented in the terms of reference currently for Board consideration via non-objection. The Board Chair emphasized the urgent nature of the approval of the terms of reference in order to ensure a timely start to the review. She also stressed the importance of conducting early summer consultation on the issue and to keep a dynamic discussion with the Board on the timeline.

8.2 The Secretariat Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Alice Albright, provided a rationale for the Secretariat's proposed language that was circulated to Board members overnight based on Board members input, including the need for a strong, clear and pithy communication.

8.3 The Board Chair then turned to the Chief Technical Officer, Jo Bourne, to introduce the simplified version of the "GPE House", including revised language for the Vision, Mission, Goal and Objectives. Board members welcomed the focused proposal and clarity of the message while stressing the importance to reach consensus across the Partnership. Some changes were requested to reinforce alignment with SDG4, promote education as a right, and foster inclusion.

Decision

8.4 Board members expressed their support to the simplified version proposed by the Secretariat through a vote conducted via email which reflected that out of the 17 constituencies that submitted their vote, 13 favored the Secretariat's simplified option against 6 who opted for the lengthier option. Based on the outcome, the Board Chair concluded that the following decision was endorsed:

BOD/2020/06-07— **Strategic Plan:** The Board of Directors:
Recognizes that GPE is developing a new strategy in a time of unprecedented global change, and there are significant risks that, as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, the education progress achieved over the last decade will be lost, and education inequities will widen. Business as usual will not suffice. GPE 2025 will have to respond to new education challenges – and opportunities - that will unfold over the period of the new strategy. GPE 2025 must be able to support partner countries as they seek to strengthen the resilience of their education systems, and grasp opportunities for system wide education transformation, that will leave no one behind.

- Approves GPE's revised ***Vision*** statement as: "A quality education for every child".
- Approves GPE's revised ***Mission*** statement as: "To mobilize partnerships and investments that transform education systems in developing countries, leaving no one behind".
- Approves GPE 2025's revised ***Goal*** as: **"**To accelerate access, learning outcomes and gender equality through equitable, inclusive and resilient education systems fit for the 21st century."
- Re-affirms the following ***priority areas*** as critical to the achievement of GPE 2025's Goal and requests the Secretariat to (a) develop a measurement strategy either through indicators or a set of evaluations to align with these (or other) priorities; (b) ensure that GPE's revised operating model is designed to support progress in these (or other) priority areas, whilst

recognizing that the detailed use of GPE resources will be determined by country level data, evidence, inclusive dialogue and country context. The proposed priority areas are:

- ✓ learning/early learning
- ✓ access (12 years plus at least 1 year of pre-primary education)
- ✓ gender equality and inclusion
- ✓ quality teaching
- ✓ strong organizational capacity
- ✓ equity, efficiency and volume of domestic financing

- Approves GPE 2025's ***Country level objectives*** as:
  - ✓ Strengthen gender- responsive planning, policy development for system-wide impact,
  - ✓ Mobilize coordinated action and financing to enable transformative change,
  - ✓ Strengthen capacity, adapt and learn to implement and drive results at scale".

- Approves an additional **enabling objective** as: "Mobilize global and national partners and resources for sustainable results".

Next Steps – Vision, Mission, Goal, and Objectives

- Requests the Secretariat to prepare a high-level strategy paper for the September Board meeting.

9. IMPLICATIONS FOR OPERATIONAL MODEL

The Secretariat presented an overview of the development of the operational model, including areas of consensus determined from the various consultations, for the Board's review and any additional comments. Due to time constraints, the Board Chair noted that further discussion would take place in December and until then, the Secretariat would work with the committees. The presentation is posted on the website.

Discussion:

Inputs from Board members included:

- **Differentiated model**. Several Board members expressed support for combining refined requirements with well-defined incentives. It was noted that there is need for concrete proposals on differentiation to ensure it would not lead to unbalanced or less equitable financing in the partnership. Inclusion, transparency, predictability of funding and country ownership were cited as important principles to maintain. One Board member cautioned that flexibility leaves room for the interpretation and subsequent prioritization of what is relevant and appropriate; there is a need for assurances that principles are clear for addressing potential differences and conflicts in the country, in the GPC and the in the Board.

- **Sector Plans**. Some Board members advocated for government-owned and evidence-based sector planning through inclusive policy dialogue as a starting point for the model to avoid distortions in sector plans caused by countries seeking to meet GPE requirements, e.g. a sector plan that is not sector-wide.

- **Financing**. With regard to the objective on mobilizing financing, several Board members expressed support for maintaining domestic resources as an essential element of the GPE model. One Board member noted the need for some options on scope and range. Another Board member emphasized crowding in more external financing through innovative financing mechanisms and new donors, such as from the Arab region, by keeping the GPE transaction costs down. The Secretariat responded that it would develop options on crowding in external financing.

- **Teachers and Teaching.** Some Board members noted that teachers and teaching were a key area of discussion in Nairobi and should be a core proposition.

- **Effective Partnership Review.** EPR principles should be more explicitly referenced in further documentation.

- **Cross-Sectoral Approach**. A Board member noted the importance of emphasizing in the country-level objectives and operational model a cross-sectoral approach on health and education, especially with a view to COVID.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

10.1 The Executive Session chaired by the GEC Chair, Nesmy Manigat, covered the following topics: (1) the extension of the GPE Board Chair term, (2) the Term of GPE Board Vice-Chair.

Decisions:

11.2 The Board approved the following decisions:

BOD/2020/06-o8 - <u>Extension of the GPE Board Chair Term:</u> The Board of Directors:

1. Notes the importance of continuity of leadership and support as the Board prepares for the next replenishment, in view of exceptional circumstances posed by the COVID pandemic, and in recognition of provision 4.3.3 of the GPE Charter on terms limitations and the June 2018 Board decision on renewal of the Chair's term;

2. Approves an exceptional 8-month extension of the current term of the Board Chair, Julia Gillard, from March 1, 2021 to October 31, 2021.

3. The Board of Directors further recognizes that this exceptional extension of the Chair's current term is critical for ensuring wide and global support for GPE's replenishment efforts and ambition.

BOD/2020/06-09- <u>Term of GPE Board Vice-Chair:</u>

Noting his exceptional service, the Board of Directors approves a renewal of the term of the Vice-Chair, H.E Serigne Mbaye Thiam, from June 10, 2020 to October 31, 2021. The Board conveys its gratitude to H.E. Thiam for his role in fostering ministerial engagement from developing country partners and welcomes his continued support to replenishment efforts.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other item for discussion. The meeting adjourned at 9:10am (DC Time).

Annex 1: Participants List

Board and Alternate Board Members

	Name	Constituency	Role
1	Elyas Abdi Jillaow	Africa 1	BM
2	Ndabazekhaya Cain Ginyilitshe Mathema	Africa 1	ABM
3	Affoh Atcha-Dedji	Africa 2	ABM
4	David Moinina Sengeh	Africa 3	ABM
5	Akram Al Hossain	Asia and Pacific	BM
6	Mohammad Balkhi	EEMECA	BM
7	Luis Cruz	LAC	BM
8	Jules Didacus	LAC	ABM
9	Donatienne Hissard	Donor 1	BM
10	Sabina Handschin	Donor 1	ABM
11	Anna Rosendahl	Donor 2	BM
12	Line Baagø-Rasmussen	Donor 2	ABM
13	Alicia Herbert	Donor 3	BM
14	Nancy Smyth	Donor 3	ABM
15	Camilla Fossberg	Donor 4	BM
16	Rashed Mohamed Awadh Al Hemeiri	Donor 4	ABM
17	Marjeta Jager	Donor 5	BM
18	Ina von Frantzius	Donor 5	ABM
19	Julie Cram	Donor 6	BM
20	Sarah Lendon	Donor 6	ABM
21	Stefania Giannini	MLA 1	BM
22	Mami Umayahara	MLA 1	ABM
23	Robert Jenkins	MLA 2	BM
24	Mamadou Balde	MLA 2	ABM
25	Luis Benveniste	MLA 3	BM
26	Amadou Diallo	MLA 3	ABM
27	Kira Boe	CSO 1	BM
28	Yona Nestel	CSO 1	ABM
29	Camilla Croso	CSO 2	BM
30	Maria Khan	CSO 2	ABM
31	Gifty Apanbil	CSO 3	BM
32	Hadis Holst	CSO 3	ABM
33	David Boutcher	Private Sector	BM
34	Randa Grob-Zakhary	Private Foundations	BM
35	Imad Sabi	Private Foundations	ABM
36	Sally Gear	GPC	Chair

37	Celine Place	FRC	Chair
38	Nesmy Manigat	GEC	Chair
39	David Archer	SIC	Chair