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Third International Conference on Financing for Development, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

July 14, 2015

Julia Gillard's remarks at the Roundtable on Global Partnership and the Three Dimensions of Sustainable Development

Thank you, Helen, for the kind introduction. When I was serving as Australia's first female Prime Minister I was very conscious of the fact Helen was the first woman elected as Prime Minister in a general election in New Zealand. Helen, thanks for being such a great role model.

I also would like to thank Justine Greening for her government's leadership on global development and education.

Minister Brende, it is wonderful to be with you again so soon after the inspiring Oslo Summit on Education for Development.

Irina Bokova of UNESCO, Tony Lake of UNICEF and Jeff Sachs are also participating here today; therefore, I feel I am in the midst of a special group of champions for global education.

At this Third International Conference on Financing for Development the key overarching question we must face is whether we will rise to the ambition behind the new Sustainable Development Goals.

We know change is possible because significant progress has been made over the past 15 years in improving access to and the quality of education. Since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, the number of children not in primary school has been cut almost in half. We are down from 110 million out of school in 2002 to 59 million today. And the number of children not enrolled in primary or lower secondary has dropped by almost 40% to 124 million.

The primary school completion rate in countries supported by the Global Partnership for Education or 'GPE' has increased from 63% in 2002 to 73% in 2012, with the biggest increase occurring in fragile and conflict-affected states.

We have also made great gains in gender parity: 69% of girls in GPE-supported countries completed primary school in 2012, up from 56% in 2002. 31 GPE developing country partners are close to or have achieved gender parity in primary education.

But the Sustainable Development Goals require us to lift our eyes to a greater level of ambition and turbo charge our efforts. We need to find both new resources and new ways of working together.

Since 2002, the Global Partnership for Education has allocated US$ 4.3 billion to developing country partners and programs. And since 2009, the Global Partnership has become the largest international funder of basic education in countries affected by conflict. We have adapted our operational model so that we can deliver support in crisis circumstances in as little as eight weeks.

In June last year, at the second replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education, our developing country partners pledged to increase their domestic financing for education. A total of $26 billion was committed by countries and an additional $2.1 billion by donors. The Global Partnership now has a new results based funding model where 70% of available funding for partner countries is provided against evidence-based and financially sustainable education sector plans, drawn up in consultation with donors and other education stakeholders. 30% of the grant amount is allocated based on the achievement of specific results in learning quality, education system efficiency and equity for all children. These "stretch" results have been chosen by government and development partners such as UNICEF and UNESCO, whose expertise and experience is critical to our success.

But even with all this support, education faces a shocking financing gap – an estimated US$39 billion per year according to UNESCO. I think it is important in this financing for development context to note that this is the gap in external financing which assumes that developing countries will make major new strides in domestic financing for education.

Donor aid to basic education in developing countries has dropped by 7% between 2010 and 2013, while overall development aid increased by more than 9% over the same period.

In the face of these statistics, it is good to see global attention is now turning to education the way it did to health after the adoption of the Millenium Development Goals in 2000. I am uplifted by:

- The fact the global community has repeatedly endorsed education as the highest development priority in multiple My World surveys.

- By the ambition of the Incheon Declaration.

- By the creation of a Financing Commission in Oslo chaired by Gordon Brown to guide and inform the global debate on financing.

- By the commitment in Oslo to find and implement the best approach to meeting the educational needs of children in crisis and conflict

- And I am buoyed by the language in the final draft of the Financing for Development outcome document on education, which declares:

  '*We will scale up investments and international cooperation to allow all children to complete free, equitable, inclusive and quality early childhood, primary and secondary education, including through scaling up and strengthening initiatives, such as the Global Partnership for Education*."

All this energy needs to be channeled into ensuring the Global Partnership for Education becomes a global fund of the same scale and heft as the global health funds.

How do we get there? I think the Background Note for this Global Partnership Roundtable highlights the key areas.

First, strengthening domestic resource mobilization and mobilizing the private sector. To achieve our education goals we must link efforts within developing countries to create functioning taxation systems and transparent government accounting with work on domestic resource mobilization. But getting to the resource level needed to educate all children will also require a new strategy to bring new donor governments to education and new engagement from the private sector and private philanthropy. Within this there is a critical need to develop innovative financing solutions that will work at scale.

Second, enhancing international development cooperation is about partnerships, like the Global Partnership for Education, which always strive to be more than the sum of their parts by leveraging advocacy, technical expertise, accountability and resources. But pivotal to multiplying the impact of all our efforts is actually doing donor coordination, not just talking about it. The Global Partnership's mission is the building of functioning education systems. When comprehensive, inclusive, high quality education sector plans are available as the result of our efforts, why wouldn't that plan be used to guide bilateral donor efforts?

The last area highlighted by the background note is enhancing science, technology, innovation and capacity building. These topics are resonate in education. We need new ways of working including the creation of global goods platforms for educational inputs such as books, technology, teacher professional support materials and assessment mechanisms. This will enable us to bring the efficiencies that come with scale as a support to country led education planning and implementation.

So there is much to do but I think we come to this challenge with energy and a sense of urgency.

Let me conclude by saying this year is a pivotal moment for global development overall and the education sector in particular. A good quality education is not only an end in itself but a means for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals that world leaders will adopt at the UN in September.

The simple truth is: we cannot achieve the SDGs without prioritizing education. Education is at the core of securing the future, equipping a skilled workforce, building stronger and resilient communities, and sustaining economically vibrant nations. The benefits of education, especially girls' education are very clear. The wide range of goals and targets for poverty reduction, nutrition, health, gender equality, climate change will be difficult to achieve without investing in education.

In the coming months, the world has an opportunity to commit to quality education for every child. Let us take this common vision for the future further and make investments that will deliver concrete results.