Endorsement of Myanmar's National Education Strategic Plan 2016-2021

For Submission to the Global Partnership for Education Secretariat

31 January 2018

The Development Partners of the Education and TVET Sector Coordination Group (ETVSCG), comprising multilateral and bilateral donors, civil society organizations, and international non-governmental organizations, endorse the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) 2016-2021 and Myanmar's application to the Global Partnership for Education.

The completion of the NESP and its February 2017 launch by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is a significant achievement. It demonstrates a substantial commitment from the Government of Myanmar to more robust and effective education planning that will accelerate progress in the sector and provide the framework to achieve learning for all. The development of the NESP served to increase the capacity of the Ministry of Education for more inclusive and evidence-based sector planning and delivery; many stakeholders were engaged with the Comprehensive Education Sector Review which served as the basis to develop the NESP, and there has been a noteworthy increase in participation of civil society in MOE-led education sector coordination.

We strongly support the inclusion of all levels and aspects of education, most specifically in MOE's stated commitment to make the NESP a plan for all learners, so that no one is left behind. The 2014 National Education Law and 2015 Amended National Education Law provide the basis for a range of reforms to improve quality, inclusion and equity, including the right to a free and compulsory primary and middle school education, expansion of basic education to include kindergarten plus twelve years of study, and support for the learning of ethnic languages.

The first Annual Performance Review, held in August 2017, was a significant milestone for evidence-based planning and review. Future Annual Performance Reviews, and the NESP Mid-Term Review in particular, will allow collective assessment of the NESP and the actions initiated in response to the February 2017 GPE Appraisal Report recommendations.

The Government of Myanmar has demonstrated increasing financial commitment to the education sector, as education spending has increased from 5.7 to 8.5 percent of public expenditures from fiscal years 2012-13 to 2017-18. We anticipate Government expenditures on education will continue to increase, in order to meet the goal in the 2015 Amended National Education Law to move toward the international benchmark of allocating 20% of public expenditures to the education sector. Representatives from the Ministry of Planning and Finance (MOPF), responsible for the budget of the Government of Myanmar, have been attending meetings of the ETVSCG, indicating closer collaboration between MOE and MOPF. Additionally, funding support from Development Partners is set to increase and will be aligned to the NESP.

While the NESP represents significant progress for the education sector in Myanmar, there remains a need to strengthen a number of aspects. The Development Partners of the ETVSCG confirm their endorsement recognizing that the Government has already committed to the following:

1. Strengthening planning, monitoring, and evaluation – The improved annual implementation plans, completed prior to endorsement, will be a strong foundation for continuing to improve planning

documents and processes. Development Partners look forward to and will support MOE continuing to strengthen and use implementation plans, improving integration of budgeting and planning, furthering progress on prioritization and sequencing, and enhancing inter-departmental collaboration. We understand that the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will be completed within 2018 and will continue to be strengthened as a tool to track progress in achieving NESP targets. Achievement of output and outcome indicators included in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will be reported in the annual NESP progress report.

2. Implementing the commitment to leave no learner behind – As a plan for all learners in Myanmar, the NESP aims to promote inclusive and equitable education for all. We endorse based on the understanding that policy, planning, resource allocation, implementation, monitoring and data collection will increasingly support non-discriminatory, gender-sensitive and gender-focused equitable education that meets the needs of Myanmar's most vulnerable learners, including learners with disabilities, out-of-school children and youth, and those affected by conflict. We look forward to the NESP principle of accountability being realized.

We stress the need to ensure that the commitment under the NESP to develop partnership mechanisms with non-state education providers will progress in a consultative manner, and that MOE will increasingly recognize complementary education systems as a critical contribution to achieve learning for all. An MOE study, supported by Development Partners, to inform the development of a coherent partnership policy and mechanism will be launched in February 2018 as a first step toward recognition of complementary systems. The study's output will provide recommendations on the way forward to developing the nationwide partnership framework while piloting partnership initiatives in a conflict-sensitive and inclusive manner. The downstream work on developing the partnership mechanism will be included in Myanmar's application to the Education Sector Program Implementation Grant (ESPIG).

The Development Partners endorse the NESP with the understanding that the Government of Myanmar will implement the recommendations in the final report of the Rakhine Advisory Commission (RAC) including equal access to quality education for all in Rakhine State, in a manner that promotes social cohesion and creates a conducive environment for the eventual safe and voluntary return of refugees. The Government of Myanmar has appointed the GPE Focal Point in MOE to also serve on the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State. Development Partners anticipate a plan from the Committee that will address the barriers currently preventing the realization of quality education for all. We will support the Government in implementing the RAC recommendations according to 'do no harm' principles that promote social cohesion and counter discrimination and segregation, including in developing and carrying out the ESPIG-financed program.

3. Disaster risk reduction – The Ministry of Education indicated disaster risk reduction will be included as a component of the Education Management Information System (EMIS), the School Quality Standards Assurance Framework, and the National School Infrastructure Improvement Plan. Given the frequency of disasters in Myanmar, addressing disaster risk reduction in education will remain a priority.

4. Review of appraisal recommendation implementation – We anticipate that the annual sector performance reviews and the Mid-Term Review, to take place in 2019, will include a review of progress toward all GPE appraisal recommendations. We endorse with the understanding that through these processes, gaps in implementation will be identified and addressed by the MOE with support from Development Partners.

The Development Partners endorse NESP in its vision for strengthening the education system in Myanmar so that no one is left behind. Development Partners are accordingly committed to support the Government as it leads implementation of the NESP. We look forward to working with the Government of Myanmar to advance efficiency, learning outcomes, and equity to benefit all learners in Myanmar.

Development Partner	Representative	Signature
Australia	HE Nicholas Coppel, Ambassador	
Asian Development Bank	Newin Sinsiri, Country Director	
Embassy of Denmark	Ambassador Peter Lysholt Hansen	
DFID	Gail Marzetti, Head of DFID Burma	
European Union	Mr. Kristian Schmidt, Ambassador	
Embassy of Finland	Katja Hirvonen, Development Counsellor	
Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany	Dorothee Janetzke-Wenzel, Ambassador	
Embassy of Japan/Japan International Cooperation Agency	Mr. Masayuki Karasawa, Chief Representative, JICA Myanmar Office	
Myanmar Mobile Education	Tim Aye-Hardy, Executive Director	
Ratana Metta	U Aung Kyaw Than, Vice President	
Save the Children	Michael McGrath, Country Director	
Swiss Embassy	Paul R. Seger, Ambassador	
UNESCO	Min Jeong Kim, Head of Office	
UNICEF	June Kunugi, Country Representative	
VSO	Joyce Laker, Country Director	
World Bank	Gevorg Sargsyan, Operations Manager	