CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

For Information

Please note: Board papers are deliberative in nature and, in accordance with the GPE Transparency Policy, are not public documents until the Board has considered them at the Board meeting.

1. OVERVIEW

1.1 As 2016 draws to a close it is clear that it has been a significant year for global education and GPE. The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity report provides new data and analysis and a bold vision of all young people learning within a generation. Its focus on delivering learning outcomes through strengthening the performance of education systems and prioritizing the most disadvantaged and marginalized mirrors closely GPE's Strategic Plan, GPE 2020. The Commission makes a compelling case for increasing investment in education through a new Financing Compact, rooted in national governments commitment to increase domestic financing, bolstered by increased and improved international support. The positive comments from dignitaries at the report launch testify that GPE is increasingly seen as a critical change agent.

1.2 The **reforms** that the Board has directed and guided the Partnership through over the past few years have transformed GPE across five key areas. At the **strategic** level GPE2020 paves the way for the leap from MDG2 to SDG4. Supporting this we have laid the **technical** foundations, a clear theory of change reflected in the indicators of the Results Framework. We have strengthened the GPE **operating model** with greater clarity on which partners do what as we work together to roll out results-based grants. We are becoming more sophisticated about how we assess and manage corporate and operational **risk**, and we have improved our **organizational effectiveness**, investing in staff and management with the expertise and experience to drive GPE. If the Board chooses an ambitious path for the upcoming replenishment, the foundations are firmly laid to take GPE's impact to scale.

1.3 The first preliminary report on the **GPE 2020 core indicators**, sets out early results against the targets we have set for ourselves. Read together with the **2016 Portfolio Review**, we

can identify progress and pinpoint challenges across the Partnership. There is evidence of improved performance of developing country partners in several areas – notably domestic finance, reporting on data, and better pupil/trained teacher ratios – but also we see the areas where all partners need to lean in further and target our collective efforts. These include greater attention to learning outcome data, earlier engagement to support sector planning and improved effectiveness of joint sector reviews.

1.4 As the GPE reforms take hold, country grants transition to results-based agreements and new evidence sets clear pathways for prioritizing efforts, the coming years hold potential for transformational change in education outcomes. The question becomes not what we can do but how much. The answer is rooted in our ambition and the amount of resources we are able to raise and effectively deploy. The completion of the **Results Framework** coupled with strengthened **risk management** together enable us to comprehensively track progress and challenges across our theory of change, identify where the gaps and risks are and consequently guide the allocation of scarce resources to prioritize the countries that need them most and the areas essential for progress.

1.5 To inform consideration of the future that the Board envisions for GPE, there are three interlinked items on the agenda in Cambodia:

- Decisions on the architecture of the proposed **Financing and Funding Framework**, which builds on the foundation of the operational model reforms, reinforcing our ability to target resources and support partners to effectively strengthen education systems;
- Consideration of the **GPE Secretariat Capacity Assessment**, which Dalberg conducted and has been sent to you together with our management response; and
- A discussion on preparations for the **2017 Replenishment Campaign**.

1.6 Among the important issues for our meeting in Siem Reap is the architecture the Board's Strategic Financing Working Group (SFWG) proposes for a new **Financing and Funding Framework** (FFF), with the detailed operational implications to follow in February. The FFF will enable GPE to more effectively mobilize and deploy new and better-structured finance options to underpin GPE 2020 and a successful 2017 replenishment campaign.

1.7 We are fortunate to be considering these high-level directional issues in Cambodia, a country which joined GPE a decade ago. The current US$ 38.5 million Education Sector Program Implementation Grant (ESPIG) is supporting the Government to strengthen the education system and focus on learning outcomes. Be it the Cambodian education system, the GPE Secretariat or the

global education arena, the key to success is the same – stay focused on the goals, measure progress, and use data and evidence to drive investment decisions and course corrections.

2. THE STATE OF GPE IN 2016

2.1 As we come to the end of 2016, the Board can take pride in a Partnership that is very much in demand. We have built strong, results focused systems and are committed to tracking our impact.

2.2 GPE's **global footprint** continues to expand. It has invested US$4.51 billion in the education systems of 60 developing country partners, and as of the end of October there were 58 active Education Sector Program Implementation Grants (ESPIGs) in the GPE portfolio representing an allocation value of US$2.14 billion. The International Commission on Financing Education Opportunity report called for increased financing to GPE – US$2 billion per year by 2020 and US$ 4 billion per year by 2030, assuming continued progress with our reforms.

2.3 Over the past six months, two new developing countries have expressed interest in joining the Global Partnership for Education – Maldives and Swaziland. The State Minister from the Maldives has been invited to participate in the Cambodia meeting and Swaziland is currently preparing an Education Sector Plan Development Grant (ESPDG) application.

2.4 The pre-Board **DCP constituency meetings** continue to strengthen DCP engagement in global governance. They provide opportunities for knowledge and good practice exchange, allow consultation with DCPs on GPE's key policies, address country level priorities and issues and serve as a mechanism for mutual accountability.[1]

2.5 Four donor governments have announced **increased contributions** to GPE. Italy has increased their annual contribution from 1.5 million euro to 4 million euro. Sweden has announced a SEK 100 million top-up for 2016. France has increased their 2016 contribution from 1 million euro to 8 million euro. The United States increased their fiscal 2016 contribution from US$45 million to US$70 million, its highest level ever. GPE also successfully met the objectives to trigger the payment of the 2016 GBP 50 million performance linked tranche of the UK pledge.

2.6 GPE is also expanding its partnership with **foundations**, with over US$27 million pledged from nine foundations to support work in core areas aligned to GPE 2020. Porticus has joined and now represents the private sector and foundations constituency at the Board, bringing the total number of members to 28. Educate A Child and Rihanna's foundation – the Clara and Lionel

[1] A progress report is included as an annex to this report.

Foundation – have expressed interest in joining the constituency. Financial contributions of US$ 500,000 each have been pledged by Comic Relief, the Conrad Hilton Foundation, Dubai Cares and the Open Society Foundation (OSF) to support Better Early Learning and Development at Scale (BELDS) over the next two years. The Assessment for Learning (A4L) initiative has pledged support of US$2 million from a private foundation and two other potential donors have expressed an interest. The Rockefeller Foundation has committed US$350,000 to the GPE Fund to support the exploration of the feasibility of risk financing for education as part of the work on the FFF. In addition, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) has refocused its 2014 pledge to support GPE's Gender Equality Strategy and Policy.

2.7 GPE continues to capitalize on the diversity of its **Grant Agents** to better adapt support to country contexts, particularly in fragile and conflict affected situations. The balance between the main grant agents for ESPIGs is very similar to last year. The World Bank is grant agent for 37 of the 58 active grants in the current portfolio, UNICEF 15, DfID (UK) two, SIDA (Sweden) two, AFD (France) one and UNESCO one. In addition, we have three new Grant Agents for ESPDGs – the Asian Development Bank, Save the Children UK and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). A variety of Grant Agents enables country level partners to choose the partner best able to provide support through the most appropriate mechanism. GPE would benefit by having more partners offer their services to guarantee the availability of a suitable Grant Agent for each context.

2.8 The level of **visibility** and media coverage for the Partnership and for education at both the global and national level has continued to increase. The number of GPE website users is up 71 percent over the past 12 months, and noticeably the number of our French website users is up by 116 percent over the past year. Our "followers" and "likes" on GPE's Twitter and Facebook accounts are up 48 percent over the past year. In September we announced internationally renowned star Rihanna as a GPE global ambassador.

2.9 GPE 2020 commits the Partnership to strengthening **cross sector interventions**, especially in the health sector. We know that healthy children are more ready to learn, and that education contributes to lifelong health. These synergies are especially important during early childhood and for adolescent girls. This is why I am returning to Malawi the week following the Board meeting to join the heads of The Global Fund, Girls Not Brides and others to explore opportunities for more coordinated and integrated support to health and education service delivery and joint advocacy efforts.

2.10 The strength of the Partnership is no more apparent than at the **country level**. In September I joined President Mutharika in Malawi to launch the GPE grant, approved by the Board at the Oslo

Board meeting in June. President Mutharika agreed to be a champion to promote the recommendations of the Education Commission report among his fellow Heads of State in the African Union. Education Minister Fabiano and Finance Minister Gondwe showed support for the establishment of a financing mechanism to pool resources while the Government strengthens fiscal safeguards and new accountability systems to rebuild donor trust. In addition, Norway expressed its willingness to align the major portion of its US$ 12 million annual support to Malawi with the GPE-funded program. Lastly the Ministry of Education will meet more regularly with the heads of the technical committees to enhance dialogue as a form of strengthened LEG and the parliamentary committee on education will become members of the LEG for enhanced oversight.

3. COUNTRY WORK

3.1 The next 18 months present an **unparalleled opportunity** for the Partnership to strengthen education systems in two thirds of GPE developing country partners. If approved, the two grants before the Board at this meeting will bring the total dollar amount of grants under the funding model to US$380 million, just under 10 percent of our total portfolio. By the end of 2018, the total dollar amount of grants under the funding model will be US$1,103 million, or over 20 percent. By the end of 2018, up to 70 percent of active grants will be under the results-based funding model.

3.2 By 2018, up to **48 countries** are expected to have active grants approved under the funding model. The Secretariat is already engaged in the ESP process in many of these countries to contribute to stronger applications and stronger sector plans which are at the foundation of achieving the objectives of GPE 2020. The Secretariat is supporting **education sector analysis** (ESA) in 23 countries and 38 **education sector plans** are under preparation with GPE support. 15 **education sector plan development grants** (ESPDGs) were approved between January 2016 and October 2016. Strengthening country systems requires strengthening GPE engagement, both the Secretariat and the broader Partnership, to support country-level processes and cultivate country-level political leadership.

3.3 Two **education sector program implementation grant** (ESPIG) applications are before the Board for consideration in Siem Reap – Ethiopia and Zimbabwe**.** The **Ethiopia** grant will support the on-going General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) Phase 2. The grant will contribute to curriculum implementation and provision of textbook and learning material, teacher and school leader development, school improvement program and strengthening of system management, and capacity building. The program will also cover newly added early childhood education. The Country Grants and Performance Committee (CGPC) recommended a grant amount

of US$70 million – the fixed part of the grant – with the World Bank as grant agent. The Committee recommended that Ethiopia expand and resubmit the variable part proposal – US$30 million – by mid-January with a longer-term perspective for a three-year period to make the interventions truly transformational.

3.4 The **Zimbabwe** grant will contribute to enhancing access to quality education and improving learning for children, especially the over one million orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) from AIDS related mortalities and high levels of poverty. The grant will help Zimbabwe develop and operationalize equity focused policies including school financing and inclusive education, and strengthen interventions that support children with special needs and non-formal access to learning. The grant will also support the roll out of a new competency based curricula through teacher development, distribution of learning materials for the most disadvantaged schools and introduction of continuous assessment systems from ECD to upper secondary. Leadership, management and research capacities will be strengthened for enhanced planning, data use and evidenced based decision making at both national and sub national levels. The CGPC recommended a grant amount of US$20.58 million – the fixed part of the grant – to be implemented over 3 years (2017 -2019) with UNICEF as the Grant Agent. Zimbabwe intends to prepare a separate proposal for the variable tranche of US$8.82 million.

3.5 Two and a half years after the adoption of the GPE results-based **funding model**, nine Education Sector Program Implementation Grant (ESPIG) applications have been completed and six grants have been approved by the Board. Lessons from the implementation of the funding model so far are gradually being incorporated into the application processes currently underway. To optimize the impact of the funding model, the Secretariat is engaging in quality assurance processes at an earlier stage to strengthen and improve sector analysis, plan development and program design and facilitate more nuanced, context sensitive and consistent assessment and dialogue around the funding model benchmarks, particularly on domestic financing and data requirements. The Secretariat is also developing guidance for local education groups' engagement in domestic finance dialogue.

3.6 Increasing **domestic finance** is a critical component of the GPE model. The Education Commission report calls on low and middle income countries to increase domestic spending on education from the current US$1.2 trillion per year to US$3 trillion between 2015 and 2030. GPE's methodology for compiling domestic finance data for the Results Framework has yielded substantive information on 47 countries, compared to the 36 as of June 2016, and this data is being used to inform country level domestic finance dialogue. While there is a considerable path to go in increasing national education budgets education in GPE developing country partners, the trajectory is positive.

3.7 Beyond the results to which the ESPIG financed programs aspire, the funding model has had a number of more indirect effects including enhanced and more focused dialogue to unblock equity, efficiency and learning outcomes challenges. In **Ethiopia**, the process has led to a commitment to increase primary education's share of the education budget, the inclusion of civil society representation in the local education group and the strengthening of joint sector monitoring. In **Zimbabwe**, the process has led to agreement to strengthen links between the Ministry in charge of basic education and that in charge of higher education.

3.8 The three grants approved by the Board in June – Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Malawi and Organization of East Caribbean States (OECS) – are at varying stages of progress. The DRC grant agreement will be signed with the World Bank within the next month and become effective by early next year. The Malawi grant agreement has been signed and the grant will become effective in mid-November. The OECS grant agreement was signed in July, became effective on the same date and preparation activities are underway.

3.9 Total ESPIG calendar year disbursements as of October 31 were US$ 379 million. GPE is anticipating approximately US$ 465 million in annual disbursements this year, based on projections from Grant Agents and the Secretariat. In FY2016, 54% of developing country partners with an active ESPIG are countries affected by fragility and conflict (compared to 49% in FY2015) and 56% are Lower Income countries (unchanged from prior year). The geographical distribution is similar to last year. 72% of active ESPIGs are in Sub-Saharan Africa, 19% in Asia, 6% in Latin America and the Caribbean and 4% in Middle East and North Africa. In FY2016, 4% of the total approved ESPIG value was assigned for agency fees and supervision allocations.

4. STRENGTHENING OPERATIONS

4.1 GPE is **pivoting to performance,** building on the foundation of the strategic, technical, operational, financial and organizational reforms to implement and deliver GPE 2020. Highlights of the improvements made over the past six months to strengthen our operations and capacity to deliver are outlined below.

4.2 **Quality Assurance** continues to be strengthened and empowered with a stronger challenge function. The Secretariat is finalizing a series of revisions to the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Process for Education Sector Program Implementation Grants (ESPIGs) and implementing its revised QAR processes for ESPs and TEPs. For countries applying for Education Sector Program Implementation Grants (ESPIGs), the Secretariat is gradually rolling out the adjusted process as new grant application processes begin. It is anticipated that all countries applying for ESPIGs in Round

2 of 2017 will have gone through the Revised QAR ESP or TEP and/or QAR ESPIG processes. The Country Grants and Performance Committee (CGPC) continued to pilot the use of the methodology developed by the Secretariat to facilitate its review of grant applications based on quality standards and alignment and will make a decision regarding its use of the methodology in Round 1 of 2017.

4.3 The Secretariat is continuing to strengthen the **independence and rigor of the appraisal of education sector plans** and transitional education sector plans. In July 2016, the Secretariat and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) rolled out a successful pilot peer-learning/training program based on the GPE-IIEP Plan Preparation and Appraisal Guidelines. A second wave of training is planned for January 2017. The GPE-IIEP online training is being finalized and a preliminary assessment of this new approach will be presented to the Board in June 2017.

4.4 Further progress has been made over the past six months to improve **grant management**. We are refreshing ESPIG, PDG and ESPDG guidelines, forms and templates to make them more consistent and user friendly, and have also worked on a better communication strategy of how updates are conveyed to country partners. A new internal tool has been developed to provide a better snap-shot on where countries are in their grant application cycle. Meanwhile work has continued on strengthening the grant management capabilities of our IT platform, the GPE Exchange. We are also continuing regular meetings with Grant Agents to improve coordination and discuss implementation and have strengthened procedures for the Grant Applications Review Committee (GARC).

4.5 In terms of **grant monitoring**, we have improved substantially the way in which information on GPE grants is captured and reported. We have undertaken a pilot exercise over the last six months to code GPE's entire grant portfolio. This has shown that GPE grants are strongly aligned with the goals and objectives in GPE 2020 and allows us to hone in on how we are investing in specific areas such a gender equality, disability and inclusion and support for learning assessments. We have also rolled-out the standard grant reporting template approved by the CGPC in April and have collected our first tranche of grant data. Review and follow up of both progress and audit reports are now a standard part of our monitoring processes. These processes will be improved over the next year and we will use the new operational risk framework to guide the prioritization of our resources to support higher risk grants. We will also be working with Grant Agents over the coming year to improve the implementation of grants – delays were 20% at end of FY16 compared to 15 percent at end of FY15.

4.6 Significant progress has been made to strengthen GPE's approach to **risk management**. The introduction of the Operational Risk Framework is a critical new tool that will help us calibrate limited Secretariat time and effort to those countries in need of greatest support. While the

Secretariat will continue to learn and adapt by rolling out the framework and through continued risk reviews, the Secretariat does not have a dedicated risk management function. This is itself a risk in terms of ability to correctly assess and monitor risk and drive the consideration of risk in a systematic way into decision making processes of the Secretariat, Committees, and Board.

4.7 In terms of **stewardship of funds**, we have continued to proactively monitor and engage on cases of misuse. Full repayments have been received during this year from Benin and Liberia related to ineligible expenditure from 2014, and also from Uganda related to ineligible expenditure identified earlier this year. We are still awaiting payment from Madagascar for a case relating back to the 2010 to 2012 period, however the government has committed to repay shortly. We also have one case noted at the Board meeting in June which is still under investigation by the Grant Agent. While we are not able to give details of this case to protect the integrity of the investigation, the amount involved is under US$ 100,000. We will update the Board on this and other cases as further information becomes available and a separate report will be given as part of the Risk Management session in Cambodia with details of each case.

4.8 The Secretariat has continued to improve its **organizational effectiveness.** Two years after the 2014 Organizational Review was completed, the Secretariat is significantly stronger. We have implemented the majority of the recommendations[2], established an operational policy committee to standardize delivery of core business processes and are strengthening corporate planning to more strategically direct Secretariat resources and ensure that all staff have clarity on what they are accountable to deliver. The Dalberg Capacity Assessment builds on the 2014 Organizational Review to assess the extent to which the Secretariat has the capacity to execute its core functions at the highest level and realize the full ambition of GPE 2020. Based on the assessment, the Board will be asked in Cambodia to consider some preliminary investments needed in key areas to ensure the Secretariat has the capacity to perform core functions.

4.9 At the December 2016 meeting the Board will be presented by an update from the SPC outlining the objectives and process to develop **LEG guidelines** and a toolkit to support LEG effectiveness, following the June 2016 Board request to review how to move forward on the process to develop LEG Standards. LEG effectiveness is integral to the success of GPE 2020 and final LEG guidelines and tools for engagement will be presented to the Board for approval in June 2017.

4.10 With key reforms in place and delivering, the **implementation of GPE 2020** is underway. GPE 2020 laid out an ambitious theory of change that demands stronger planning and use of

[2] An assessment of progress against the recommendations of the 2014 Organizational Review is included in the Dalberg Capacity Assessment.

evidence in developing education policies and systems that will lead to transformation of educational equity and learning outcomes. It called for strengthening of the results focus in GPE country level grants, and greater support for mutual accountability among governments, country-level and international stakeholders in monitoring and ensuring more results focused execution of education sector plans and GPE grants. GPE has made significant changes in its operational model over the past year to bolster this pivot towards results through improvement in monitoring and data, enhancement of support and creation of guidance for country level policy processes, and the introduction of a suite of knowledge and good practice exchange activities and products.[3]

5. STRENGTHENING OUR FOCUS ON RESULTS AND IMPACT

5.1 GPE is strengthening its focus on **managing for results**. The development of GPE's Results Framework with methodologies allows the Partnership to monitor the quality of sector plans, domestic finance, joint sector review processes and grant performance. The Results Framework enables GPE to track progress and challenges across the theory of change and to target financing, knowledge and good practice exchange initiatives and Secretariat capacity to those areas essential for progress towards the GPE 2020 goals and objectives. It also provides a tool for GPE partners to strengthen their own performance and supports the principle of mutual accountability. It provides the foundation for greater consistency and rigour in the support GPE provides to policy dialogue and sector plan implementation, and forms the basis for a more robust approach to quality assurance and decisions about GPE investments. We are starting to see the value of these tools in CGPC decision making and going forward will increasingly mine data collected to develop detailed country level analytics that can further spur results-focused dialogue at the country level.

5.2 The **preliminary results report** presented to the Board for the December 2016 meeting reviews progress on the core indicators of GPE 2020. A complete report along with recommendations will be presented to the Board at its February 2017 meeting. The preliminary results report indicates that while progress is being made on systems level outcomes, it is not yet sufficiently translating to equity and learning indicators. The proposed Financing and Funding Framework specifically addresses some of the areas for improvement identified in the results report. It is important to note the interlinkages between the FFF and the Results Framework and the rationale behind a comprehensive FFF.

[3] KGPE activities include three initiatives in areas of core focus for GPE2020: learning assessment systems, early childhood education and gender equality.

5.3 The Secretariat has built a robust **Monitoring and Evaluation** (M&E) system following the Board's approval of the M&E Strategy in June 2016. The M&E Strategy informs the Board and other stakeholders about what is being achieved with the time and resources invested into the Partnership's work. It helps support the principle of mutual accountability, detailing results from all levels of the theory of change and across partners, including DCPs, donors, Grant Agents and the Secretariat.

5.4 The Results and Performance team is now fully engaged in designing and contracting for its first **evaluations**. These evaluations – at the country, program and thematic levels – will help us understand the extent to which our theory of change is working, help the Partnership to learn from experience and inform improved GPE program implementation. Design of terms of reference and development of a procurement process is underway to ensure that evaluations planned in GPE's M&E strategy are delivered in a timely manner. Work is also underway to develop the learning sub-strategy, which will explore how to utilize GPE data to support country processes, including using country metrics to support country advisory work expected.

5.5 The Secretariat has produced new **tools, policy briefs and technical guidance to support country advisory work** in gender equality, inclusive education, development of robust data strategies and monitoring domestic financing. A working paper analysing GPE experience with the Joint Sector Review process and another on GPE experience with Results Based Financing will be published in early 2017.

6. DELIVERING GPE 2020

6.1 Delivering GPE 2020 will require GPE to build on the solid foundation laid by the reforms of the past three years. It will require us to evolve our approach to financing, support the establishment of the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) platform, pursue knowledge and good practice exchange initiatives that contribute to our theory of change, reform our governance and invest in the Secretariat's capacity.

6.2 GPE's **financial position** continues to be challenging. While there have been a number of positives in terms of increased donor contributions and the successful conclusion of a contribution agreement with the European Commission, the strong dollar and ongoing pressure to shift development spending to humanitarian for some donors has removed the possibility to reverse any of the previous prioritization measures adopted at this time. Given the risks to GPE's financial position, the Board will be asked to continue its call for partners to fulfill their pledges in a timely manner, and for donors that are in a position to advance the timing of their contributions to please

do so. If GPE is to reach the substantially higher level of financing called for by the Education Commission then a significant rethinking of our financing is required, as the Strategic Financing Working Group (SFWG) has been working on over the past six months.

6.3 The SFWG will update the Board in Cambodia on its work and request Board approval of the overall architecture of the **Financing and Funding Framework**. The detailed operational implications, eligibility, and allocation for each of the components of the FFF will be submitted for Board approval at its February 28 –March 1 2017 Board meeting. Successfully delivering on GPE's Results Framework and achieving the goals and objectives of GPE 2020 requires transformational change. The FFF provides an opportunity for transformation across all GPE's strategic goals and will enable GPE to more effectively mobilize and deploy new and better-structured finance. The FFF is grounded in GPE's vision, builds on the strengthening of GPE's operating model and optimizes its ability to deliver on GPE 2020 and beyond. It proposes a unified suite of funding mechanisms and corresponding financing approaches to develop, strengthen, and reform education sectors. It reinforces GPE's belief that transformation across all member countries cannot rely on a "one-size-fits-all" approach. The FFF will strengthen the Partnership and help all GPE countries achieve their learning goals.

6.4 Alongside the development of the Financing and Funding Framework, the Secretariat has been working with the SFWG to develop a **Contributions and Safeguards Policy** (CSP) delineating the restrictions and allowances for GPE to accept targeted contributions. The Secretariat has developed a survey to elicit views from across the Partnership, the results of which will be presented to the Board in Cambodia to inform a facilitated discussion. Detailed consultation webinars will be held to further develop the CSP for consideration by the Board in February 2017.

6.5 Accelerating progress against GPE's ambitious learning and equity goals will also require investment in **knowledge and good practice exchange** (KGPE). KGPE supports countries to explore effective and efficient policy solutions in key areas of GPE Strategic Goals and Objectives. Each of the KGPE initiatives approved by the Board in June 2016 will be rolled out in early 2017. Better Early Learning and Development at Scale (BELDS) will support developing country partners to scale effective approaches to pre-primary education and early learning, one of the most valuable investments in education. The Assessment for Learning (A4L) initiative is a systems approach to measuring and improving learning that will strengthen capacity of developing country partners to develop robust learning assessment systems and promote holistic measurements of learning. The Gender Equality Policy and Strategy is rolling out with initial guidance and cross national workshops planned for 2017. Support from CIFF will allow GPE to accelerate this work and back new opportunities to work with partners in the health sector. The FFF proposes to add funding global

public goods to existing support to cross-national knowledge exchange activities, reinforcing the Partnership's ability to utilize evidence and learn from best practice.

6.6 Achieving GPE 2020 will also mean making **Education Cannot Wait** (ECW) a success. The GPE Secretariat will continue to actively support ECW, as we have been at the Board's request since June 2016. GPE has been leading the early investments work for ECW in the absence of a staffed secretariat. It is clear from these early investments that there is significant complementarity between the work of ECW and the work of GPE. But it is also clear that GPE should not take on the ECW platform unless the Secretariat is equipped with the technical, operational and financial resources required to deliver the ECW mandate. GPE remains strongly committed to addressing the needs of the millions of children around the world affected by crises and emergencies and provides a foundation for coordination and dialogue among humanitarian and development actors. 60% of the countries in the GPE pipeline are affected by fragility and conflict.

6.7 To meet the challenges ahead, GPE's **governance** arrangements will have to evolve to address the extra demands of both the growth and sophistication of our business. The Secretariat will support the Board's direction on advancing our governance model. Strengthening GPE's governance arrangements to ensure that the Board has sufficient time to engage in the strategic issues facing GPE with appropriate decision authority provided to committees is critical for the success of the broader Partnership. I look forward to our discussions in this area.

6.8 Delivering on GPE 2020 will also require a more effective, efficient and responsive Secretariat. The Dalberg **Capacity Assessment** indicates that there is a need for significant investment in the Secretariat's capacity. I look forward to a constructive dialogue with the Board regarding the recommendations.

6.9 The forthcoming **GPE replenishment** has taken on a greater significance following the Education Commission's report in September, which set out improvements to the effectiveness and efficiency of international finance, including a much higher share of ODA through multilateral channels. It proposed that "if (GPE's reforms) are successful, their financing should increase to $2 billion per year by 2020 and $4 billion per year by 2030". The GPE replenishment is no longer seen as simply a means of raising the funds to implement GPE 2020. It is also an early concrete opportunity for donor and developing country leadership to demonstrate their commitment to global education financing in pursuit of the Commission's transformative agenda. I look forward to the Board's feedback on the paper setting out GPE's replenishment planning.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 Conversations about international development across the public and private spheres increasingly come back to the value of education. Be it the rights of children, the workforce needs of industry or the power of education as a vaccine against extremism, ensuring all children and young people have access to education and are learning is essential to advance the global agenda for shared prosperity. The question is what will it take to make the shift needed? The Education Commission report launched in September provides a roadmap. It concludes that it is possible to create transformative change and reset education outcomes across the globe and it is possible to achieve these changes within a generation. But it's going to require all of us to do more and education expenditure in low and lower middle income countries will have to triple.

7.2 The principal source of education financing has and always will be domestic finance. The Commission says 97% of the increase needed ought to be raised domestically. International financing is however "important for its catalytic effect in encouraging greater domestic resource mobilization and reform" and significant international contributions will continue to be needed in the lowest income countries for many years to come. A challenge has been thrown down to GPE as part of a set of proposed changes to education resourcing – implement reform and quadruple in size by 2020 and double again a decade later.

7.3 My job as CEO is to steer the course of reform, keep us firmly focused on the goals and objectives of GPE 2020, manage risks and ensure we are equipped to deliver the results we have committed to achieving. Supporting more than 60 of the world's lowest income countries strengthen their education systems and transform education outcomes over the next 15 years is no small task. It requires political commitment, more resources and for these resources to be more effectively applied. If the Board wishes to capitalize on the surging momentum behind global education, I believe GPE's foundations are strong and that if we strengthen capacity in the right places, GPE is ready.

8. PLEASE CONTACT (aalbright@globalpartnership.org) for further information.

9. ANNEXES/ REFERENCE(S) AND GLOSSARY

6.1 The following Annexes are included in this paper:

Annex1: Country Work

Annex 2: Pre-Board Developing Country Partner Constituency Meetings Report

ANNEX 1 – COUNTRY WORK HIGHLIGHTS

1. There are currently **10 ESPIGs** in the Round 1 2017 pipeline, 26 in the Round 2 2017 pipeline and four in the Round 1 2018 pipeline. The Secretariat continuously monitors progress and seeks to ensure a good balance between readiness, good processes and timely submission of applications, with particular attention to the importance of strong education sector plans as the basis for grant applications. We do not expect all of these pipeline applications to meet their deadlines.

2. **57 ESPIG progress reports** have been received from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon (2), Cambodia, Chad, Congo DR, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania (2), Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Nigeria (Jigawa state only), Pakistan-Balochistan, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone (2), Somalia-Federal, Somalia-Puntland, Somalia-Somaliland, South Sudan (2), Tajikistan (2), Tanzania-Mainland, Tanzania-Zanzibar, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uganda (2), Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe (4).

3. Two ESPIG completion reports were submitted to the Secretariat from Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste, and the Secretariat approved 22 ESPIG revisions for Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo DR, Eritrea, Gambia (2), Haiti, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Nicaragua (2), Somalia-Puntland, Somalia-Somaliland, Tajikistan, Tanzania-Zanzibar, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Yemen.

4. Total ESPIG calendar year disbursements as of October 31 were US$379 million. GPE is anticipating approximately US$465 million in annual disbursements this year, based on projections from grant agents and the Secretariat.

5. The Secretariat is supporting **education sector analysis** (ESA) in 23 countries/ federal states, and 38 **education sector plans** (ESPs) are under preparation with GPE support.

6. ***Education Sector Plan Development Grants*** (ESPDGs) help countries perform strategic, consultative and analytical work to develop or revise their sector plans. 15 ESPDGs were approved between January 2016 and October 2016 for Afghanistan, Benin, Cambodia, Chad, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mali, Republic of Marshall Islands, Senegal, Somalia-Puntland, Somalia-Somaliland, Sudan and Zambia.

7. 11 ESPDG revisions were approved by the Secretariat between January 2016 and October 2016 for Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo DR, Ethiopia, Kiribati, Nepal, Nicaragua, Organization of

East Caribbean States (one regional OECS ESPDG includes four countries: Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines), South Sudan, Tanzania-Mainland and Vietnam.

8. 12 countries/federal states — Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Eritrea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Kyrgyz Republic, Niger, Somalia-Federal, Swaziland and Uzbekistan — are in the pipeline to submit an ESPDG application by the end CY16.

9. **Program development** grants (PDGs) finance the design of an education program that will help the country implement the sector strategy. The Secretariat approved two extensions (OECS PDG was extended twice), and four countries/federal states — Afghanistan, Cambodia, Liberia and Somalia-Puntland — are currently in the pipeline to submit a PDG application by the end of FY16.

10. Since January 2016, the Secretariat has conducted 15 **quality assurance** missions, 41 **ESP development** missions, 21 **JSR** missions and 88 **grant monitoring** missions.[4]

11. Conflict broke out in **South Sudan** on July 8, a day prior to the country's fifth independence celebrations. The Secretariat Grant Agent, Coordinating Agency and the Ministry took stock of the situation a week later when a temporary ceasefire was declared. Program implementation, particularly school construction and teacher training, have been adversely affected as agency and contractor staff were evacuated from the country. The Ministry intended to continue with developing the education sector plan and the GPE Secretariat facilitated dialogue between UNHCR, the education cluster and the ESP team to ensure the impact of the crisis is reflected in the draft ESP.

12. In September a Secretariat mission to **Guinea-Bissau** helped the Grant Agent prepare an ESPDG request and an extension request for the current project to extend the project closing date from March 2017 to September 2017 to complete the construction of new classrooms in remote areas. The Minister decided to target isolated communities in Guinea Bissau's islands for the last batch of school construction.

13. The Category-4 Hurricane Matthew that struck parts of **Haiti** violently on October 4 caused the largest humanitarian emergency since the 2010 earthquake. 2.1 million people – 20% of the population – were affected, of which an estimated 894,000 are children. Based on the request prepared by the World Bank under the leadership of the Haitian Government, GPE has reallocated $1 million to feed 13,888 students for 70 days in affected areas located in the south part of the island.

[4] Some of the missions combine multiple functions, so adding these figures does not reflect total number of missions.

ANNEX 2 – PRE-BOARD DEVELOPING COUNTRY PARTNER CONSTITUENCY MEETINGS

1. The purpose of this annex is to present the Board of Directors with a progress report detailing the outcomes and value of pre-Board Developing Country Partner (DCP) constituency meetings that have been organized by the Secretariat immediately before the biannual Board of Directors meetings following the Board of Directors' request for an annual progress report in December 2015.

2. In June 2014, the Board of Directors mandated the Secretariat to organize pre-board DCP constituency meetings for GPE's six developing country partner constituencies. In December 2015, the Secretariat presented the Board of Directors with a progress report of the pre-Board DCP constituency meetings from December 2014-June 2015 and obtained Board approval for continued funding of DCP constituency meetings. At that time, the Board of Directors requested the Secretariat submit a progress and impact report annually on the outcomes and benefits of the meetings. In June 2016, the Board of Directors approved the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Strategy. As part of the M&E Strategy, a program evaluation for the pre-Board DCP constituency meeting was proposed. This evaluation will assess the specific contributions of the DCP constituency meetings over the course of one year (December 2015-December 2016) and will be submitted to the Board in June 2017. In advance of the program evaluation the Board will receive in June 2017, this document provides a brief progress report on the outcomes and value of the meetings from December 2015-June 2016.

Composition of Pre-Board DCP Meetings:

3. The GPE Secretariat invites GPE's 65+ DCP Focal Points to attend the pre-Board DCP constituency meetings. The DCP Focal Points are appointed by Ministries of Education (including some Ministries of Federal States) as the official and primary Ministry liaison between the Ministry of Education and the GPE Secretariat. Focal Points play a key role in the management of the constituency and participation in constituency deliberations, and helps ensure a better understanding of GPE processes at the country level, in particular by government partners. Focal Points are appointed and duly authorized by the Minister to serve as the Ministry's primary interlocutor in GPE related matters. On behalf of their Ministry, Focal Points facilitate communication and coordination of the country's participation in GPE governance structures within their Ministry as well as with other members of the constituency. The DCP Focal Point mechanism has been key to strengthening countries' engagement with the Global Partnership and provides a direct entry point for the GPE Secretariat into Ministries of Education.

Objectives of Pre-Board DCP Constituency Meetings:

5. The primary objective of the DCP constituency meetings is to improve consultation, communication, and coordination within and between the DCP constituencies in order to strengthen their collaboration and to enable them to present a more inclusive DCP position at Board meetings. The meetings also provide an opportunity for DCP constituencies to improve their engagement with GPE governance processes and the work of the partnership as a whole, thereby strengthening the link between the global and the country level. Following each DCP constituency meeting, the Secretariat circulates a meeting evaluation form to the DCP Focal Points to collect their immediate feedback about the meeting's activities, objectives, and outcomes. The Secretariat analyzes the results to improve the effectiveness of the meetings and inform programming decisions for future meetings. Based on the meeting evaluation results received from the June 2016 constituency meeting, 95% of the participants stated that the objectives of the meeting were accomplished.

5. Six pre-Board DCP constituency meetings have been organized since June 2014, including the November 2016 meeting in Siem Reap, Cambodia.[5] With each new meeting, the level of ambition has increased and the Secretariat has made efforts to optimize efficiency and maximize utility, including combining the six constituencies into one meeting versus having two separate regional meetings. Although initially focused on governance, the DCP constituency meetings have increasingly focused on knowledge exchange, whereby the countries have been able to share and learn good practices from each other as well as from other development partners.

Value of pre-Board DCP Constituency Meetings

6. **Strengthens DCP constituency engagement in GPE's global governance.** As a platform for developing consensus and arriving at decisions, the meetings allow the DCP Focal Points to prepare constituency responses that are then shared with their respective DCP Board representatives. Following the deliberations that are held separately among the six constituencies at the DCP constituency meetings, the six constituencies produce a summary document that presents their respective constituency positions in response to the Board documents that will be discussed at the Board for decision. This summary document is used by the DCP Board and Alternate Board members to inform their interventions at the Board meeting. Armed with these constituency positions, the DCP Board and Alternate Board members are able to intervene at the Board meeting, on behalf of their constituencies, and to speak with the weight of their constituencies behind them.

[5] 3 Africa constituencies in November/December 2014 in Kigali, Rwanda. 3 Rest of the World constituencies in December 2014 in Washington, DC. 3 Rest of the World constituencies in May 2015 in Dubai. 3 Africa constituencies in May 2015 in Dakar, Senegal. 3 Africa and 3 Rest of the World constituencies in December 2015 in Kampala, Uganda. 3 Africa and 3 Rest of the World constituencies in June 2016 in Paris, France. 3 Africa and 3 Rest of the World constituencies in November 2016 in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

As a result, DCP Board and Alternate members have said they are able to more effectively represent the interests of their constituencies. This has led to a stronger engagement by the DCP constituencies in GPE's global governance as well as to an increase in interventions from the DCP Board and Alternate Board members at Board of Directors meetings.

7. **Anchors global dialogue to the country level.** For each DCP constituency meeting, the GPE Secretariat produces an outcome report that captures the deliberations and constituency recommendations for each agenda item. This is circulated to the DCP Focal Points for onward transmission and circulation within their Ministries of Education and to country level partners. This enables discussions and the sharing of good practices at the transnational (global) level to be brought to the awareness of other country level partners. The outcome report enables the DCP constituencies and the GPE Secretariat to transfer knowledge from the meetings to the country level as well as facilitates institutional memory.

8. **Provides opportunities for knowledge and good practice exchange (KGPE).** At the request of the DCP constituencies, the constituency meetings have evolved to include sessions on knowledge and good practice exchange. The meetings provide DCP constituencies with the opportunity to share good practices, innovations, and country experiences to drive knowledge and learning on national and global level innovations and policy solutions to address systemic challenges in their national education systems. In order to ensure that the themes for the KGPE sessions continue to respond to identified needs and demands coming directly from the countries themselves, the GPE Secretariat includes a section on the meeting evaluation form where the DCP Focal Points are able to identify the KGPE themes that they would like to be included in future DCP constituency meetings. The meetings help to give further expression to GPE's operational model and its presence at the national, regional, and global level, by bringing countries from multiple regions together to discuss and seek solutions to the policy challenges they are facing. The KGPE sessions have increasingly attracted other development partners working with countries on key technical areas, to support knowledge and learning on technical issues to inform policy dialogue, and support sector planning and implementation.[6]

9. **Allows consultation with DCPs on GPE's key policies.** While the meetings allow for DCP constituencies to caucus and discuss Board decisions, they also enable the GPE Secretariat to engage and interface with countries as a collective. The meetings serve as a key strategic platform to

[6] Partners that have contributed to DCP constituency meetings through the KGPE sessions include the German BACKUP Initiative – Education in Africa, UNESCO-IIEP, UNGEI, and Plan International. Themes that have featured in previous KGPE sessions at DCP constituency meetings include GPE's Funding Model and country level processes, sector planning in federal states, GPE's added value in countries without an ESPIG, Joint Sector Reviews, domestic education financing and the gender equality policy, strategy and action plan.

dialogue, consult, sensitize, and orientate countries on the partnership's strategic, governance, and financing direction, including allowing countries to mutually shape the GPE business model. This includes consultation on the GPE Strategic Plan (GPE 2020), its monitoring and evaluation strategy, ongoing work on strategic financing and proposed new financing and funding framework, replenishment and DCP advocacy, the operational model, Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and LEG minimum standards.

10. **Addresses country level priorities and issues.** The feedback received to date shows that DCPs strongly agree that the DCP constituency meetings add value by allowing them to discuss key issues and reach consensus, by serving as an important space for the countries to express their views on key policies and decisions, by serving as a platform for knowledge and good practice exchange, and by allowing increased dialogue with the GPE Secretariat staff. One of the points that DCPs have repeatedly emphasized with regards to constituency meetings' added value is the provision of a unique space where all GPE constituency groups get together to discuss and shape the course of policy decisions within GPE.

11. **Serves as a mechanism for mutual accountability.** The meeting evaluations reveal that the DCP constituency meetings are increasingly viewed as a mechanism for mutual accountability, strengthening the stake and ownership of countries in the partnership. Through peer-to-peer learning, countries motivate one another in their efforts to deliver on results. Accompanied by the DCP Focal Point mechanism, the meetings bond DCP constituency members together, fostering respect and trust. According to written comments received in the meeting evaluation form from June 2016, the DCP constituency meetings allow the DCP Focal Points to maintain communication with other constituency members and the "DCP constituency meetings promote long term collaboration/ good practice sharing, and relationship building".