1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to continue the discussion on the three strategic directions of the Global Partnership for Education: (i) girls’ education (further described in Annex 1); (ii) fragile states (further described in Annex 2); and (iii) quality and learning outcomes (further described in Annex 3).

The proposed decision is a confirmation of the commitment of the Global Partnership to these areas and request proceed with implementation of the directions described in this paper.

2. Background

At its May 2011 meeting in Kigali, Rwanda, three papers were presented for approval on the three strategic directions of the Global Partnership for Education, namely, girls’ education, education in fragile states and quality and learning outcomes (BOD/2011/05 DOC 05-07). At the time, the Board took the following decision.

**BOD/2011/05-03 – Strategic Directions of the EFA FTI:** The EFA FTI Board of Directors endorses the focus on quality, fragile states and girls’ education, notes the EFA FTI Secretariat’s papers on these strategic directions (BOD/2011/05 – DOC 05-07) and requests the EFA FTI Secretariat to deliver revised strategies, taking into account the inputs received from the EFA FTI Board of Directors, including a short overview integrating the three strategic directions, for further consideration by no later than 31 August 2011.

Following the meeting of the Board of Directors, the Chair formed a reference group of Board members and other constituency members to work with the Secretariat on revising the papers. The revised papers
were discussed at an audio conference call of the Board of Directors on 15 September 2011. The Board made the following decision at the conference call:

**BOD/2011/09-01 – Strategic Directions of the EFA FTI:** The EFA FTI Board of Directors endorses, taking into account the comments made at its conference call on 15 September 2011, the strategic directions and mechanisms described in the document entitled “EFA FTI Strategic Directions and Mechanisms: Bringing it All Together” (BOD/2011/09-DOC 05).

The mechanisms described in BOD/2011/09-DOC 01 to 03, and the actions being taken to pursue them, including the respective roles of the partners, the EFA FTI Secretariat and the partnership as a whole, shall be discussed further at the meeting of the EFA FTI Board of Directors on 9-10 November 2011 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The new versions of the papers numbered BOD/2011/09-DOC 01 to 03 are attached as Annexes 1 to 3 to this paper. The contents of the “Strategic Directions: Bringing it All Together” paper (BOD/2001/09-DOC 05) are included in Section 4 below.

3. Decision Requested

The Board of Directors is requested to approve the following decision:

**BOD/2011/11-XX – Strategic Directions for the Global Partnership for Education 2011-2014:** The Board of Directors: (i) takes note of the paper on the Strategic Directions of the Global Partnership for Education 2011-2014 (BOD/2011/11—DOC 06); (ii) affirms the commitment of the Global Partnership to the directions; and (iii) requests the Secretariat to implement the initiatives described in the paper and in accordance with the comments made by the Board of Directors at its meeting on 9-10 November 2011 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 Introduction

Responding to demand from developing country partners, the Global Partnership for Education has developed an ambitious set of strategic directions for 2011-2014, focused on increased support for fragile states, improved learning outcomes and girls’ education. These strategic directions focus on results, and support the Global Partnership’s longstanding goal of reducing the number of out-of-school children.
The three strategic directions are closely interlinked and critical to ensuring that more children stay longer in school and receive a better education. This paper explains their rationale and inter-linkages, and the role of both the Secretariat and the broader partnership in taking them forward. For details on the three strategic directions, and related instruments, please see Annexes 1 to 3 of this paper.

The Global Partnership for Education is uniquely placed to provide support and momentum to the strategic directions given its membership of developing country partners, donors, civil society, multilateral organizations, the private sector and private foundations. By using its convening power to create coordinated platforms at both global and national levels, the Global Partnership can drive progress towards shared objectives in each of its policy areas, while injecting financial and technical support to allow developing countries to scale up effective interventions in education. Moreover, the Global Partnership’s model supports the evolution and growth of the entire education system in developing countries, with particular attention to strengthening the relevant institutions in-country.

4.2 Rationale for the Strategic Directions

The past decade has seen many developing country partners improve access to education. More children are now in school than ever before and the number of children out of school has dropped since 2000 from over 100 million to 67 million. Within the Global Partnership’s developing country partners, the out-of-school numbers have dropped from 27 million to 17 million.

However, this masks some dramatic, enduring problems, including a global crisis in learning: around 200 million children are currently in school but learning very little: the causes are multiple, but as little as 30% of available school time is effectively used in schools in some countries. In addition, although the proportion of girls entering primary school in the past decade has increased, the transition from primary to lower secondary for girls is still much lower than boys (and this is the area where many other health, economic and social benefits occur). Finally, over 40% of the 67 million children currently out of school live in conflict-affected or fragile states. To address these enduring problems, the Global Partnership has focused strategically on quality learning, girls’ education and fragility.

In order to ensure that these priorities are being met, the Global Partnership has shifted from an input-oriented to a results-oriented approach. A Results Framework will be discussed at the meeting of the Board of Directors on 9-10 November 2011 in Copenhagen, Denmark. It integrates the objectives of the
three strategic directions and seeks to ensure a greater focus on the outcomes in learning, not just monitoring inputs such as teacher training or provision of text books.

4.3 Linkages between the Strategic Directions

The three agendas relating to quality learning, girls’ education, and fragile states are clearly inter-linked. In the context of conflict-affected and fragile states, the first priority is to ensure that more children have greater access to school, especially girls who tend to be the most at-risk in these contexts. A special focus is then required on the quality of education and increasing the numbers of girls staying in school.

4.4 Global Partnership Mechanisms and Strategic Directions

To deliver on these strategic directions, the various mechanisms available to the Global Partnership must be suitably aligned. The Global Partnership is well placed to do this since it has much in its “toolkit”, from technical support to the development of sound education plans, financing of implementation and the power of the knowledge and experience across the partnership. It will also need to work with its partners, most of which are represented in the constituencies of its Board of Directors and already take leadership in many of these areas.

The five main Global Partnership mechanisms are outlined below. Table 1 explains how these mechanisms will support the three strategic directions.

a. **Education Plan Development, Assessment and Endorsement.** This is the core of the Global Partnership model, ensuring strong country ownership and on-site policy dialogue, which is even more important than the funding itself. The Secretariat is currently developing an improved version of the appraisal process and ensuring an explicit link to core indicators in the new Results Framework. Education plan development is linked to all of the other Global Partnership mechanisms.

b. **Resource Allocation and Transfers.** Financial allocations for each country are determined by the Needs and Performance Framework (NPF) that explicitly takes account of the strategic directions. The NPF recognizes important needs to be addressed (such as a country having a high gender disparity in primary access) and also recognizes good performance/progress (such as a country receiving a higher score under the NPF if it is making good progress in primary completion). Second, financial top-ups (or other
performance-based financial transfers executed through any of the partners) will be available to countries with strong performance against agreed indicators reflecting policy priorities. In addition, the policy discussion process will leverage in-country own-source funding.

c. **In-country Mechanisms and Experiences.** Key to the success of the Global Partnership and its policy priorities is the successful implementation of national education plans and the results they deliver. There are a number of ways in which the Global Partnership will increase its support of developing country partners in order to deliver better results, including the following:

   i. Enhanced technical support provided by the partners to developing country partners to identify and scale up ideas that work. The Secretariat will disseminate good practice in that regard;
   
   ii. Close monitoring of education plan implementation to track progress on policy priorities and the plan more broadly, and identify measures to improve results;
   
   iii. Support for more effective monitoring of progress at a country level with a focus on strengthening Joint Sector Review processes; and
   
   iv. Support to Local Education Groups to strengthen coordination of activities and financing.

d. **Results Framework.** The Secretariat has developed a Results Framework specifically to reflect the importance of the three strategic directions with core indicators of achievement in quality learning and girls’ education. Indicators for these areas have been incorporated into the Results Framework. Explicit agreements on the mutual accountability of all partners for achieving results will help ensure progress on all of these indicators.

e. **The Global and Regional Activities (GRA) program** will be used by partners to support education plan implementation by offering knowledge development and dissemination on how to measure and achieve the goals laid out in the three strategic directions. The GRA supports the development and implementation of education plans. It will also be
used to support mutual commitment and accountability around the goals embodied in the Results Framework.

The broader Global Partnership affords the opportunity to drive the policy goals. All of the partners can and should define ways in which their own policies, financing and political commitment can support these priorities. The Global Partnership is developing a Mutual Accountability Matrix that seeks to establish these commitments and responsibilities. Moreover, the Global Partnership for Education pledging conference includes not simply financial pledges to the Global Partnership for Education Fund, but also policy pledges and other bilateral, domestic and multilateral funding commitments aligned with the Global Partnership’s processes and policy goals.

Table 1. Illustration of Fit between Global Partnership Mechanisms and Strategic Directions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Available Mechanisms</th>
<th>Strategic Directions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girls’ Education</strong></td>
<td><strong>Quality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fragile States</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Plan</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preparation, assessment, endorsement</td>
<td>Appraisal guidelines will ensure that issues pertaining to girls’ access to school and learning are given due consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appraisal guidelines will help ensure that issues pertaining to learning outcomes, particularly initial literacy and mathematics, are well considered.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appraisal guidelines will make special allowances for fragile states such as a focus on specific topics or encouraging consideration of interim education plans. They will specify the elements to be considered for helping countries transition from ‘interim’ to ‘full’ education plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource allocation and transfers</strong></td>
<td>Needs and performance funding framework already includes incentives to improvements in gender parity in primary school completion. Funding top-ups can provide added incentive to achieve performance or policy targets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Needs and performance funding framework already includes incentives to progress on primary school completion. Special funding top-ups are proposed based on specific performance or policy targets, for instance, related to learner assessment or use of quality assurance systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Needs and performance funding framework already contains an allowance for fragility. Note that funding cannot be used to induce results that reduce fragility itself, as overall reduction in fragility is beyond the medium-term reach of the education sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-country mechanisms and</strong></td>
<td>Partners will engage in discussions around girls’ education results as identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partners will engage in discussions around learning outcomes as identified by</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Secretariat will propose joint sector review processes that are sensitive to the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Available Mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Girls’ Education</strong></th>
<th><strong>Quality</strong></th>
<th><strong>Fragile States</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>by the education plans and joint sector reviews, and will use the Results Framework as a source of indicators, targets, and knowledge of “what works” for girls’ access and learning outcomes.</td>
<td>the education plans and joint sector reviews, and will use the Results Framework as a source of indicators, targets, and knowledge of what works for learning outcomes in initial literacy.</td>
<td>operational realities of working in fragile states, including engagement of the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies. The Country Support Team will include greater expertise on fragile states issues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Results Framework

- Will specify the results countries could aim for, and on which the Partnership will be assessed with respect to girls’ access and learning results.

- Will specify results countries could aim for, and on which the Partnership will be assessed with respect to initial literacy (and numeracy) outcomes.

- Targets in Results Framework will be set country by country so as to take into account issues specific to fragile states.

### Global and Regional Activities program

- Will provide funding for partners to use in feeding knowledge into education plans, in-country instruments and experiences. Will generate agreements and mutual accountability on results needed with specific reference to girls’ access and learning outcomes.

- Will provide funding for partners to use in feeding knowledge into education plans, in-country instruments and experiences. Will generate agreements and mutual accountability on results needed on learning outcomes.

- Will provide funding for partners to use in feeding knowledge into education plans, in-country instruments and experiences with specific reference to improving access, learning outcomes, and girls’ performance in fragile states.

The Secretariat recognizes that each of these areas can benefit from further elaboration and detail on how each of the partners can contribute. Part of this discussion will take place in the context of the Mutual Accountability Matrix at the meeting of the Board of Directors in Copenhagen and will be further elaborated in the full strategy for the Global Partnership for Education which will be developed over the coming months.

### 5. Next Steps

Once the decision is approved, the Secretariat will develop the strategy for discussion at the next face-to-face meeting of the Board of Directors. Board members and other partners will be consulted throughout the process.
6. Costs of Initiative and Source of Funding

All costs associated with the development of the strategy will be taken from the Secretariat’s Work Plan for FY 2012.

7. Contact

Board members and others with questions on these matters are invited to contact Robert Prouty, Head of the Secretariat, at: rprouty@globalpartnership.org.
ANNEX 1: STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR GIRLS’ EDUCATION

1. Executive Summary

A quality education is a human right. The education of girls in developing countries is important to girls’ own quality of life, and their ability to make informed choices. It is also critical to a country’s social and economic well being as it promotes the health and welfare of the next generation. It can reduce poverty and curb unsustainable population growth. An educated female population increases a country’s productivity.

The Global Partnership for Education has had an important impact on girls’ education, demonstrated by the sizeable increases in the number of girls enrolled in school and corresponding progress in gender parity rates in its developing country partners. Nonetheless, there are many challenges to continued achievements. This paper highlights three of the most critical. First, a significant number of girls are still out of school. Second, the completion rates and learning levels of girls are low. Third, girls’ participation in upper secondary school, critical to reducing birth rates and improving child and maternal mortality, is low. To address this situation, the Global Partnership for Education will: (i) strengthen the potential to improve girls’ education in education plan preparation and in the endorsement process; (ii) support girls’ education through allocations for education plan implementation grants from the Global Partnership for Education Fund, including expanding financing to upper secondary education for girls from at-risk and disenfranchised communities and providing top-ups to developing country partners demonstrating impact; and (iii) facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise among organizations and institutions working in this area.

2. Justification for the Global Partnership’s Focus on Girls’ Education

While the Global Partnership for Education recognizes that all children should be in school and learning, according to the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (GMR) (2011), educating girls is “an affordable investment with high returns.” Some of the justifications for the continued attention and prioritization of this area are as follows:

a. Every girl has the right to good quality education. The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by almost all states, ensures that every child has a right to free and compulsory education
without discrimination. This includes every girl in a developing country having the right to attend and complete schooling.

b. **Educating girls is critical to ensuring the health of the next generation.** A child born to a mother who can read is less likely to die before age 5. An increase in the educational attainment of women prevents child deaths and reduces maternal mortality—dramatically. Each additional year of formal education for the mother translates into her children remaining in school for a longer period of time.

c. **Educating girls advances the health of the adult population in a country and assists in limiting population growth.** Each additional year of secondary education for girls reduces fertility by delaying the birth of the first child, spacing successive pregnancies, and encouraging the use of contraceptives. The population increases recently projected by the United Nations Population Division portray the urgent need to equip girls to exercise control over their reproductive health and childbearing decisions. The population in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to quadruple by the end of this century at current rates. Increased secondary education is crucial to reverse these environmentally unsustainable trends. A girl with basic education is less likely to become infected with HIV.

d. **Educated women fuel economic growth.** The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (2007) estimates that Asia-Pacific countries lost US$16 to $30 billion a year in economic growth due to a gender-imbalanced workforce. Each year of primary schooling increases a girl’s earning power; the return on secondary education is even higher.

3. **The Challenge**

Although access to free, compulsory and quality education is the human right of all girls, this is far from the reality in most countries. A large number of girls are still out of school. According to the GMR (2011), 54% of the world’s children who are out of school are girls. Moreover, gender equalities tend to be masked by aggregate data, and they are particularly large, even at the primary level for rural, poor and minority-ethno-linguistic populations. Research indicates that without sustained attention and appropriate interventions, girls are less likely to enrol and remain in school. In Pakistan, poor girls in rural areas are 16 times less likely to attend school than the wealthiest urban boys. Of the out-of-school children in Sub-Saharan Africa, three-quarters of the girls are unlikely to ever enrol compared to two-thirds of the boys. Furthermore, regional and national averages mask even greater levels of educational
poverty among sub-groups and populations, with significant intra-national disparities in girls’ enrolment, completion and transition to secondary based on socio-economic status and location. On average, a poor rural girl in Sub Saharan Africa will drop out of primary school after just less than two years – reflecting the large rural/urban and income level disparities in school attainment, which are even starker at the secondary level.

The number of out-of-school girls is particularly high in the group of existing and potential Global Partnership developing country partners that have a Gender Parity Index (GPI) below 0.97. Many of these countries are considered fragile and post-conflict. In such conditions, it is an even greater challenge for girls to attend school. In Benin, Cameroon, Central African Republic, and Mali the number of girls out of school far exceeds the number of boys that are out of school.

Participation of girls decreases as they progress through the education system, highlighting the need to focus on retention and completion. The average primary completion rate for boys in Sub-Saharan Africa is 56% compared to only 46% for girls. Furthermore, girls have less than a 50% chance of proceeding to upper secondary education. The GPI for Sub-Saharan Africa drops from an average 0.95 at the end of the primary cycle, to 0.85 in lower secondary, 0.78 in upper secondary and finally 0.65 in higher education.

Recent research points to the importance of learning and cognitive skills for later productivity rather than just the number of years spent in school. Learning levels across existing and potential Global Partnership developing country partners are low. Countries with the worst learning outcomes show the greatest gender disparities against girls, especially from poor and ethnic minorities. According to the recent report by the Brookings Institution (A Global Compact on Learning, 2011) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 40% of the girls in grades 2 and 4 could not read a single word compared to 30% of the boys.

4. How the Global Partnership for Education Can Make a Difference: Getting Results on Girls’ Education

a. Actions Taken to Date by the Global Partnership for Education and Outcomes in Girls’ Education

As of October 2011, there are 46 developing countries that have had their education plan endorsed and are now partners in the Global Partnership for Education. Many of these countries have made tremendous strides in girls’ education. The Global Partnership model, which puts countries in the
“driver’s seat” in charting reform and progress in the education sector, has had considerable impact on improving girls’ education. National education plans, which drive reform in a structured and comprehensive way, are able to prioritize girls’ education. Joint sector reviews (JSRs) enable Local Education Groups (LEGs) to monitor and evaluate progress made each year. Moreover, financing provided through the Global Partnership has contributed additional resources for implementing interventions important to girls’ education.

Over the past few years, a range of different interventions were introduced to improve girls’ education in Global Partnership developing country partners, as described in the Girls’ Education Report (2011). The most common intervention was to mobilize communities to send their girls to school. Developing country partners have used and are continuing to use a variety of media—television, radio, newspapers—as well as local leaders to reach parents and community members about the importance and benefits of education. The Global Partnership for Education and its partners provided targeted financial support to cover fees and textbooks, the creation of school health and feeding programs, and gender-sensitive curriculum reform and teacher development. Programs that the Global Partnership supported sensitized government officials to gender issues and the importance of monitoring girls’ participation in school, created learning environments which were healthy, safe, and where gender-based violence was not tolerated and built separate latrines for boys and girls, along with sanitary facilities to assist girls during menstruation. In addition, boarding schools were opened for girls from remote communities. Developing country partner governments introduced laws and policies that support girls’ education in addition to strengthening the legal and structural framework for inclusive education.

The Gross Enrolment Ratio of girls in Global Partnership developing country partners grew from an average 82% to 100% between 2002 and 2008. On average, 68% of girls now finish primary school. Even greater progress is evident in the Grade 1 Gross Intake Rate, where all but a handful of countries will achieve Gender Parity by 2015. 18 of the Global Partnership’s developing country partners had achieved gender parity in enrolments by 2008. Seven countries—Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritania, Mozambique, and Niger—show a remarkable average 46 percent increase in girls’ enrolment—significantly higher than the period just before becoming partners in the Global Partnership. Three countries—Benin, Cameroon, and Timor Leste—have also made progress in increasing the number of girls in classrooms since they joined the Global Partnership. Notwithstanding the significant strides made in some of the Global Partnership developing country partners in improving
girls’ enrolment, there is a group of countries within the partnership where these efforts have not resulted in the expected increase, such as Liberia, Mali, Djibouti, Senegal and Yemen. Moreover, in many of the countries that have had significant increases in girls’ enrolment, retention and transition from grade to grade continues to be a challenge.

b. New Initiatives for the Global Partnership for Education

The Global Partnership for Education has had a strong focus on girls from the time that it was established. The proposed actions outlined below will strengthen the Global Partnership’s support for girls’ education. The new strategic direction will move to couple advocacy with evidence-based operational support for girls’ education. Beginning with an emphasis on gender in all Global Partnership procedures and outcomes monitoring, the new strategic direction will include providing targeted support for bringing out-of-school girls into school, keeping them there and helping them learn.

i. Education Plan Preparation, Assessment and Endorsement

The Global Partnership for Education will provide strong incentives, as well as both technical and financial support to developing country partners to encourage the inclusion of gender-responsive strategies in their education plans. Global Partnership procedures and processes will be strengthened to promote girls’ education. The Global Partnership Secretariat will expand the girl-focused areas in the guidelines for education plan development and appraisal to include additional policies and interventions to help countries address girls’ education in an effective and targeted manner. Education plan development grants from the Global Partnership will also support the exploration and inclusion of relevant and appropriate policies and interventions to expand and improve the quality of secondary education, including transition to lower secondary and attainment of upper secondary education. Developing country partner governments will be encouraged to appoint dedicated units and staff to monitor education plans and budgets to ensure potential impact.

ii. Resource Allocations and Transfers

The Global Partnership will support girls’ education in four ways. First, the Needs and Performance Framework (NPF), which is used to determine indicative allocations for education plan implementation grants, will include a dimension related to the level of girls’ participation in education in a country, including the size of the out-of-school girls’ population. Second, applications requesting financial
support from the Global Partnership for Education Fund for education plan implementation will not be accepted if they do not include robust interventions for improving girls’ education. In countries where boys’ education presents particular challenges, proposals for also addressing boys’ educational challenges will be expected. Third, top-ups may be provided to countries that have performed significantly well on improving girls’ education based on indicators agreed with developing country partner governments. Possible indicators will depend on the status and context of the country and guidance will be provided in the Results Framework. For example, countries that have reached universal primary enrolment could be eligible for top-ups based on sustained levels of high gender parity and transition levels to lower secondary, whereas, for post-conflict fragile countries, indicators could include girls’ retention and achievement in primary school and the number of female teachers in the workforce. Fourth, in their applications requesting financial support from the Global Partnership for Education Fund, developing country partners will be able to include programs that enable the participation of girls from rural and disenfranchised communities in upper secondary education. This is a major shift from the current focus on basic education, which only includes financial support for transition into lower secondary education.

iii. **In-Country Instruments and Experiences**

The Secretariat will support developing country partners to strengthen annual Joint Sector Reviews that assess the implementation status of education plans. The Secretariat will monitor the extent to which countries are undertaking systematic and targeted evaluations of progress in implementation of interventions to improve girls’ participation, retention and learning outlined in education plans. If the situation is particularly challenging, the Secretariat will encourage Local Education Groups to obtain additional technical input with a concentrated focus on girls’ performance in primary, transition to lower secondary and participation of girls from rural and disenfranchised communities in upper secondary school.

It is recognized that the specific mandate of several international institutions, bilateral organizations, civil service organizations and coalitions (e.g., UNESCO, UNGEI and the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development) is to improve girls’ schooling. The Secretariat and partners will support on the one hand, the cross sharing of expertise and insights garnered, and on the other hand, communicate these experiences in the Secretariat’s interaction with developing country partners.

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1The United Nations’ Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) is expected to target eight countries. The Global Partnership will work closely with UNGEI on strategies to improve girls’ education in this group of countries.
Depending on country specific constraints, government departments responsible for girls’ education will be encouraged to work directly with organizations that have the appropriate and relevant expertise. For example, if a country is struggling with gender-based violence in schools, the Secretariat can facilitate connections made with organizations known for successes in this area.

iv. **Results Framework**

The Global Partnership for Education Results Framework will include the outcomes and outputs indicators related to girls’ education. Developing country partners will collect sex-disaggregated data on key educational outcomes related to girls including enrolment, transition, repetition, completion and learning. Throughput indicators specific to girls could include the ratio of toilets to girls enrolled, the ratio of textbooks to the number of girls in a classroom, and the number of female teachers. In addition, developing country partners will monitor process indicators that can be collected such as teacher absenteeism, in-class evaluation of girls’ performance, textbook use and time-on-task. Global Partnership grants to support education plan implementation will be used to improve the production, quality, and reliability of data on girls generated at the country level. The Secretariat will encourage developing country partners to set up national assessment systems to monitor learning for both boys and girls at regular intervals. Furthermore, developing country partners will be encouraged to capture information on the complexities surrounding school attendance for girls from at-risk and marginalized communities.

v. **Global and Regional Activities Program**

Though girls’ education is not a specific thematic area in the Global and Regional Activities (GRA) program, it is a cross-cutting theme across all GRA activities. The GRA will provide funding and opportunities for partners (donor agencies, civil society organizations, etc.) to engage in knowledge-sharing about how to improve access, completion, and transition of girls, as well as improve their learning outcomes, with a special interest in fragile states. The GRA program will assist in knowledge compilation, workshops, and the development of methodologies for measurement and practical management of girls' inclusion (e.g., improved monitoring of attendance, or improved involvement of girls in the classroom).
5. **Linkages to Other Global Partnership Policy Priorities**

Improving girls’ education is linked to the other Global Partnership policy priorities of: (i) fragile and post-conflict countries; and (ii) improving learning. The gender focus in these areas will also form a part of the work to improve access and quality in girls’ education.

a. **Improving Girls’ Education in Fragile and Post-Conflict Countries**

Extended conflict is particularly detrimental to the education of girls. Enrolment and completion rates for girls are significantly lower than for boys in fragile and post-conflict countries. Within the Global Partnership’s strategic direction for increased efforts in fragile and post-conflict countries, girls’ education will be a critical concern which will require different interventions, targets and ways of working. Additional attention will be given to girls in this policy priority area developed for fragile and post-conflict countries. In the scenario where alternative arrangements instead of government service delivery is organized, girls’ education will be highlighted (please refer to the Strategic Directions paper on Fragile States in Annex 2). Similarly, demonstrating progress in girls’ education will be an important criterion for additional financing and the results-focused engagement in these countries.

b. **Improving Levels of Learning for Girls**

Improving the quality of education to increase girls’ knowledge and skills in order to join the workforce in the 21st century will be a critical objective for the Global Partnership in the coming decade. A variety of interventions such as sufficient textbooks, time on task, and systematic testing are critical to improving levels of learning for girls.

The impact on girls’ performance of the new methods of teaching and learning, especially for the learning in the early grades, explored by various partners, will be closely monitored by the Secretariat. A variety of international assessments collect data on student learning. However, possibilities for comparing outcomes and monitoring at the country level are weak. Establishing systems for the regular assessments of learning will be an important task for developing country partners. On the one hand, developing country partners will be encouraged to include objective assessments of girls’ performance by civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations in education plans and on the other hand, Local Education Groups will be urged to monitor whether these assessments take place.
In addition, the Global Partnership will focus on helping girls from ethnically or socially marginalized groups, with mental or physical disabilities, with HIV and AIDS, or who are orphaned, get into schools. Coordination and partnerships with UNICEF, UNGEI, UNESCO, the International Center for the Research on Women, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, and others to support countries and to monitor progress in out-of-school girls forms a part of the work. In addition, the Secretariat will facilitate the recognition of countries that have made significant progress in reducing the number of girls out of school.
ANNEX 2: STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR EDUCATION IN FRAGILE STATES

1. Executive Summary

“One key message is that business-as-usual approaches undermine any prospect of achieving either the Education for All goals or the wider Millennium Development Goals.”

- Education for All Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2011

This paper sets out the strategic direction of the Global Partnership for Education in fragile states. One third of countries eligible for financial support from the Global Partnership are fragile states. They face weak institutional capacity, poor governance, political instability and, in many cases, ongoing violence or the legacy of past conflict. Over 40% of the 67 million children out of school worldwide live in fragile states. If the partners in the Global Partnership cannot find more effective ways to help children in fragile states go to school and learn, it will fail in its objective to support achievement of Education for All.

The Global Partnership for Education can support fragile states in four ways:

- Increasing its technical engagement to support the development of sound education plans and improve coordination in the education sector;
- Enlisting bilateral and multilateral agencies (working with local partners, including non-governmental organizations) to implement Global Partnership-supported programs where the government-led Global Partnership model is judged unlikely to work;
- Increased and more predictable financing; and
- Rewarding good performance based on progress against mutually-agreed, context-specific results.

There is a real opportunity to make a difference for children in fragile states if the Global Partnership can get this approach right.

2. Justification for the Global Partnership’s Focus on Fragile States

A strong focus on education is important in fragile states for many reasons. Education can promote peace, stability and good governance. The re-establishment of education systems can provide a visible sign of a return to normalcy, and establish precedents for other sectors. Fragile states need the short-
term benefits that investments in the sector can bring, as well as the longer-term health, wealth and governance benefits. Further, with some of the worst education indicators in the world, fragile states will need significantly improved efforts in the coming years to make meaningful progress towards providing Education for All. Recognizing this, a number of donors have increased their bilateral support to education in fragile states in recent years. An increased focus on fragile states through the Global Partnership will complement this thrust by enabling “…bilateral donors to pool resources and risk, and to avoid having to create their own delivery systems.” (UNESCO, 2010)

3. The Challenge

The scale and intensity of development challenges in fragile states is formidable. No fragile or conflict-affected country has yet achieved a single Millennium Development Goal (MDG). These countries account for the majority of the MDG deficit and are generally 40 to 60 percent behind on progress of other low and middle-income countries in MDG achievement. They account for close to a fifth of the population of low-income countries but more than a third of their poor (background note to the 2010 MDG Review Summit). Violent conflict has directly injured, maimed and permanently disabled at least six million children and between 8,000 and 10,000 are killed or maimed by landmines every year. Children in fragile, conflict-affected states are twice as likely to be undernourished and twice as likely to die before reaching the age of five as children in another developing country (World Development Report 2011). In Sub-Saharan Africa, the average infant mortality rate for developing countries is 83 infants per 1000 live births. In the 26 existing and potential Global Partnership developing country partners that are fragile states, the average is 90. In Sierra Leone, the infant mortality rate is 126 deaths per 1000 live births. The average under-5 child mortality rate for Sub-Saharan Africa is 133 per 1000 children. For existing and potential Global Partnership developing country partners that are fragile states, the average is 140. In the Central African Republic, the child mortality rate is 172. In Chad, the average is 209.

There are no short-term solutions to fragility: many of the countries considered fragile in 1979 are still fragile in 2009, and the gap with other developing countries has been widening since the 1970s. There are also growing concerns that new situations of fragility may emerge due to the current economic downturn, and that countries emerging from conflict and fragility may relapse. Net private capital flows
to fragile states have dropped and the slowdown in economic growth could trap almost 100 million additional people in poverty (OECD-DAC, 2009).

Educating children in these countries – and particularly ensuring education for girls – could make a real difference to the chances children will have of surviving. But many fragile states have a long way to go before they can reap the broader development benefits of education: the World Development Report (2011) states that children in fragile, conflict-affected countries are nearly three times as likely to be out of primary school as children in other low-income countries. Enrolment rates in secondary school are nearly one-third lower in conflict-affected countries. The legacy of conflict – massive classroom, teacher and textbook shortages, and the need to bring child soldiers, refugees/returnees, and demobilized or alienated youth into the education system – present uniquely difficult challenges. In Liberia, for example, after more than 10 years of civil war, 80% of primary teachers were untrained or had received only a brief orientation course when the education plan was developed.

Compounding these practical challenges, fragile states often lack the basic data needed for education planning. The table below shows how little we know about existing and potential developing country partners that are fragile states. But one startling fact emerges from the data that is available in Sub-Saharan Africa: girls’ enrolment and completion rates are significantly lower than those for boys and indeed are lower than for the continent as a whole. Given the many development benefits associated with girls’ education, this is a crisis.
Table 1: Gross Enrolment Ratios, Completion Rates and Out-of-school Population in Existing and Potential Global Partnership Developing Country Partners that are Fragile States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developing Country Partners</th>
<th>Gross Enrolment Ratios</th>
<th>Completion Rate</th>
<th>Out-of-School Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sao Tome &amp; Principe</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timor Leste</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>72</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yemen, Rep</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>72</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Developing Country Partners</th>
<th>Gross Enrolment Ratios</th>
<th>Completion Rate</th>
<th>Out-of-School Rate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo DRC</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo, Rep</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cote D’Ivoire</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yet while the needs are greatest in conflict-affected and fragile states, and transition out of fragility slow, evidence suggests that the success rate of development interventions in these environments tends to be lower. A review of 4,370 World Bank projects over the period 1980-2004 showed that the probability of project outcomes being rated satisfactory is strongly associated with a country’s Country
Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) score (Centre for Global Development, 2010). Since fragile states by their very nature have low CPIA scores (see World Bank definition of fragile states below),¹ there is a very real risk for the Global Partnership that investing in these environments will yield lower development outcomes than similar investments in non-fragile environments. For the Global Partnership this implies investing more effort to foster results while being prepared to accept a lower rate of success than expected but at the same time working closely with Supervising Entities and Implementers agencies to put in place robust measures to mitigate fiduciary risks. The dividends to getting education right in fragile states will be enormous. Education in these countries will:

- **Foster peace and state-building:** “No country can hope to establish lasting foundations for peace unless it finds ways of building mutual trust between its citizens – and the place to start is in the classroom.” (GMR, 2011). At the same time, education supports democracy through its impact on economic growth (USAID Education strategy 2011/2015).
- **Improve children’s safety and diminish the likelihood of them being recruited into armed groups.** For every additional year of formal education a male receives, the risk of them becoming involved in violence is reduced by 20% (Save the Children, 2009).
- **Diminish factors that perpetuate violence.** Between 1970 and 1999, 80 percent of civil conflicts occurred in countries where 60 percent of the population or more were under the age of thirty (Population Action International, 2007). Providing youth with appropriate education and skills-training can be an important factor in maintaining or restoring peace.
- **Offer new opportunities to re-build, re-new and re-invent ineffectual systems** (International Institute for Education Planning, 2009).
- **Drive economic growth:** Each year of schooling translates into a 10% increase in the potential income of an individual while each year of additional schooling leads to a 1% increase in annual income.

¹ The definition of “fragile state” is that used by the World Bank, i.e., those countries and territories that have had (i) a score of 3.2 or below (or no score) on the average CPIA; or (ii) the presence of a UN and/or regional peace-keeping or peace-building mission during the past three years. There are 32 countries that are considered fragile by the World Bank in 2011. They include countries with deteriorating governance, those in prolonged political crisis, post-conflict transition countries, and those in gradual but still fragile reform processes. All 32 countries are, or have been, affected by conflict. 27 of these countries are categorized as eligible for funding by the International Development Association (IDA) and are therefore eligible to access funding from the Global Partnership for Education Fund (an exception is made for fragile states in IDA Category iii). The Global Partnership recognizes that development agencies define fragility differently and that there may be countries in situations of fragility which will not be included on the World Bank list of fragile states. In such situations, the Global Partnership fragile states approach will be applied as requested by the Local Education Group.
Gross Domestic Product. In Sub-Saharan Africa investing in the education of girls, in particular, could boost agricultural output by 25%.

- **Enable progress on other international development targets:** “When provided in a safe and protective environment, attending school can provide an important sense of normalcy crucial to a child’s development. Schools can also be a center for life-saving information and services, such as mine-awareness and HIV prevention” (Human Rights Watch, July 2011). More generally, educating girls reduces child mortality rates by 7-9%. A child born to a mother who can read is 50% less likely to die before age 5. In many countries, each additional year of formal education for the mother translates into her children remaining in school for an additional three to six months.

4. **How the Global Partnership Can Make a Difference: Getting Results in Fragile States**

a. **Actions Taken to Date by the Global Partnership and Outcomes in Fragile States**

The Global Partnership for Education was slow to recognize the special challenges fragile states face in providing good quality education and in developing a comprehensive education sector plan. The Global Partnership has since begun to lay the groundwork for an increased and more effective engagement with fragile states to enable them to join the Global Partnership and access funds from the Global Partnership and, since 2003, the Global Partnership has disbursed US$ 431.3 million to 11 fragile states. The Global Partnership’s developing country partners have built 4,840 classrooms, trained 36,545 teachers, and bought 9 million textbooks in these countries with these funds.

In addition, the Global Partnership for Education has:

- established a single fund which will provide financing to all eligible countries, including fragile states;
- adopted flexible solutions to allow UNICEF and other development partners to implement education activities where the *de facto* national government has become unable to do so (Guinea and Madagascar);
- allowed for the more flexible use of Global Partnership financing to enable fragile states to respond to emergency priorities (Haiti);
• adapted country level processes to allow fragile states to prepare an interim education plan rather than a comprehensive education sector plan for endorsement by the Local Education Group; and
• prepared tools and guidance to support sector planning in fragile states.

b. New Initiatives for the Global Partnership for Education

The Global Partnership for Education can play a significant role in supporting education in fragile states in the following four ways:

i. Education Plan Preparation, Assessment and Endorsement

Increasing technical engagement to support the development of sound education plans and improve coordination in the education sector

In many fragile states, efforts to support education are fragmented and short-term. Post-conflict countries in particular experience difficulties in bridging the divide between humanitarian aid and long-term development assistance and inadequate attention is paid to getting the balance right between short-term service delivery and long-term system strengthening. Overlaying this, dysfunctional or weak governments cannot provide the overall leadership of the sector that would enable the effective harmonization and alignment of aid. The Global Partnership can be catalytic in these contexts. The Mid-term Evaluation in 2009 indicated that the catalytic effect of the Global Partnership at a country level is greatest in countries, like fragile states, where education sector planning and coordination is least developed. The Global Partnership should support country-level stakeholders to identify what innovations have been successful during emergency response and recovery and support the institutionalization of successful innovations.

In addition to aid coordination, fragile states face compound challenges in developing and implementing sound education plans. Firstly, the education system often lacks adequate numbers of people with the knowledge and skills to develop effective education plans. Secondly, the donor base in-country is often small, making it more difficult for ministries of education to access external technical support. And thirdly, as outlined above, the basic data needed for planning is not available. In these contexts, the Global Partnership can be a vital source of knowledge and technical support. The new Global
Partnership model where countries can access support to develop an interim education plan – one that covers the most critical activities necessary in the short- to medium-term – combined with technical support to help build capacities and vision for the longer term, can make a real difference.

The Secretariat will work more intensively with fragile states. This will involve more country visits by Secretariat members, a very close monitoring of progress, and ongoing dialogue with Local Education Groups. Through this more intensive engagement, the Secretariat will aim to:

- Ensure the development of a sound education plan and ensure that the appraisal process is supportive but robust in assessing whether the plan targets the right approaches and, where interim, finds the right balance between short- and long-term service-delivery.
- Work closely with the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) to promote their Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies and will encourage countries where fragility is linked to recurring natural disasters to consider disaster risk reduction in schools and will facilitate links to agencies and expertise which can support these efforts.
- Work with Local Education Groups to support the development or strengthening of multi-donor trust funds or pooled funds where possible.
- Promote conflict and context analyses to ensure that proposed education interventions address drivers of conflict and fragility and “do no harm”. Global Partnership funds will be provided to Local Education Groups to support them to undertake a conflict analysis, if needed.
- Support the strengthening of Local Education Groups to foster improved coordination of activities in the education sector and through this strengthen intervention strategies, optimize use of resources, and increase efficiency.
- Promote dialogue with Education Clusters, where appropriate, to ensure that medium- to long-term planning for the education sector builds on experiences and successes in responding to emergencies and humanitarian crises.
- Identify windows of opportunity to strengthen the engagement of civil society organizations in Local Education Group processes to foster improved accountability and responsiveness.
- Monitor the implementation of education plans closely and identify when progress is not being made.
New staff with significant skills and experience of working in fragile states will be recruited to the Secretariat for this purpose.

ii. Resource Allocation and Transfers

Increased and more predictable Global Partnership financing

The GMR (2011) estimates that the average per-pupil financing gap in conflict-affected countries is around US$69, compared with US$55 for all low-income countries. Yet low-income conflict-affected countries receive US$16 per pupil in aid to basic education compared with the US$22 average. This situation is compounded by the erratic, and often unpredictable nature of Official Development Assistance to fragile states, which makes planning for long-term system strengthening difficult. In 2007, less than half the aid scheduled for disbursement was delivered in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal and Sierra Leone. In Chad and Liberia, none of the scheduled aid was disbursed that year (UNESCO, 2010). At the same time, bilateral donors have already withdrawn, or have announced their intent to withdraw from providing bilateral financing for education in 13 existing or potential Global Partnership developing country partners that are fragile states. This will compound the disadvantages these countries are already facing. The Global Partnership can help equalize distribution of aid for education by delivering additional financing through the Global Partnership for Education Fund and galvanizing increased support for a medium- to long-term education plan from development partners at a country level. The Needs and Performance Framework (NPF) has already been adjusted to channel a greater share of Global Partnership financing to fragile states.

Increased financing will be important but not sufficient. Many fragile states will need decades to reach international development targets and for most, a functioning education system is many years away. For this reason, the Global Partnership will focus on providing the right level of resources over a longer period of time: fragile states need to know they can count on Global Partnership funds for more than three years if they are investing in long-term programs to strengthen their education systems. It is proposed that the Global Partnership structure Interim Education Plans so that they set out an indicative “guarantee” i.e., an expression of intent to provide follow-up financing subject to the achievement of certain sector results. Such a statement of longer-term intent, while not legally binding, would nonetheless establish a “virtuous circle” of incentives and can help generate confidence in the broader donor community to scale up their own investments.
iii. **In-Country Instruments and Experiences**

Enlisting bilateral and multilateral agencies to implement grants from the Global Partnership for Education Fund where the government-led Global Partnership model is judged unlikely to work

For many fragile states, ministries of education may lack the capacity to deliver education services. In such cases, the Global Partnership will continue to develop the new system to allow non-government stakeholders to receive funds and implement programs, while helping implementing agencies to work as closely as possible with government authorities and other local partners. This approach has already been used with success in Guinea and Madagascar to maintain essential education services.

There is a spectrum of ways in which agencies implementing Global Partnership financing might operate. Scenarios 1 and 2 below provide two examples.

- **Scenario 1:** In countries where the government is not able to deliver effective education services, a bilateral or multilateral agency, nominated by the Local Education Group, can act as Implementer for the Global Partnership grant. The Secretariat will emphasize the importance of identifying the development agency best placed to deliver results on the ground effectively, and the choice of Implementer will be subject to approval by the Board of Directors. The Implementer will work closely with, and report on progress to, the Local Education Group. It will be especially important in these situations for the Local Education Group to ensure it works closely with Education Clusters. The Implementer will be permitted to contract, *inter alia*, non-state actors and/or UN agencies to support implementation of activities approved by the Board of Directors. In such circumstances, the Implementer will ensure rigorous fiduciary oversight. The Secretariat will also, where possible, encourage the use of pooled funds or multi-donor trust funds and, through these, support to recurrent costs including teachers’ salaries.

- **Scenario 2:** In countries where the government has some capacity and is committed to delivering an education plan, a bilateral or multilateral agency may act as Implementer for a portion of the education plan implementation grant, with another agency acting as Supervising Entity channeling remaining funds through a grant to be managed by the developing country partner government.
In all cases, the program should have a strong focus on developing government/national capacity to take on all Global Partnership financing in the future and to build progress towards a comprehensive national education sector plan. It is also expected that any implementing agency will engage with government or authorities at different levels of the education system to look for opportunities to channel funding directly to regions, districts, or schools.

iv. **Results Framework**

A strong focus on rewarding good performance based on progress against mutually-agreed, context-specific results

The Global Partnership has shifted from an input-oriented approach to a results framework as the main mechanism for tracking progress and determining success of the in-country programs it supports. At a country-level, the Global Partnership will support the development of results-based financing mechanisms. The results expected will be defined in terms of the Global Partnership’s three current priorities: quality and learning outcomes, girls’ education, and fragile states. These mechanisms will ensure that strong incentives are given to developing country partners and to stakeholders involved in service delivery at the school level.

The Global Partnership for Education Results Framework captures the ultimate outcomes expected, although the short- to medium-term results possible in fragile states may relate more to establishing or strengthening systems, and achieving interim inputs or outputs.

Getting the incentives for results right in fragile states will mean understanding the very specific nature of the constraints they face and working with the Local Education Group to identify critical results for the short to medium term. Developing country partners may also be eligible for additional disbursements of funding – top-ups contingent upon the successful achievement of results at the end of an agreed period.
v. **Global and Regional Activities Program**

**Identifying and disseminating good practice in service delivery in fragile states**

The Global and Regional Activities (GRA) program will focus on the need for new and improved knowledge and good practice on education in fragile states. GRA service providers (the agencies/organizations financed by the Global Partnership for specific knowledge products or on-the-ground activities) are expected to highlight fragile states in their proposed program of activities or justify their exclusion.

5. **Linkages with other Policy Priorities**

The Global Partnership’s other two policy priorities – girls’ education and learning outcomes – have important significance in fragile states. As outlined above, fragile states face formidable challenges in getting all children into school and ensuring effective teaching and learning. Poor quality education can directly fuel violent conflict; conversely, good quality education helps create the social conditions that reduce the likelihood of conflict erupting. Supporting fragile states to improve education will be a core element of the Global Partnership’s work on learning outcomes.

Similarly, girls are often particularly disadvantaged in fragile and conflict-affected states. Reports by the UN Secretary-General continue to provide evidence that rape and other sexual violence are widely used as a war tactic in many countries. The fear and insecurity this generates deters girls from going to school or causes irregular attendance. The Global Partnership should ensure a strong focus on girls’ safety in fragile states with a view to raising awareness and understanding around good practice.
ANNEX 3: STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR QUALITY AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Executive Summary

Rapid progress on educational quality in developing countries is starting. Collective action by all partners in the Global Partnership for Education, including developing countries, donors, multilateral agencies, civil society and the private sector and private foundations on five strategies described in this paper, with one achievable indicator of quality, as well as an agreed entry-point, will speed up this progress and allow the Global Partnership to halve the number of children who cannot read in 20 countries.

The Global Partnership for Education, along with other partnerships and agencies and developing country partners themselves have, to date, focused attention mostly on the Education for All (“EFA”) Goals of primary access and completion. Action and results on EFA Goal 6, pertaining to quality in general and learning outcomes specifically, has lagged, despite the fact that quality education is just as much a human right as access. The Global Partnership for Education proposes that with sufficient joint action amongst its partners and with a sequential approach tailored to country context, challenges in improving the quality of education can be overcome. The Global Partnership for Education can show a tangible impact in quality improvement in just a few years by coordinating partners’ efforts around a common agenda to improve learning, while providing targeted financial and technical support to achieve measurable results in learning outcomes and ensuring dedicated implementation by developing country partners. Global Partnership processes (and associated tools) such as education plan development (appraisal guidelines), financial allocation criteria (Needs and Performance Framework and results-based instruments), in-country monitoring (Results Framework and joint sector reviews) and knowledge sharing (Global and Regional Activities program) provide powerful entry points to structure collaborative action by all partners to achieve clear targets in learning and quality.

Partners in the Global Partnership can play important roles (convening, providing technical assistance, supporting implementation, articulating mutual commitments and coordinating partner action) to promote increased attention to and progress in learning outcomes, based on their history and comparative advantage. The approach involves using the Global Partnership as a catalyzing agent to generate action to improve the development of initial skills in primary schools, via five key strategies: (1) improved teaching methods; (2) better and more abundant learning materials; (3) better time
management; (4) use of mother tongue instruction (where appropriate); and (5) more appropriate assessment. Partners would provide stimulation, models and best practices and coordination mechanisms, but the bulk of any implementation would proceed through partners who express interest. The Global Partnership would therefore provide a platform for collective action to improve progress towards commonly agreed targets in learning and quality, with each partner’s roles and responsibilities agreed through policy dialogue at the national level, through Local Education Groups (LEGs), and at the global level through the Board of Directors.

2. **Justification for the Global Partnership’s Focus on Quality and Learning Outcomes**

The Charter of the Global Partnership for Education states that the partnership is focused on all of the Education for All Goals. In the past, vastly more progress has been made on some of the goals than on others. EFA Goal 6 is “Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and **measurable learning outcomes** (our emphasis) are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.” Children in low-income countries have 60% to 70% of the access to school that children in richer countries have (e.g., in terms of average years spent in school), but they acquire knowledge at a rate of only about 20% to 25% of the rate achieved by children in richer countries. At the same time, research increasingly notes that it is how much youth know and can do, and not just how long they have been in school, that impacts socio-economic development. Furthermore, as a mandate issue, while EFA Goal 6 does refer to quality in general, it focuses in on learning outcomes, and it is not accidental that it refers to literacy, mathematics, and life skills in that order.

3. **The Challenge**

The challenges to improving education quality and achieving measurable learning outcomes are enormous, but they can be addressed. One of the difficulties is that the problem *appears* so enormous and so complex that many actors are daunted; leading to difficulty in coming to agreement on what quality is and the impression that there is insufficient proof of “what works” to begin. There is also a tendency for actors to try to address all aspects at once, as prioritization is difficult; this leads to paralysis in action. While individual developing countries, non-governmental and civil society organizations (NGOs and CSOs) and private foundations (and to some extent, the private sector) have stepped ahead and are successfully addressing the quality challenge, the international community as a whole has not produced clear indicators, agreed-upon processes, and results on improved quality.
The median child in the Global Partnership’s developing country partners achieves at the 5th percentile of the OECD country distribution and would be considered at serious risk, or perhaps even a special-needs child. Recent studies by NGOs and agencies show that somewhere between 25% and 75% (depending on the country or grade in question) of children in poor countries cannot read a single word even after several years in school. Time spent on effective teaching in some low-income countries can be as little as 20% of the time available over the school year.

At the same time, as opposed to access, it is hard to see lack of achievement unless measurements are taken. When there are no schools, communities can see this, and they and community-based organizations can effectively lobby for access; lack of learning is not as obvious. It will therefore be critical that the lacuna in available data on quality indicators is addressed by improving approaches to measure school-level and national outcomes in quality objectives.

Because achieving good education quality is the outcome of multiple factors, high-level actors often try to improve on multiple aspects of quality at the same time: all subjects, all grades, quality inputs, processes and learning outcomes, as well as the equality of input provision, the level of participation in school-based decision-making, and other similar factors. Working simultaneously and instantaneously to improve quality at all levels of the education system risks under-delivering on quality objectives due to the complexity linked to both implementation and measurement of quality interventions. A more promising approach for the Global Partnership is to start by focusing on the basic issues, then to apply the lessons learned from those to improve progress towards broader quality objectives.

This will also require improving the measurement of quality, and demonstrating ways in which improvements in measurement, if strongly tied to systems of teacher support, can lead directly to improvements in teaching and learning.

4. How the Global Partnership Can Make a Difference: Getting Results on Quality and Learning Outcomes

a. Actions Taken to Date by the Global Partnership

A specific policy focus on quality and learning outcomes is a new area for the Global Partnership. Work thus far undertaken by the Secretariat has been facilitative in nature. Under the new policy, the
Secretariat’s work in quality and learning outcomes will be strengthened and made more coherent, while still relying on partners to undertake implementation activities.

An example has been collaborative work with selected public and private donors and developing country partners to define a logical starting point, so as to make the problem more manageable, while at the same time working on the broader issues. The approach has been to first focus on learning outcomes in line with the precise wording of EFA Goal 6. Within learning outcomes, the initial focus is on literacy and, within literacy, reading, since it is a precursor to the other two learning outcomes in numeracy and life skills. The approach includes an initial focus on the earlier grades, since these are the grades where the problems start.

The focus on learning outcomes in the Global Partnership for Education Indicative Framework has served as inspiration to other agencies wishing to focus on learning outcomes, such as DfID, USAID in its most recent education strategy, or the Brookings Institution’s call for a Global Compact on Learning drawing on the private sector. The Secretariat is engaged in a process to refine these indicators according to guidance from an international panel of reading specialists and extensive piloting carried out by bilateral agencies, NGOs, CSOs, foundations and developing countries. The final indicators will be included in the Results Framework that is replacing the Indicative Framework. They will refer to: a) The proportion of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text; and b) the proportion of students who, by the end of the primary or basic education cycle, are able to read and demonstrate understanding, as defined by the national curriculum or agreed-upon by national experts.

The Secretariat has also been working to support agencies and countries that are taking action to improve education quality. This has been done through global and regional events co-sponsored by the Global Partnership, and via direct collaboration with countries’ education plans (e.g., The Gambia, Liberia), and with partners such as USAID, DfID and UNESCO. It is recognized that this must be a country-driven process and demand rather than supply-driven. On the other hand, other countries have expressed interest and donor response has been difficult to mobilize.

b. New Initiatives for the Global Partnership for Education

This section describes Global Partnership mechanisms which can be used to support the quality and learning outcomes strategic directions. In the past, there has been no clear mandate for the Secretariat
to work in a strong and coherent fashion on quality issues. With an emerging mandate to work on quality issues, the Secretariat will be a catalyst, convener, working through and with LEGs and with countries, through education plans that are endorsed at a local level. The Secretariat has played a role in initial efforts to define proxy indicators of quality, and will continue to provide a catalytic role in this area while working through its partners to implement activities. The Secretariat would facilitate partner collaboration, for example, in developing written assessment protocols and for developing quality frameworks.

i. **Education Plan Preparation, Assessment and Endorsement**

Quality issues, including initial literacy issues, will be included in education plan appraisal guidelines. The Secretariat will facilitate the provision to developing country partners of expertise in this area, if needed, in preparing education plans. Appraisal guidelines will help ensure that issues pertaining to production and measurement of learning outcomes, particularly initial literacy and mathematics, are taken into consideration.

ii. **Resource Allocation and Transfers**

The needs and performance framework (NPF) currently includes incentives to improve completion. The completion rate captures some facets of quality, but has not been the subject of much policy dialogue and hence is only a relatively weak incentive. One of the tools that can incentivize partners to lead a policy dialogue on quality is to provide for top-ups based on specific performance or policy targets, for instance related to setting up learning improvement systems, or use of quality assurance systems. The Secretariat is starting to develop such a program.

iii. **In-country Instruments and Experiences**

Joint sector reviews undertaken by all actors in the LEG are an opportunity to review and track progress on learning outcomes and for the LEG to highlight their importance. Through education plan implementation efforts and the Results Framework, partners in the LEGs may also coordinate and scale up proven methods to improve learning outcomes. LEGs may employ existing methods that have been proven to yield results (though always adapted to each context), and if attempting more innovative methods, ensure that rigorous evaluation is in place.
As the successes of various experiences demonstrate, much of the knowledge on how to produce results exists and much of it is documented. This can be used to inspire other start-ups aimed at scale and replication, adapted to the realities of each country situation. This can be undertaken by developing country partners with the support of donor or multilateral partners and in the context of their quality-improvement plans. Civil society and the private sector and foundations can assist with funding, technical support, and providing an atmosphere of accountability.

iv. Results Framework

The Results Framework will specify targets that developing country partners could aim for in initial literacy (and later numeracy) outcomes. The Global Partnership will also be measured by these indicators.

v. Global and Regional Activities (GRA) Program

The GRA program will provide funding for developing country partners to develop and apply knowledge to improve certain technical aspects of education plans, in-country instruments and education development activities. The GRA will generate agreements and mutual accountability on results needed and will help produce and disseminate knowledge products. These will be based on proposals from agencies that have been identified as having particular strengths in priority areas, and will go through a quality review process based on objective criteria. Care will be taken not to fund duplicative efforts though there may be a need to encourage efforts to merge and work together.

Details on the GRA program will be provided in documents that are currently subject to a separate consultation. However, areas that may be part of the GRA include:

- Financing the production of broader quality frameworks
- Researching knowledge gaps
- Improving accountability and demand side issues
- Improvement on indicators and measurement approaches
- Knowledge production and dissemination on global and regional scale.

The Global Partnership is at the hub of an emerging community of practice that possesses sufficient knowledge to achieve progress on early literacy, which is a key entry point for other forms of progress. The Secretariat has a catalyzing role to play in modeling improved quality; it will not become an
implementer of research or knowledge-sharing programs. However, there is no single model for improving initial literacy (or numeracy), nor is there any expectation that a single model will emerge, although any model will need to address key constraints and challenges as noted above.

Several countries have already expressed an urgency to be provided with coherent guidance that can jump-start efforts. The Secretariat has a role to help broker this assistance and to encourage other experimentation (with rigorous evaluation). In the reading of the literature and the experiments of other organizations’ results a coherent package of techniques has emerged, which may be summarized as follows:

A. **Improved teaching methods.** Teachers are the key to quality improvements, and all quality improvements must start with teachers. There are practical, classroom-oriented techniques that focus on specific skills in a key subject such as initial literacy. They require that teachers be provided with close guidance and support. They also require that teachers be actively involved in assessing the gains made from using such techniques and provide feedback on improvements to teaching methods. Improved teaching needs to be backed up with improved school management in general and management of the teaching process specifically, involving the role of the principal and school leadership as pedagogical leaders. Having developed lessons on how to better support teachers in an initial entry-point, these can be spread to more complex problems quickly.

B. **Better and more abundant learning materials.** It is difficult to teach reading when there is nothing to read. Inexpensive, abundant books, wall materials, “pocket charts,” writing materials, are all needed. Some of them have to be very tightly linked to the lessons. Others can be more general and can be used to induce pleasurable reading. At the same time, they have to be efficiently produced at low cost, so as to maximize the pedagogical impact per dollar spent, based on research and measured results. Learning materials production, procurement, and distribution is currently insufficiently based on research on pedagogical efficiency and process management and engineering, as well as an understanding of corruption and collusion prevention.

C. **Better time management.** Research by the World Bank, the Global Partnership, various NGOs such as the Aga Khan Foundation, and others, finds levels of time use that are often appallingly
low—as little as 20% to 30% of potential schooling time is productively used at all, with the result that students in some countries get as little as 200 hours of effective instruction per year, when they should be getting 1000 or so. At the same time there is often little time specifically devoted to the teaching of reading and pre-reading as specific skills, even in the earliest grades. Better structured and marked homework and parental involvement in homework can add to school time. The issue of incentives and supervision of attendance of both students and teachers is also part of the agenda. CSOs and NGOs can play a role in the quality agenda by watching over key accountability issues such as use of time and efficient use of funds, which are key to the quality agenda. They can also contribute by adding funds. All this can be at the local school and district councils, as well as on a national basis by participating in the LEG’s development of the education plan.

D. Use of mother tongue instruction (where appropriate). A large body of research supports the notion that the earliest reading skills should be acquired in learners’ mother tongues, and that this approach will strengthen later acquisition of second language skills. Many countries and agencies have committed to this, on paper. The Secretariat, via collaboration with other key actors interested in mother tongue instruction, can contribute to country-based experiences to improve the use of mother tongue in particular for early literacy instruction. Improvements in the creation of low cost learning materials in a wide variety of languages can be made if one takes advantage of technology and of advances in what is known about the range of vocabulary that is needed to at least get children to start reading. At the same time, it is important to note that in some countries the issue of mother tongue can be somewhat controversial and a country-led model will take precedence. It is also important to recognize that the issue of mother tongue may be the most technically demanding of those listed here, and is one area where caution and evaluation and careful design is essential.

E. More appropriate assessment. Assessment, including regionally-based assessment, has progressed in all developing regions. However, the ability of assessment systems to provide feedback to teachers, or to be used for improving instruction, is still an under-exploited area. Oral assessments have proven to be both useful motivators for policy-makers to take action (e.g., The Gambia, Ethiopia and India) and for teachers to track their learners’ progress. However, the links between oral assessments and later (or concurrent) written assessments are
insufficiently understood. The Global Partnership could bring together key actors in this area, such as PASEC, SACMEQ, IEA, UIS, LLECE,\(^1\) various NGOs and academics, and possibly others, to create convergence of opinion and standards on these issues.

**F. Other.** There are other issues that require work that the Secretariat can catalyze in partnership with others. Some of these include, but are not limited to providing truly accelerated education or remediation to children in post-conflict or even in-conflict situations and in fragile states or in any countries where enrollment is growing faster than traditional management systems can absorb; reaching specific pockets of disadvantage with both access- and quality-enhancing measures (nomadic, disabled, linguistic minorities, the poorest, girls, and especially intersections of those sets of populations); ensuring that results-oriented finance specifically addresses the learning outcomes of the poor, not just their access to schooling.

These will serve as an entry point. But making quality improvements sustainable and deeper, and spreading quality to all subjects and grades, as well as to the overall quality of schooling as a positive experience, requires that contextual and broader factors not be neglected by the Global Partnership: including funding, school health, nutrition, adult literacy, disability, poverty issues, the inherent quality of the school’s processes, and many others. In addition, there are systemic accountability and governance issues that need to be addressed. The Global Partnership has explicit ways to address these issues, covered in more detail in operational papers and papers aimed at inducing knowledge-sharing. These papers are both “collective” in the sense that they arise from the Partnership through the Secretariat, but many donors also have their own papers and strategies, and they increasingly coincide. The points above, however, have been shown to provide entry-points that can lead to optimism and a sense that forward movement is possible even in difficult conditions.

**5. Linkages to the Other Global Partnership Policy Priorities**

The Global Partnership for Education remains committed to getting all children in school, and learning, completing, and continuing, as specified in the Education for All goals. The quality and learning outcomes agenda specifically addresses the learning aspect, but learning has clear links to the other aspects. In survey after survey, the main reason given by parents for why they take children out of

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\(^1\) Programme d’Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs (PASEC), Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ), International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), Laboratorio Latinoamericano de Evaluación de la Calidad de la Educación (LLECE).
school, or for not enrolling them to begin with, is that they were not learning, school was not relevant to their lives and work, or they were failing exams. Cost and insufficient learning combine: children drop out because school is often seen as not offering value-for-money. If quality is not improved, there is a danger that gains in access will stall, or even be reverted in some cases. Historical data confirm that when countries have increased access, they also have increased quality; but this has not been accidental, it has been the result of purposive policy. As countries accelerate their progress on access under pressure from EFA goals and with international agency support, they also have to accelerate progress on quality, to maintain the observed historical link between the two. The international community has an obligation to help maintain this linkage by accelerating work on quality and learning outcomes.

With respect to other policy priorities such as girls’ education and education in fragile states, there are several links. First, states that are fragile or in conflict are often poor as a result of the conflict and need simple ways to deliver quality results. The quality-enhancing methods that are needed in these cases are similar to the methods that are needed in countries where achievement is low for other reasons. Accelerated and remedial programs are key in both fragile states as well as in situations of fast enrollment growth. Second, in places where girls are generally disadvantaged they also suffer from low learning outcomes. For instance, it seems that the greater the linguistic diversity, and the weaker a country’s capacity to deliver reading instruction in mother tongue, the more disadvantaged girls are. There is a coincidence between poor pedagogy in general and pedagogy that disadvantages girls. Methods proposed to be used under impetus from the Global Partnership with the Secretariat as a facilitator of knowledge-sharing among donor and multilateral agencies and developing country partners, aim to boost the learning of all children with a specific focus on girls. Validation of emerging methods will take place through knowledge- and lessons-comparing events and workshops. Similarly, when teachers teach only a minority of the students in a class rather than all students, girls suffer. The teaching methods that are being perfected by various partners correct for these kinds of issues by calling on all children’s involvement systematically, both in response and in ongoing assessment.