Hon. Amadou Sanneh  
Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs  
Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs  
Banjul  
Republic of The Gambia

Hon. Claudiana Cole  
Minister of Basic and Secondary Education  
Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education  
Banjul  
Republic of The Gambia

**Approval of COVID-19 Accelerated Funding to Support Gambia’s Education Sector**

June 8, 2020

Hon. Sanneh, Hon. Cole,

On behalf of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), I am pleased to inform you that with the delegated authority from the GPE Board of Directors, I have approved Gambia’s application for a COVID-19 accelerated funding request in the amount of US$ 3,500,000. I have also approved a 1.75% agency fees for the grant agent, the World Bank in the amount of US$ 61,250.

The grant has a start date of June 19, 2020 and an end date of November 30, 2021. The full decision language of this approval can be found in the annex to this letter.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mr. Plamen Danchev, Country Lead for the Gambia.

We look forward to working with you closely to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of the Gambia’s children.
Sincerely,

Alice P. Albright  
Chief Executive Officer  
Global Partnership for Education

cc:

Members of Local Education Group (LEG)  
Mr. Adama Jimba Jobe, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education  
Mr. Rupert Leighton, Deputy Representative, UNICEF  
Ms. Toshiko Takahashi, Deputy Representative, UNICEF  
Ms. Sandra Lattouf, Representative, UNICEF  
Ms. Ryoko Tomita Wilcox, Senior Economist, World Bank  
Ms. Meskerem Mulatu, World Bank  
Mr. Douglas Sumerfield, Senior Operations Officer, World Bank  
Ms. Natalia Cherevatova, Senior Operations Officer, World Bank  
Mr. Sven Baeten, Acting Country Support Team Manager, GPE Secretariat  
Mr. Plamen Danchev, Country Lead and Senior Education Specialist, GPE Secretariat
Annex – DECISION LANGUAGE

In line with the delegated authority granted by the Board of Directors, the GPE CEO approves the COVID-19 accelerated funding request for The Gambia in the amount of US$ 3,500,000 plus an additional US$ 61,250 in agency fees to World Bank as Grant Agent. The grant has a start date of June 19, 2020 and an end date of November 30, 2021.

The GPE CEO recognizes with appreciation the leadership and commitment of the Government of The Gambia in preparing a response plan and grant proposal that will mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector as well as support the recovery of the education system from the crisis.

The GPE Board approved the COVID-19 funding mechanism on a first come, first served approach for the first US$ 125 million of the original US$ 225 million COVID-19 country funding window. Although the remaining US$ 100 million has been subsequently significantly increased to US$ 350 million by the Board, the demand for the COVID-19 funding mechanism still exceeds the available funds and the maximum allocation for The Gambia is now US$ 3.5 million, lower than the initial allocation and requested amount of US$ 5 million.

Unless otherwise indicated by the decision language request for Report-Back, and keeping within the original budget of each component, the government and grant agent have full authority to prioritize within the approved activities of the original application, after consultation with the local education group.

Recognizing the GPE Board’s intent to proceed with the COVID-19 funding on a timeline which acknowledges the COVID-19 emergency, the Government and Grant Agent are asked to move forward with implementation immediately while addressing the following points and reporting back to the Secretariat by June 29, 2020:

Request for Report-Back

1. The Grant Agent is requested to provide a revised program document (including results framework and budget), to be sent after grant approval, following consultation with the LEG and agreement by the Government on the changes including the prioritization.

2. Activities with clear and immediate impact on the continuation and safeguarding of education for vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 crisis be prioritized over activities that provide lesser immediate value for money for this purpose.

The Secretariat also raises the following points of observation, which are recommendations rather than requirements:
Observations

a) Given the urgency of the crisis, GPE expects grant implementation to commence on schedule and the Grant Agent to submit a cash transfer request within two weeks of approval to facilitate the timely release of funds in support of program implementation.

b) An appropriate reduction is suggested in implementation support costs given the lower overall budget.

Reporting

Please note that during the implementation period, the GPE Secretariat will require the Grant Agent to fill out a quarterly survey which will request core data on program implementation. At the end of the implementation period, the Grant Agent is expected to submit a completion report to the GPE Secretariat. Detailed information on the reporting requirement is available in the Guidelines for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding on GPE website.

Reprogramming

The Government and the Grant Agent may reprogram this grant, in consultation with the Local Education Group and where active the Education cluster, for an amount not to exceed 25% of the allocation without prior Secretariat approval but must disclose such cases to the Secretariat. For an amount of 25% or more, as well as for any extension, advance approval from the Secretariat must be sought. The process for advanced approval will be that of non-minor revisions of ESPIG which can be found here: https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/policy-education-sector-program-implementation-grants