June 15, 2020

H.E. Mr. Ahmed Shide
Minister of Finance and Economic Cooperation
Ministry of Finance
Addis Ababa
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

H.E. Dr. Getahun Mekuria
Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
Addis Ababa
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

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

H.E. Mr. Shide, H.E. Dr. Mekuria,

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 Ethiopia’s application for a COVID-19 accelerated funding request in the amount of US$ 15 million. I have also approved a 1.75% agency fee for the grant agent, World Bank, in the amount of US$ 262,500.

The grant has a start date of June 15, 2020 and an end date of December 31, 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 Dr. Subrata S. Dhar, Country Lead for Ethiopia.

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

Alice P. Albright  
Chief Executive Officer  
Global Partnership for Education

cc:  
Members of Education Technical Working Group  
Mr. Elias Girma Wakjira, Director for Planning & DCP Focal Point, Ministry of Education  
Ms. Vigdis Aaslund Cristofoli, Counsellor, Royal Norwegian Embassy  
Ms. Sonjai Reynolds-Cooper, Director, Education and Youth Programs, USAID  
Ms. Safaa El Tayeb El-Kogali, 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  
Dr. Subrata S. Dhar, 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 Ethiopia in the amount of US$ 15,000,000 plus an additional US$262,500 in agency fees to World Bank as Grant Agent. The grant has a start date of June 15, 2020, and an end date of December 31, 2021.

The GPE CEO recognized with appreciation the leadership and commitment of the Government of Ethiopia in preparing a national 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 Ethiopia is now US$ 15,000,000, lower than the initial allocation and requested amount of US$ 20,000,000.

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 July 7, 2020:

Request for Report-Back

1. The Grant Agent is requested to provide a revised program document (including results framework, budget and implementation plan), following consultation with the LEG and agreement by the Government. This revised program document needs to prioritize activities so as to keep within the new grant allocation and must address the requirements noted below. Upon receipt of the revised program document, the Secretariat will verify compliance with the requirements below, but there will be no additional grant approval issued, nor further reassessment of the program.

   i. 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.
ii. Given the urgency of the crisis, grant implementation to commence within two weeks, if necessary through the use of the retroactive financing provision.

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

**Observations**

(a) 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 in implementation support costs given the lower overall budget.

(c) Measures should be in place to ensure that the GPE supported COVID-19 Response Program continues to be implemented on time to the extent practicable. This includes measures being put in place to mitigate potential delays in budgeting and disbursements from the national treasury, since the project is being prepared when the budget cycle, and the first supplementary budget process for FY 2020/21 has been completed.

(d) The Secretariat notes that school feeding (provision of school meals through take home ration) is included in Ethiopia’s National COVID-19 Response Plan and emphasizes that this is a critical aspect of support to ensure the most vulnerable children will be able to return to school. Since school feeding is not among the activities proposed for GPE funding, the Secretariat encourages further dialogue among partners to ensure school feeding is prioritized, including in the most vulnerable areas, through other sources of funding.

**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](https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/policy-education-sector-program-implementation-grants)