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The importance of secondary, vocational and higher education to development

Greater investment is needed at all levels of education if we are to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). DFID gives priority to supporting primary education for all children – especially girls – in countries that are off-track for reaching the MDGs for education. It will continue to do so.

But investment is also needed in secondary, tertiary and vocational education, lifelong learning and skills, in order to increase the ability of governments and the private sector, to deliver basic services, and to promote sustainable growth.

The best way to do this is with a sector-wide approach, which means supporting the whole education system and using the contributions to education that other sectors make.

Our approach

- The UK has promised to spend £8.4 billion on education in developing countries over the next ten years. In doing so, we will focus on supporting our partner governments' plans to distribute funding in a balanced way across all levels of their education systems, in order to meet the MDGs.
- We will encourage the international community to put more funding into post-primary education.
- We will talk more about post-primary education with governments, other donor agencies and civil society partners, within the context of a sector-wide approach, national plans and budgets, and poverty reduction plans.
- We will improve the ability of our developing country partners to provide education by working with them, the international community and across UK government departments to encourage effective approaches, lesson learning and research.
- We will support the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in producing plans to develop higher education and science and technology in Africa.
- From DFID central funds, we will directly support a number of innovative post-primary programmes.

Why are secondary, vocational and higher education important?

There are many benefits of investing in secondary, vocational and higher education and skills. These will help us reach all of the MDGs and ensure long-term, sustainable growth. The benefits are discussed below.

Economic growth and employment

- Creating a pool of qualified people with the knowledge and skills to contribute significantly to economic development, to be entrepreneurial, develop science and technology, deliver basic services, and to be enlightened leaders. None of the MDGs can be achieved satisfactorily without educating and training enough qualified people through all levels of education.
- Enabling countries to compete in an era of globalisation and knowledge. Investment in post-primary education is associated with greater export-led growth than primary. (Wood and Mayer 1999)
- Expanding choices and increasing personal and work-related skills.

Completion of primary education

- When secondary education is available, more children are encouraged to complete their primary schooling. In Uganda, rising primary enrolment has been accompanied by an increase in children going on to secondary school, from 24% in 1998 to 42% in 2001. In Malawi, with more limited opportunities for secondary education, only 22% of primary students stay to grade 5, (compared with 38% of pupils in 1998), even though tuition fees have been removed.
- Providing more secondary education, particularly lower-secondary education, has a crucial effect on the demand for and completion of primary education by girls.

Sufficient numbers of qualified teachers

- Training the large number of teachers necessary to expand access to primary education and ensure students receive a quality education. It is estimated that 1.6 million more teachers are needed to reach universal primary education by 2015 in sub-Saharan Africa. In Ghana, poor-quality public schools and teacher supply appear to have caused enrolment rates to falter. Ghana would have to triple its output of primary teachers to reach universal primary completion.

Promoting gender equality and empowering women

- Meeting this MDG requires equal numbers of boys and girls, men and women at all levels of education. DFID's strategy *Girls' education: towards a better future for all* (2005) emphasised that this target will be missed without more focus on secondary and higher education.

- Increasing enrolment leads to improved gender equality. In South Asia, when overall enrolment rates are high, a greater percentage of girls are in post-primary education.

Reduction in HIV/AIDS

- Influencing and pushing for better choices in terms of sexual behaviour, reduction of infection rates and increased tolerance and support for people living with AIDS. HIV prevalence is considerably lower among both female and male teenagers in secondary school in Burundi, Eritrea, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. In Swaziland, two-thirds of teenage girls in school are free from HIV, while two-thirds of out-of-school girls are HIV positive (Lewin 2004).
- Secondary education has proved to be the single biggest factor in reducing the threat of HIV and AIDS for girls. In Uganda, young people who have been to secondary school are four times less likely to become HIV positive.

Where are we now?

We have defined primary education as six years of initial schooling, and post-primary as the education and training received after the completion of primary school. It includes secondary and tertiary education, training for employment, professional development, lifelong learning and skills development. Basic education is understood by most of our partners to mean nine years of education: six years of primary and three of junior secondary. There is a positive trend in many countries towards providing access to nine years of basic education.

Since 1990, DFID has given priority to supporting primary education for all. We will continue to do this where countries are off-track to meet the education MDGs. Development Assistance Committee (DAC) aid flows (2001-02) given in the Education for All (EFA) *Global Monitoring Report* show that 50% of UK aid for education was not given to a specific level of education, and 85% of the remaining aid was given to basic education. This is the highest proportion of any DAC donor.

As more children complete primary education, demand for post-primary education is increasing rapidly. Of DFID's 25 public service agreement (PSA) countries, 11 now have primary net enrolment rates of over 75%. Primary enrolments grew by about 40 million in South and West Asia between 1990 and 2002, and by nearly the same amount in sub-Saharan Africa.

DFID already provides support for post-primary education through general budget and education sector-wide support, core funding of multilateral agencies, research funding, support for capacity development and innovative centrally funded programmes.

DFID's contribution to post-primary education is viewed against the education aid collectively provided by other bilateral and multilateral agencies: 13 out of 17 DAC donors give more than 50% of their education aid to post-basic education (of all aid

identified by education levels) although only a small proportion of this goes to DFID's priority countries.

DFID prefers to encourage country governments to develop effective education sector-wide plans. DFID support for primary or post-primary education will therefore be part of comprehensive national plans and budget processes. Countries that are off-track for the education and gender MDGs will be expected give priority to primary education in their budgets.

In 2005, the Commission for Africa, the G8 communiqué, the Millennium Review Summit declaration and the Sachs Report highlighted the need for more support for higher education and developing capacity, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. This was largely due to positive global trends of rising primary enrolment rates and the increased need for higher knowledge and skills in low-income countries.

In our responses to the Commission for Africa Report and G8 commitments we have recommended the international community should increase its support for post-primary education in low-income countries. This includes an estimated \$5 billion a year more aid for secondary education, \$0.5 billion a year for higher education and \$3 billion over ten years to develop centres of excellence in science and technology. This will be implemented as more money becomes available from development agencies. The 2005 paper *From commitment to action: acting now to improve living standards, health and education for all*, produced jointly by DFID and HM Treasury, outlines how this extra money for education could be used.

In April 2006, the UK Government announced it would commit up to £8.4 billion over the next ten years to support education in developing countries. Based on comprehensive education plans, most of this money will be allocated to enable every child to complete primary school but some will be used for post-primary education in support of the MDGs.

What DFID will do

Using the £8.4 billion pledged by the UK for education over the next ten years DFID will work with the international community and partner governments in the context of whole-sector support to:

- develop and implement ambitious ten-year comprehensive education plans in order to meet the MDGs that include consideration of secondary, tertiary and vocational education and skills;
- support additional funding by the international community for post-primary education. A particular initial emphasis will be on increased access to secondary education for girls where countries are on-track to meet the education MDG;
- encourage the integration of post-primary education into poverty reduction planning processes and encourage more equal allocation of resources both

within education and across sectors in support of the MDGs, while continuing to give priority to primary education in countries that are off-track;

- improve human resource planning and management, including the training, allocation, and retention of teachers in the context of public sector reform;
- encourage more effective use of information communication technologies in education and open and distance learning, particularly where this can be used to increase the numbers of teachers and health workers available to help reach the MDGs;
- assist coordinated lesson learning and research, including continued development of in-country education research partnerships through DFID's research consortia. In Africa, by January 2006, 12 consortia had been established in education and health, involving 36 institutions. We expect the number of partners to increase as DFID's research budget expands from £100 million in 2006 to £135 million in 2008;
- support the development of the African Union (AU) and NEPAD plans for revitalising higher education, with particular emphasis on science and technology. We plan to make funds available for implementation of the AU/NEPAD Consolidated Plan of Action for Science and Technology, working through the African Science and Innovation Facility, and to support higher education through national and regional centres of excellence.
- centrally fund innovative higher-education programmes including:
 - giving funds for university scholarships in 2006-08 (£12 million for the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan and £2 million for the Commonwealth Shared Scholarship Scheme each year) and review how these can be strengthened for 2008-11.
 - supporting up to 300 partnerships through the Development Partnerships in Higher Education programme (£15 million for 2006-13), which will help reduce poverty, promote science and technology and meet the MDGs.

We will work more closely with UK government departments involved with development, primarily HM Treasury, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department for Education and Skills, the Department of Health, the Department of Trade and Industry (Office of Science and Innovation), and civil society organisations and higher education partners to maximise the UK's contribution to supporting post-primary education as an integral part of education sector development.

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