NEW HEAD OF THE FTI SECRETARIAT APPOINTED! The Partnership has appointed Mr. Desmond Bermingham, the current head of education in DFID, as the new Head of the FTI Secretariat, following a competitive selection process. Desmond will be re-locating to Washington, DC early this summer. “I am delighted to have been offered this post at an exciting time for education and development. I look forward to working with all the FTI partners to do whatever we can to get more children into school - particularly girls - and to give them a good quality education,” said Desmond Bermingham.

WORLD BANK SPRING MEETINGS PLACE EFA-FAST TRACK INITIATIVE HIGH ON THE AGENDA

Ministerial Press Conference Held on the Fast Track Initiative

On Friday, April 21, during the World Bank/ IMF Spring meetings, Finance Ministers placed education in the spotlight with a high-level press conference on the EFA-Fast Track Initiative to discuss how rich and poor countries can attract the financing and technical help they will need to reach the Millennium Development Goal 2015 target.


After acknowledging the enormous contributions and political leadership demonstrated by the Netherlands and United Kingdom, President Wolfowitz started off the panel discussion by committing the Bank to invest its full energy - on the global and country level - to help poor countries improve their education systems.

Mr. Wolfowitz declared his support for EFA-FTI stating that “The FTI partnership is starting to provide a glimpse of what development could look like across all sectors.” He cautioned that
“donors must do more to secure long term and predictable financing to support effective country education plans. This will send a positive signal to the next round of countries that their engagement in FTI is worth the investment.”

Executive Director Jan Willem van der Kaaij announced that the Netherlands is expecting that by next year their assistance for basic education in developing countries will rise to 700 million euros (US$840 million) per year – about twelve times more than a decade ago.

Minister Ngozi said; “Africans recognize that they have to seize their problems and take their problems into their own hands.” She announced a meeting of finance ministers of African countries to be held on May 20-22 in Abuja to “see what we on our own side can do.”

Chancellor Gordon Brown announced US$178 million to the Fast Track Initiative over two years, representing a down payment to meet the UK share of the current financing gap, and called on other donors now to come forward with their contributions. This is in addition to the UK announcement made earlier in the month in Mozambique to spend US$15 billion over ten years on education.

For the full transcript/ participant remarks/ GCE press release and related press clips please see http://www.fasttrackinitiative.org/education/efafft/Annual_Spring_Meetings.asp

THE UNITED KINGDOM

On April 10, 2006 in Mozambique Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, and Secretary of State for International Development, Hilary Benn, committed the UK Government to spend at least $15 billion, or £8.5 billion, on aid for education over the next ten years. This is four times as much as the US$3.5 billion of the previous ten years. Brown and Benn were joined by Mozambique's President Armando Guebuza, former South African President Nelson Mandela and other African leaders. The UK announcement was not a call for new plans but rather meant to encourage finance and education ministers of developing countries to prepare ambitious but realistic ten year plans which will allow them to achieve the education goals by 2015.

The aim of this initiative is to build a positive cycle of development in which poor countries are able to plan with confidence for the expansion of their education systems because they have reasonable assurance that additional finance – both domestic and external – will be made available to support these systems. At the upcoming African Ministers of Finance meeting in Abuja, Nigeria (May 22) the issue of education and the development of long term plans is firmly on the agenda.

DfID will spend at least £8.5 billion (US$15.2 billion) over the period 2006-07 to 2015-16. This compares with a figure of less than £2 billion (US$3.6 billion) over the period 1995-96 to 2004-05. DfID’s planned spending on education over the three year period 2005-06 to 2007-08 is £1.4 billion (about US$2.5 billion) including a notional allocation of 20% of its general budget support programmes. DfID's direct investment to the FTI will increase to $120 million per year from 2006/ 7."
THE NETHERLANDS

Strong public and political support for development in general and strong commitment to the EFA goals and the MDG’s on education in particular, have helped education become a top priority in the Netherlands.

The Dutch spending on all levels of basic education for developing countries evolved from 53 million euro in 1997 to an estimated 500 million euro in 2006. In 2001, the Dutch Government committed to spend 15% of its overall ODA on basic education by 2007, which means that by next year their assistance for basic education in developing countries is expected to rise to 700 million euros (US$840 million) per year. This is about twelve times more than a decade ago.

This includes contributions through multi-lateral and bi-lateral channels, civil society, silent partnerships with other education donors, civil society and a 195 million euro contribution to the Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund (2003-2007).

JOINT MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE OF THE BOARDS OF GOVERNORS OF THE BANK AND THE FUND ON THE TRANSFER OF REAL RESOURCES TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Reflecting the high visibility and growing support for EFA-Fast Track Initiative, the Development Committee Communique had strong and specific language for strengthening both sides of the compact and called for a progress report in time for the next gathering in the fall at the Annual meetings in Singapore.

Development Committee Communique

Paragraph 4

We called for rapid progress in implementing the framework agreed in the Paris Declaration for enhancing aid effectiveness through improved modalities and a stronger focus on results. Developing countries need to strengthen their management of financial resources, and improve their domestic resource mobilization as well as governance and delivery of basic services. Donors and other partners need to improve the quality of aid, modalities of aid delivery to reduce volatility, achieve greater predictability, and provide stronger alignment with national poverty reduction strategies. To this end, we encouraged donors where possible to move towards multiyear plans and commitments, and to be ready to finance recurrent costs where sector policies are sound and fiduciary conditions are adequate. We asked the World Bank and other partners to intensify their coordination at the country level, particularly in strengthening health systems and improving access to good quality education, to reduce transaction costs and to help increase absorptive capacity. We emphasized the importance of universal access to primary education and sustained support for good quality education plans, and the key role the Education for All - Fast Track Initiative could play in all qualifying low income countries. We called on donors to fill the current financing gap. We asked for a progress report on Education for All by our next meeting.

For full transcript: http://www.worldbank.org/springmeetings/
SPRING MEETINGS WRAP UP WITH PRAISE FOR EFA FTI

The April 24, World Bank “Town Hall” discussion with global staff about the Spring meetings began with praise for the Fast Track Initiative. Mr. Wolfowitz said that “while the quality of aid is still not always what it ought to be - directed at high priority needs, flexible and sufficiently dependable,” he pointed to the Education for All – Fast Track Initiative as an example of best practice and said; “We are hoping to scale up from the current 20 countries to 60 countries.”

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION LAUNCHES ACTION WEEK FOR EDUCATION

April 24 kicked off civil society’s global action week for education. Across Europe, education campaigners are putting on a show of strength to demand that leaders live up to the promise that every child will have a decent free education by 2015. In France, the coalition has used Global Action Week to launch a massive petition calling for France to increase aid to primary education at the G8 Summit. In Germany, pupils will produce dossiers with ‘teacher-missing' ads, painted pictures of their dream teacher or a short story describing the education situation in a developing country. Hundreds of teachers gathered in The Netherlands for a national training day on EFA and the role of teachers, and a discussion with the minister for Development Cooperation. From Greece to Denmark, the UK to Romania, children and teachers are confronting leaders with the simple demand ‘Every Child Needs A Teacher'. In the US, press conferences are being held and mock Congressional Hearings with youth from around the States are being organized with bi-partisan support. Honorary GCE Chair Angelina Jolie helped to galvanize media attention by speaking with dozens of journalists and conducting television interviews about the need to mobilize support for accelerating progress toward the education MDGs. Her participation helped to produce hundreds of media stories, around the globe on education.

UPDATE: THE FAST TRACK INITIATIVE TODAY

Steering Committee Expands

FTI is managed by the full partnership with day to day decisions taken by a Steering Committee (SC). The SC is co-chaired by a representative of the country chairing the G8 and by a representative of a non-G8, OECD country. It includes the World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF as permanent members. Russia has taken over as the new co-chair of FTI, co-chairing with Belgium. The SC has recently been expanded to include Kailash Satyarthi, President of the Global Campaign for Education, and Haja Nirina Razafinjatovo, the Minister of Education from Madagascar.

FTI is helping 54 Countries

As of April 2006, 54 low-income countries are receiving financial or technical support from the Fast Track Initiative, 20 as fully endorsed partners and another 34 through the Fast Tracks technical fund, known as the Education Program Development Fund (EPDF). An additional 40 countries are expected to join the FTI partnership by 2008, enabling FTI to help enroll some 70 million out-of-school children, 42 million of whom are girls, and to help millions others who are already in school, to achieve universal primary education by 2015.
The 20 FTI endorsed countries need a total of US$1.1 billion annually in external financing. Donors are providing US$490 million through regular channels and US$115 million through the FTI Catalytic Fund, leaving an annual gap of around US$510 million. **If 40 more countries are endorsed by the end of 2008 as projected, the total external financing needs will be a minimum of US$3.7 billion.**

**The Catalytic Fund (CF).** Ten donors are currently contributing to the Catalytic Fund, with commitments totaling US$453 million over 2003-2007, much of it pledged for the outer years when many new countries are expected to come on board. Receipts to date total US$165 million, of which nearly US$89 million has been disbursed; the remainder is expected to be disbursed this year. The EU contribution of 63 million euros to the Catalytic Fund, to be disbursed to African, Pacific and Caribbean countries, will be signed shortly.

**The Education Program Development Fund (EPDF)** is funded by six donors with commitments totaling US$36 million for the period 2005-2007. EPDF is strengthening the capacity of eligible countries to develop and implement education programs, focusing on improvements in access, quality and gender equity of education. A proposal to support “fragile states” through the FTI has been agreed upon.

**EFA FTI DONORS’ TECHNICAL MEETING HELD IN MOSCOW**

The World Bank Moscow office hosted a three day technical meeting, from 13-15 March 2006, to discuss progress toward achieving the Millennium Development Goal of Universal Primary Education by 2015. Leading education donors gather at least twice a year to discuss the status of EFA Fast Track Initiative. The gathering co-chaired by Belgium and Russia, attracted nearly 60 donor education representatives from bilateral, regional and international agencies and development banks.

The conference was opened by remarks from Russia’s Minister of Education and Science, Andrei Fursenko, who committed US$7.2 million to support the Fast Track Initiative. In 2006, Russia assumed the G8 presidency and the co-chair of FTI. As donors gathered over the course of three days they considered the direction of the global compact going forward, recognizing its enormous achievements to date as well as the shortfalls in resource mobilization.

The majority of the discussions focused on improving access to quality education for the poorest children of primary school age, increasing donor financing for basic education in low-income countries, ensuring that all low-income countries have access to lessons learned, technical advice and capacity building.

Several new pledges in addition to Russia’s were made to FTI at the Moscow meeting including; the Netherlands Euro 6 million, Italy US$1 million, France indicated willingness to cover the cost of an additional secondee in the FTI Secretariat (France is already funding one secondee) and Spain announced its plan to contribute a minimum of US$6 million annually over the next three years. The US again indicated that US$65 million has been targeted by the US Congress for additional support to basic education in FTI countries. This was first announced in Beijing.
Other Key Action Points from the Moscow Meeting:

- Russia is proposing a major intervention on education quality for the upcoming G-8 meetings. Russia proposes to explore measures that assess quality in primary schools in low-income countries, in coordination with other agencies and organizations.

- **FTI Capacity Development Task Team** (with Germany as lead) has been established. This task team will focus on improving absorptive capacity within countries to implement an accelerated EFA program, engaging local donors, stakeholders, and government. It will be complementary to the FTI Education Program Development Fund and Fragile States Task Team.

- Participants reaffirmed their commitment to expanding the FTI partnership to fragile states. The FTI Fragile States Task Team will work with pilot countries including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Haiti, and Sudan.

- The participants agreed that financing through FTI should be more predictable over time and agreed to the need for an expanded financing mechanism. The task team working on this issue will convene another meeting to feed into the Cairo Partnership meeting, November 2006.

The donors remained committed to expanding the partnership and to ensuring that basic quality education features prominently on the agenda of the next G-8 summit in St. Petersburg this July.

**SOUTH-SOUTH LEARNING**

This past February, the E-9 countries brought together by UNESCO in Monterrey, Mexico, endorsed a new vision of South-South learning and network building in support of FTI.

**On 9 February, Japan held an Education Forum focusing on the theme of “improving the quality of education: Enhancing Teachers’ Quality”**.

The forum invited key academics and practitioners in education including Mr. Ato Essuman, Chief Director of Ministry of Education and Sports from the Republic of Ghana, Mme Francoise Caillods, Director a.i.UNESCO-IIEP, Dr. Fasli Jalal, Director General for Quality Improvement of Teachers and Education Personnel, from Republic of Indonesia, and Dr. Merle Tan, Director of National Institute for Science and Mathematics Education Development from the Philippines. The participants discussed the key role of teachers in improving the quality of education and determining students’ achievement at school level, and actively exchanged experiences on various measures to improve teacher quality, that includes quality pre-service and in-service training and investment in quality secondary education so as to improve the subject knowledge of teacher candidates. The forum thus provided an important South-South learning opportunity.

The related documents can be found [www.fasttrackinitiative.org](http://www.fasttrackinitiative.org)
ADEA MEETING IN GABON, MARCH 27-31

FTI representatives were present during the ADEA Sixth Biennale in Libreville, Gabon held on March 27-31.

Desmond Bermingham and Niger's Education Minister Hamani Harouna spoke on behalf of the FTI partners. Many speakers during the week long forum mentioned FTI as an effective mechanism for harmonization, but many commented that FTI had to do better at mobilizing resources. Some countries were not aware how FTI could help them.

Accordingly, the Secretariat held bilateral meetings with several current and potential FTI partners including briefings on the functioning of the Catalytic Fund. There was a general FTI briefing for African journalists.

2006 KEY CALENDAR DATES FOR EDUCATION

May 22   African Finance & Education Ministers Meeting
         Abuja, Nigeria

July 15-17 G8 Summit
            St Petersburg, Russia

July 19-21 Education for All Working Group Meeting
            Paris

September 16-20 World Bank/ IMF Annual Meetings
            Singapore

November 14-16 EFA High Level Group Meeting & FTI Partnership Meeting
            Cairo, Egypt

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We want to hear from you!
We will gladly include education news from FTI partners in the newsletter.
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