

## PRESS RELEASE

# Ethiopia's Deputy PM at Global Partnership for Education Event

## Ethiopia Joins the Global Champions Group for Education

27<sup>th</sup> March 2014, LONDON

Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister, H.E. Demeke Mekonnen, says Ethiopia's impressive performance in education is the result of building on sustained economic growth along with a strong commitment to alleviating poverty and substantial investment in the country's education system.



He was addressing an event hosted by the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Global Education for All entitled "***Fund the Future: Tackling the crisis in financing education for all***", here in London during his official visit to Great Britain.

The event was organized in collaboration with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), a working partnership of governments, civil society, international organizations, teachers and the private sector.

Ethiopia is taking part in the GPE forum in its capacity as a member of the Global Champions Group for Education. Ethiopia joined the group owing to the high priority it has given to education, following its adoption of a practical strategy which is all inclusive in every aspect. The strategy *inter alia* ensures access to education and puts in place a mechanism that guarantees equity, fairness and quality.

Since its establishment in 2002, the GPE, an Education for All Fast-Track Initiative, has grown from seven developing country partners to 59 in 2013, including fragile and conflict-affected countries.

Ethiopia mapped out its education sector plan, starting with the Education and Training Policy in 1994 and evolving into a series of four comprehensive Education Sector Development Programmes, the latest - ESDP 4 – is currently under implementation.

By investing an increasing share of its own resources, especially in the period 1999-2013, the government of Ethiopia has succeeded in raising the number of schools from about 11,000 to over 36,000, the number of classrooms from about 72,000 to 400,000 and of teachers to over 412,000 from just 10,5000.

The new education system is highly focused on science and technology, research and employability to speed up the on-going national development drive as mapped out in the five- year Growth and Transformation Plan.

The Deputy Premier said allocation of more resources to the sector has produced impressive results. The primary net enrolment has more than doubled in the last decade, from just 40 per cent in 2000-2001 to 86 per cent last year. During the same period the gross enrolment rate for primary grades 1-8 grew to 95.4 per cent from about 57.4 per cent.

Ethiopia is on the right track to achieving universal primary education thanks to the robust progress of the past years, but there are still outstanding challenges in addressing disparity in access, low learning outcomes and high repetition and dropout rates. Quality improvement programmes are also paying dividends but much still needs to be done.

Ethiopia dedicates over 25.3 per cent of its annual spending to education, ranking it among the few countries in the world dedicating at least 6 per cent of their GNP to education.

The student population in Ethiopia stands at about 22 million, which is close to a quarter of the whole populace, estimated at over 85 million. HE Demeke expressed gratitude to GPE for its generous support, which amounts to 168 million dollars for the quality improvement programme phase 1, and a pledge of 100 million USD for phase 2.



The Global Partnership supports education, and among other things, provides funding and coordinated technical assistance for developing high-quality national education plans, strengthening capacity by training and certifying teachers and administrators, building more schools and better classrooms in addition to the distribution of text books, teaching materials and school supplies.

DPM Demeke noted that Ethiopia's huge effort in developing its education system over the past two decades would not have been possible without the strong and consistent support of development partners, including GPE, the World Bank, DFID, USAID, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands and JICA.

DFID has been a consistent source of support and encouragement for government efforts across a number of sectors. With £110 million DFID was the second biggest contributor to the Quality Improvement programme phase 1 and has made an even greater commitment of 120 million to phase two. DFID has also committed £460 million for the Provision of Basic Services, on top of allocating resources for similar projects. Its annual support for the education sector alone amounts to around £65 million.

The DPM urged developing countries and organizations to mobilize more resources for education development to withstand the decline in foreign aid to education, and maintain growth and expansion in the education system.

In remarks he made at the AAPG-GPE event, the Honourable Mark Williams MP mentioned the progress made on education but said "we are not on track".

Millions of children remain out of school, and globally, donor aid for education is declining just when it is urgently needed. UK leadership on education aid is welcome and crucial. But, he said, a turning point is needed and he highlighted the importance of the GPE replenishment conference in June as that turning point. He described Ethiopia's commitment to a transformational education system as exemplary.

Speaking on the occasion, House of Lords Spokesperson for the UK Department for International Development, Baroness Northover, emphasized the UK's leading role in bilateral aid to education, and as a

major donor to the Global Partnership for Education. She also made reference to the synergy between DFID's priorities and those of the GPE, such as education in conflict and emergencies, girls' education, quality of learning.



*The Panel (l-r): Mr. Mark Williams MP; H.E. Mr. Demeke Mekonnen, DPM of Ethiopia; Ms. Alice Albright, Chief Executive of the Global Partnership for Education; Aaron Oxley, Executive Director of RESULTS UK and member of the Global Campaign for Education UK; Baroness Northover, House of Lords Spokesperson for DFID*

Baroness Northover urged all partners, both donors and developing countries, to make ambitious commitments.

Panellists at the event have commended the commitment of the Ethiopian Government to mobilizing domestic resources for the expansion and quality improvement of education and urged developing countries to follow in the footsteps of Ethiopia, which employs education as a tool for economic prosperity and the enhancement of democratic institutions.

DPM Demeke also held consultations with the UK Government DFID Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Lynn Featherstone, on bilateral issues, with particular focus on education.

The Deputy Premier briefed the Minister on strides regarding expansion of education and quality improvement made with the support and partnership of the UK Government and the GPE.

The two parties discussed community development programmes, respect for human rights and peace and stability in the Horn of Africa region. Deliberations also focused on education for girls in vulnerable communities, persons with disabilities and issues related to improved learning outcomes and result-based programmes.

The Deputy Premier elaborated on the revised national strategy that addresses students' special needs, which reinforced the inclusive educational approach, and the use of diverse, appropriate technology. He said seven universities had been picked to train teachers for special education.

Expressing gratitude for the consistent support, he promised further progress in accessibility of education at all levels, with accompanying quality improvement, to achieve economic prosperity by beating poverty and building a peaceful, democratic and viable nation.

On Tuesday, he met with the CEO of the Global Partnership for Education, Ms Alice Albright, and discussed gains made in Ethiopia's education sector on the basis of government policies that are pro-poor and participatory, paving the way for community ownership of all projects.

The Ethiopian Government, he said, had education at the centre of all development endeavours, in alignment with the national economic growth trajectory. He also underlined the significant progress made in the enrolment of girls, which now stands at a ratio of 0.95 as Ethiopia makes headway in achieving the MDGs.

Alice Albright appreciated Ethiopia's stride in the sector, which she said was "impressive and a role model for success in education".

She said the GPE is working on new ways to raise awareness of the imperative of supporting education as a vehicle for societal transformation. The CEO called on governments, organizations, the private sector and parliamentarians to contribute their share to tackle the crisis in financing education for all by highlighting the unique opportunity provided by the GPE's replenishment campaign.

Ms Albright briefed the DPM on the GPE's leadership role in supporting transformational reforms of education systems, meeting the data challenge and significantly increasing commitments to reversing growing financing gaps. She also underlined the leading role played by the UK Government within GPE and how GPE supports UK priorities on fragile states, girls and learning.

Globally about 57 million children are still not in primary school, half of them girls.

**\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\***

Video footage to follow.

For further information please contact the Ethiopian Embassy Press Office on 0207 838 3883/0 or [info@ethioembassy.org.uk](mailto:info@ethioembassy.org.uk).

 Find us on  
**Facebook**  
[www.facebook.com/EthioEmbassyUK](http://www.facebook.com/EthioEmbassyUK)