



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
Unity – Dignity – Work

PLEDGE STATEMENT BY
THE NATIONAL EDUCATION,
HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH MINISTER
OF THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

TO THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION (GPE)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN BRUSSELS, Belgium

-JUNE 2014-

*Ministry of National Education, Higher
Education and Scientific Research,*

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Central African Republic, a harshly landlocked country in the central African region, has been undergoing numerous military, social and political conflicts for over two decades and is currently living the darkest times of its history. All socio-economic structures have been destroyed, and it is in this climate that the Transitional Government has entrusted me with the delicate mission of leading the people's education and training policies in a context of emergency and post-conflict recovery.

The State investment capacity has certainly been severely undermined, causing the socio-economic situation and well-being of the Central African people to deteriorate. However, I am convinced that conflicts will be extinguished and prevented through greater and more equitable education investments throughout the country.

This is the reason why reopening schools all over the country has been a strong demand. To this day, 56% of the schools have reopened, and partners' support has greatly contributed to maintaining education activities in many regions in the country. This testifies to our will to achieve universal fundamental education access in order to ***build a solid human capital, a security priority of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).***

Evidently, the current political and military conflict has hindered the emergency program implementation: for a while, national executives fled the country, NGOs which were implementing programs on the field withdrew, but they are slowly coming back.

The conflict has given rise to the awareness of the need of education for all. We must therefore seize the opportunity provided by this rude awakening to deploy improved education everywhere in the country as soon as the start of the 2014-2015 school year.

This emergency (also dictated by the rebellion spirit which has set in) demands that education be simultaneously redeployed over the whole territory, and the current financial efforts will not be sufficient to this end. I insist on SIMULTANEOUS efforts all over the country in order to respond to one of the Central African conflict minority stakeholders' claims: to remedy the educational desert and marginalization of their region.

Hence the following objectives for the transitional period:

Preparing for a global reopening in October 2014 will include:

* building schools in educational deserts.

*satisfying the need for a quality education which is open on our century, will steer children away from mobilization, and will teach them to resolve conflict through dialog and negotiation instead of weapons.

*fighting corruption in exams and competitions: strong actions have just been put forth. The objective is to expand this operation to all teacher recruitment competitions in the country in order to raise the level of all future teachers and curb the corruption which blights the examination and competition system.

*upgrading the level of the past three graduating teacher promotions.

*ensuring teacher salary regularity by categorizing payment as part of compulsory expenditure regardless of treasury difficulties.

*developing mass literacy for girls, because as future household mothers, women guarantee the stability in our societies.

Our strong commitment is to tend to quantitative and qualitative improvement of our education system, as the current crisis more than ever demands from us to make education an integration factor and a weapon against all fundamentalisms.

We are confident that our educational project will continue in improved conditions because we will be able to count on the progressive securing of the whole country and the imminent arrival of the UN forces to enable us to serenely achieve this objective.

Additionally, the European Union funds which have just complemented national education partners will supplement the GPE funds to provide the opportunity to the Central African education system to rebuild itself.

Ladies and gentlemen, the post-conflict period is surely the best time to support our efforts and our partners' efforts... Now is the time, the current crisis having definitely revealed EDUCATION FOR ALL as a conflict mitigation tool.

I thank you.