

Presentation of Minister Semere Russom at the Second Global Partnership for Education
Replenishment Pledging Conference
Brussels, Belgium

Ladies and gentlemen

It gives me a great pleasure and an honor to participate in the Second Global Partnership for Education Replenishment Pledging Conference and present this short statement.

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the time of liberation in 1991, education and training in Eritrea were extraordinarily limited in terms of access, infrastructure and quality. Since then (in the last two decades) Eritrea has achieved significant progress in rehabilitating, expanding and improving the education system. As a result, the total enrolment in primary education increased from 56% in 1991 to 99% in 2012. To continue to build on the momentum, Eritrea will make a serious and sincere effort to achieve the objectives set on education.

In the process of assuring social justice, the diversity of the Eritrean society has always been an actuality of categorical importance. The task of giving the requisite attention to all the variances has been one of prudent interventions the main focus of which has been the gender parity issue. The education of girls and women in particular was regarded as one of the most important pre-requisites and a condition for the successful transformation of the society. Poverty alleviation has been a major developmental strategy. Assuring food, health, environmental and welfare security with sound basis of educational provision have been the major agenda.

Ladies and gentlemen,

During the last two decades the international communities and donor partners have focused on primary education. Other sub-sectors of equal importance in the development of economies have been given very little attention. Several factors demonstrate the importance of increased interventions to secondary education, TVET and tertiary education. Secondary education plays a central and pivotal role in the education and employment system. It has the potential for huge vertical and horizontal multiplier effects on the education system and economy as a whole. The growth of the modern sector of the economy depends to a large extent on the supply of educated and trainable secondary graduates.

More and better secondary education for girls contributes directly to the empowerment of women, allowing the economy to absorb both sexes. Thus, secondary education occupies a strategic place for future growth and development.

The rapid expansion of lower levels of the system has exerted pressure for the secondary intake. This pressure mounts quickly and increased the demand for secondary education.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In view of shortages of skilled workers and the lack of skills provision in important parts of the economy adequate supplies of competent, adaptable skills for the attainment of the overriding

national development objective integrated knowledge and skills based education and training requires much attention than ever before. Therefore, the post 2015 development agenda needs to build on what has been achieved and expand the scope beyond primary education.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The provision of equitable access and quality education of the lower levels of education is largely dependent on higher education. The supply of much-needed teachers, the skilled manpower required to develop our economies requires increased output from higher education institutions. Therefore, I would like all of us to pay attention that this sub-sector to be one of our main objectives in the post 2015 agenda.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Eritea currently has started the implementation of a program supported by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the support provided by GPE. On behalf of my government I would also like to acknowledge that we endeavor to consolidate and expand the partnership. The support from GPE has provided the opportunity for those children who are out-of-school to enroll and continue their education. However, recognizing the importance of secondary education, I would like to extend my call to GPE to expand the scope of the intervention up to secondary education.

The Second Global Partnership for Education Replenishment Pledging Conference creates a unique opportunity for us to discuss on education and look forward and build on the achievements made since the last two decades and calls to keep up the momentum. Therefore, we deem it incumbent for this conference to address the challenges that hinder the progress of education and come out with a vision and the intended objective in order to ensure the provision of equitable and quality education for all.

Thank you.