

Global Partnership for Education – Pledging Conference

Brussels, Belgium – 26 June 2014

Summary of Pledging Conference Intervention – Sierra Leone

(Dr. Minkailu Bah, Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Sierra Leone)

Sierra Leone supports the replenishment push of the GPE. It will increase budgetary allocation for education annually over the next 5 years. Education expenditure currently exceeds 25% of total domestic recurrent public expenditure (i.e. excluding investment), primary education accounting for approximately 49%. The percentage of public expenditure, inclusive of investment, earmarked for education in 2014 is 13.8%. This is projected to increase to 14.5% in 2015.

Approximately 0.5% (i.e. Le800,000,000 (US\$185,400)) of recurrent expenditure at the primary level is being spent on the education of children with disabilities – focusing largely on teaching/learning materials as well as mobility and/or assistive devices - in 2014. This is augmented by support from partners working in collaboration with the Government of Sierra Leone. For example, over US\$200,000 from a Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) will be spent this year on the development of a comprehensive policy on the education of children with disability and the subsequent piloting of a model to increase access to education and learning of children with disability.

Approximately 5.2% of the budget for secondary education is on a girl-child education programme. At the same time a 150% increase in budget support for the 'Gender Desk' at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology was made between the 2013 and 2014 financial years. The attention given to the education of girls has had a marked effect on enrolment of girls at all levels. For example, between the 2004/05 and 2011/12 school years female enrolment at the primary level rose from 582,466 to 624,025, whilst the GER based Gender Parity Index is now over 0.98 i.e. gender parity at the primary level has been achieved with measurement errors taken into account.

Existing inequities in access and quality are being addressed in a planned and systematic manner as indicated in a new Education Sector Plan covering the period 2014 to 2018 and the third Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper – An Agenda for Prosperity – 2013 – 2018.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, has established and is strengthening an EMIS with the support of partners. Annual school censuses are being conducted. Using data from the school census and with support from UNESCO and our development partners, the Ministry has produced and distributed Sierra Leone's first ever School Census Report.

In partnership with our development partners, a comprehensive learning assessment system is about to be established. In excess of US\$500,000 will be spent on developing the system over the next 3 years.

Plans are afoot for an Education Website on which data on education, including the budget, will be available to the public.

In addition to the foregoing, Sierra Leone will:

- i. Continue to provide scholarships for girls who sit and pass the national Grade 9 examination.
- ii. Develop and implement a comprehensive policy on the education of children with disabilities
- iii. Expand comprehensive annual data collection on education to include TVET, NFE and higher education
- iv. Increase and improve on the availability of education data at the decentralised/local council level
- v. Make greater use of ICT at the school level and phase in an education intranet for schools
- vi. Continue work on increasing teacher: student contact hours
- vii. Proceed with national early grade reading and mathematics assessments as part of an overall learning assessment set-up
- viii. Further strengthen teaching and learning
- ix. Allocate additional resources to capacity and systems development
- x. Give greater attention to studies that would inform policies