

## Draft Speaking Points on Education for Session 2

- As Development Partners, we appreciate the priority GoB gives to education in the PRSP; education is one out of seven priority areas the Government considers crucial for the fight against poverty.
- We fully endorse the focus on quality at all levels of the education system, given the progress Bangladesh has already made with access and enrollment, particularly at the level of primary education;
- We realize that the PRSP is the first attempt to develop a comprehensive policy matrix for the education sector which has been shared with Development Partners. We encourage the Government of Bangladesh to continue the direction taken and to develop a costed development plan for the education sector that sets clear and achievable goals within a time line and brings them in relation to available resources and external financing needs. Bangladesh has a complex institutional setup for the education system, with responsibilities spread over several line ministries and agencies. An education sector development plan would facilitate coordination and coherence of activities in different sub-sectors, between and amongst government and non-governmental actors. There are “best practice” models from countries in the Asia Region where a costed national education development plan is used for financial and operational planning.
- The Government of Bangladesh has rightly identified *an education system that provides quality education reflecting labor market needs and ensures access particularly for the poor and underprivileged* as the long-term goal in its strategy against poverty. The PRSP outlines an ambitious mid-term policy agenda for the years until 2007. As Development Partners, we would like to take this as the platform and ask the Government to prioritize particularly the following issues over the next 12 months, before we meet again:
  - Consolidate the progress that could already be made at the primary level through PEDP-II. Move towards applying primary school quality level standards (PSQL) with emphasis on increasing contact hours in PEDP-II schools.
  - Quality education needs well-trained and motivated teachers. Establish sub-cadres for primary and secondary education to open up career opportunities for staff working at different levels. This is an important yet easily reachable step.
  - The PRSP identifies the first two years of secondary education as a major “bottleneck” in the education system where many students, particularly girls, drop out. A sub-sector development program beyond singular projects can address the manifold and complex reasons behind this trend. The first steps in this direction can be taken over the next 12 months.
  - The PRSP rightly asks for the relevance of education and reflection of labor market needs. Presently, technical and vocational training cater to less than 3% of the secondary student population. The development

of a common policy and regulatory framework for the provision of technical and vocational education and training would be a first step.

- Establish scope for post literacy and continuing education for young adults and adults, specially disadvantaged groups, with emphasis to transform learning into livelihood through formal and non formal opportunities. The next 12 months could focus on a needs assessment and a policy outline.
- None of these targets are additional requests or conditionalities from the side of donors. They are desiderates and targets established in your PRSP. We encourage the Government of Bangladesh to take on its ambitious development agenda for education. Development Partners stand ready to support you in these endeavours.