

## **Input for Bangladesh Development Forum Discussions Submission by Education Local Consultative sub-Group**

### **Background**

The following are key points on the education sector, which are also major issues in the wider context of development in Bangladesh. The input is offered to the executive committee of the main LCG for feeding into, as appropriate, the background documentation for the Bangladesh Development Forum. DPs wish to stress the positive developments in the primary education sub-sector, notably in regard with a shift to a programmatic way of working and with DPs co-ordinating their support for PEDP-II.

### **Governance Issues**

- **Greater financial support for the primary education sub-sector is probable with the GoB's adoption of a more comprehensive and harmonised approaches to development.** Lessons learned from 'projectised' development clearly show duplication of resources, unsustainable effort and gaps in provision, and limited GoB absorptive capacity due to weak planning and management of the education sector. Education donors are working with MOPME on a master plan for primary education (PEDP-II). A number of donors have already indicated their level of financial support to PEDP-II, and a pre-appraisal mission for PEDP-II is ongoing.
- **Decentralisation can enhance accountability and decision making.** The need for decentralisation was highlighted by an assessment of the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP-I) and has been incorporated in the design of PEP-II. It is crucial to strengthen decision making at Upazila and District levels; currently local officials and schools have little authority for making crucial decisions, and they are therefore not accountable to the communities they serve. Enhancing the role of SMCs in school governance is important.
- **The development of a cadre of professionals in the primary education sector is vital to sustained improvement in the system.** A cadre of professionals dedicated to the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education needs to be created by GoB. Currently, officials are transferred in temporarily from other Ministries, inhibiting capacity building efforts due to the lack of an internal career path, particularly frequent transfers, and lack of primary education background. MOPME is committed to establishing a primary education cadre, and DPs expect all other ministries involved to support MOPME in this effort.
- **Corruption is unacceptable.** GoB needs to deal with 'system loss' in all its forms, in all sectors of the education system.

### **Pro-Poor Growth and the I-PRSP**

- **Strengthening of basic education must be an essential aspect of a poverty reduction strategy and plans for economic growth.** Comparison of countries' HDI shows that those with weak education conditions find it harder to sustain economic growth. Investment in human capabilities will improve the ability of Bangladesh to cope with global competition and to realise the potential of poor people, so that growth will help alleviate poverty in the future. To ensure effective targeting of the poor in programmes such as primary stipends, there is a need to monitor the poverty alleviation impact of primary education, which could