

## Secondary Education Support Programme

### Annual Consultation Mission

#### Aide Memoire

December 7 and 8 2006

1. The Government of Nepal in collaboration with Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Denmark developed and initiated the Secondary Education Support Programme (SESP) 2003-2009. The programme aims to improve the quality of and access to public secondary schooling, particularly for girls, students with disabilities, poor and disadvantaged groups and districts, and to develop institutional capacity of central and local bodies and communities to sustain and deepen the school improvement process.
2. Representatives from the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) and line agencies of the Government of Nepal, ADB and Denmark carried out the seventh Joint Annual Consultative Review of the SESP in Kathmandu on December 7 and 8 2006. The MoES/DoE chaired the Mission proceedings.
3. The objectives of the Annual Consultative Review were:
  - To assess the programme progress against the ASIP/AWPB for the fiscal year 2005/2006
  - To identify areas where sector or programme targets are unlikely to be achieved, if any
  - To review underlying causes that inhibit target achievement as well as new challenges emerging as a result of changes in the external environment
  - To develop an overview of possible strategies and interventions to address specific sector challenges and identified specific underlying causes for poor performance
  - To update the status and discuss the findings of “The Study on Student Performance in SLC”

### Methodology

4. The Consultative Review was planned and prepared by the MOES/DOE, which also arranged for the chairing of the meetings. DOE and central level agency staff made status reports and provided presentations to outline progress and plans for the future.

### Status Report

#### Physical Progress

5. Overall, the DOE reported satisfactory progress. There has been some delay in central level activities, due to delay in policy level decisions. During the coming year, DOE is confident that this spending will be in line with plans.
6. There was considerable improvement on capital activities over Fiscal Year 2004-05 (53% to 82%), in particular in learning environment (see below).

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## Financial progress

7. Financial progress has continued overall to be underspent. However, there are improvements over previous years. The underspending in central funds was caused by three factors: delay in getting approval for the purchase of the security printing press, consultants not being appointed until recently, and the postponement in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) decision. The printing press has been approved, and is now incorporated in the Red Book; the consultants begin work from January 2007, and the NCF will be finalised very soon.

## Performance indicators

8. The GER indicator for the end of the programme has already been achieved in some cases, and DOE is confident that the figures will continue to increase. There is particular improvement in the GER for girls.

Gross Enrolment (boys and girls)	Target 2006 (Total)Indicator	Actual 2006 (Total)	Actual 2006 (GER Girls)
Lower Secondary	65%	71.5%	65.4%
Secondary	55%	56.7%	53.1%

9. Data provided on SLC pass rates showed a marked improvement over the past three years, and a narrowing of the gap between the PID rate and the national rate. This is also true of girls' pass rates. However, in most PIDs the SLC rate is below the national average. Achievement tests would be useful in addition to the data provided already available. At present SLC data serves as a proxy indicator; the Mission asked for all such data to be disaggregated by girls/boys and for Dalits, and also for data on public schools in non-PIDs and on private schools, to allow for proper comparison.
10. There is a pressing need for more teachers. This is principally because of increased enrolment, leading to a very high student:teacher ratio (in lower secondary schools 48.7, higher still in community schools – 65.2). The quality of education suffering because of this shortage. A new initiative is speeding up the process of converting primary teachers with adequate qualifications into lower secondary level teachers.
11. The participation of girls and disadvantaged groups and their pass rate in Grade 8 and SLC are expected to be in line with indicators or better by the end of the programme.
12. Almost 400 girls are in feeder hostels. Mountain districts are also benefiting from the establishment of the hostel, which are fully in operation. DEO are planning a further two hostels for this year. Ninety-five female teachers received the special allowance last year for teachers stationed away from home.

## Issues and Challenges

13. The Mission expressed concern over delays in the finalisation of the NCF. Following extensive consultations, the Curriculum Development Centre will shortly submit the NCF to the MOES for approval. It was agreed that CDC should submit a revised implementation, budget plan and target 2007-09 for this component before ASIP 2007.

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The Mission also agreed that resources from SESP would be prioritised for this component.

14. The success of this programme has increased the pressure on the education service in the PIDs. There is a great need for more teachers and more classrooms, and extending the success of SESP to all districts has implications for spending on secondary education. Development partners draw the attention of the National Planning Commission (NPC) and the Ministry of Finance (MOF) to this.
15. In view of the expected funding gap at the end of SESP, DOE will present a paper to the Local Donors Meeting of the projected spending requirements at the end of the Programme for secondary education.
16. It was pointed out that lower secondary and secondary schools benefit significantly from parents and guardians through fees and donations. This is a huge contribution to education made by members of local communities.

### **Overall Assessment**

17. The DOE's overall assessment of the programme is that it has already achieved much of what it has set out to do, and in many ways it is likely to perform beyond original targets. In two areas in particular, enrolment (especially of girls) and classrooms in the PIDs and beyond there are marked improvements. However, significant progress needs to be made in the areas of curriculum development, assessment, teacher training, management and institutional capacity building if SESP is to bring significant achievements by the time it is completed. SESP resources will be provided in priority for these components.

### **Learning Environment**

18. Progress in this area has been considerable, DOE reported, and further work is in the pipeline or planned for an early start.
19. In the past year, 60 schools in programme-intensive districts (PID) have had classrooms, multi-purpose halls and toilets for boys and girls completed and in 90 schools construction is under way. The environment for construction activities is much improved, and DOE reported that qualified staff, designs and materials were in place, and construction can be completed quickly, generally four to six months after authorisation. The selection of a further 40 schools is in the final stages, and technicians are ready to publish plans for work on them, making a total of 190 schools to benefit from capital projects by the end of fiscal year 2007-08.
20. The amount provided to PID schools for construction was reduced to US\$55,000 from US\$78,000 following the MTR and MOF approval. Since some schools had already started on projects costing more than this, there is insufficient funding for the remaining schools to have the agreed sum of US\$55,000 unless funds can be reallocated into this from other parts of the programme.
21. Now that the policy for Lead Resource Centres has been approved, it has been possible to proceed with constructing them: 25 planned for this year, and a further 21 will be completed in the coming fiscal year. These centres provide support for primary and secondary schools and also serve as the extended arm of teacher training centres. Any

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excess funds from this budget will be reallocated to meet the financing gap identified in PID schools.

22. Although there were initial delays in approving construction for the Regional Education Directorate, the programme and budget is in the final stage of approval: action on this can follow shortly.
23. The Mission acknowledged the progress in appointing engineers and overseer posts for the duration of the programme. The Mission requested information for when the Ministry of General Administration will be able to give approval for these posts.

## Scholarships

24. The increasing participation of girls in secondary education was noted and commended. In Karnali Zone all girl students in the PIDs benefit from scholarships. The Mission received data on scholarships in all districts. An intensive study is requested to assess the extent to which scholarships has improved the performance of students.

## Teacher Education

25. Particularly noteworthy teacher education are demand-driven training and Distance Education and Open Learning systems. However, there are constraints on the capacity of ETCs to meet demands placed on them, and the delay in completing planned LRCs continues to hamper the demand-driven training. NCED will work with DOE to resolve problems with overlapping roles, to maximise the benefits of the funding, with proposals to be presented before ASIP 2007.

## The Way Ahead

26. MOES and DOE will facilitate collaboration as soon as possible between NCED and the Faculty of Education to ensure the implementation of the following activities: ICT integrated Teacher Preparation Courses, ICT teacher-training and other teacher education courses.
27. The School Sector Approach (SSA) was outlined, and the Concept Paper was discussed. Development partners endorsed the initiative. The next stage of the process is the preparation of the Core Document, and the Government invited development partners to support the SSA process. Seven Thematic Groups have begun work on elements of the Core Document, and partners are invited to participate in the process of planning. A small number of pilot districts will implement SSA, with the phasing of full implementation to begin in 2009-10, at the close of the present funding cycle of SESP.
28. The Mission acknowledged the fruitful collaboration between I/NGOs and education and commended this, hoping that this will extend beyond PIDs to other districts.
29. The Mission commented on the fact that the share of the National Budget devoted to the education sector had reduced from 16.75% to 15.99%. They were of the view that the Government's declared commitment to education should be evidenced best by restoring this percentage at least to 16.75%, if not higher. It will be much easier for

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development partners to give wider support to the SSA if they see the Government making increased expenditure on education a priority.

30. The next SESP Review is planned for May 2007 in Kathmandu and will be timed to coincide either with EFA Review or MTR. Draft supporting documentation for the May review will be presented to SESP monthly meeting in March 2007.