

**Aide Memoire  
Fifth Review Mission  
Secondary Education Support Programme  
27-30 November 2005**

**Background**

1. The Secondary Education Support Programme (SESP) was launched in August 2003, and has accomplished the comprehensive interim project in preparation for full-fledged implementation of the programme. SESP is a national programme, aimed at improving the physical learning environment at schools throughout the country in a phased manner. Reform of secondary education like improving the curriculum and assessment system, teacher development have a nation-wide coverage.
2. The execution of the programme has improved. However challenges remain. Discussing progress and mitigating measures was one of the main objectives of the Joint Review. Scope and timing of the upcoming MTR was discussed.
3. Representatives from the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) of His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG/N), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Denmark carried out the fifth Joint Review Mission of the SESP in Kathmandu 27-30 November 2005. The MoES chaired the mission proceedings. The list of participants is attached in Annex A.
4. The fifth Joint Review Mission preceded the Education for All 2004-09 annual consultations and the mission subscribes to the view that support for secondary education should be seen in the context established by the education for all movement.
5. The programme of the mission included meetings between the partners at MoES and Department of Education (DoE) based on presentations and discussion of a range of documentation as well as high-level consultation with representatives of the National Planning Commission (NPC), Ministry of Finance (MoF) and Financial Comptroller Generals Office (FCGO). Consultation with representatives of civil society was also included in the review programme. Further, the representative of Denmark accompanied by a representative of DoE visited schools and interacted with stakeholders in Dhanusa and Saptari.
6. This Aide Memoire was drafted and agreed to by the three partners to SESP.

**Status Report and Programme Progress**

7. The DoE presented the annual Status Report for SESP. Due to time constraints, a brief discussion aimed at clarifying a few points was undertaken. The completion of the provision for toilets for girls may require some additional funding from this year ASIP.
8. The sharing with stakeholders focused on the current teaching learning conditions in lower secondary and secondary schools. Teachers are reported to have to cope with difficult

circumstances. The number of teaching periods per week, overcrowding of classrooms, delays and insufficient delivery of textbooks were some of the impediments mentioned.

9. Deployment of teachers seems to be a major challenge. The number of positions has not been regulated lately and is not distributed according to the needs. In particular, there is a shortage of subject teachers (English and Nepali).
10. The representative of private schools mentioned the lack of trained teachers and absence of training system for teachers in private schools as a pertinent issue.
11. The interaction with stakeholders supported information that the school year 2005/06 has seen a substantial increase in enrolment, particularly of girls. In general, classrooms are too small but the increase in enrolment has led to further shortage and overcrowding. Shift classes are necessary, and there is a deficit of school furniture and other physical facilities.
12. Experience with support to SMC from the community and the DEO is mixed, but generally positive. Training and provision of information will be required. The cost sharing ability is generally low, but schools report that they generate revenue from commercial activities and utilise this revenue to, among others, recruit teachers.
13. The review appreciated the efforts by students, teachers and SMCs to continue to conduct regular classes despite the various difficult circumstances. It is evidence of great community resilience and a quest for education. The need for a sub-sector financial and development plan was emphasised as a key tool for MoES to deal with the future development of secondary education, taking into consideration the concerns raised.

### **Mid-Term Review**

14. The MoES presented a list of preparatory documents for the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of SESP that was forwarded to partners on 17 November 2005. The MoES requested that partners consider bridging assistance to cover a possible funding gap for the fiscal year 2008/09, which may occur due to different closure dates of ADB and Danish support for SESP.
15. It was agreed that the MTR will focus on making adjustment in programme activities and budget categories within the framework of the current agreements. Considerations for major changes in funding modalities as well as issues pertinent to the long-term sectorwide approach to educational development will be taken at MTR as preparation for future support. It was also agreed that preparatory activities in this direction will be supported under SESP, including Danish direct funding and the current ADB technical assistance for the sectorwide approach.

### **Impact of Conflict**

16. The DoE presented an overview of effect of conflict and measures taken. The mission appreciated the presentation and noted a preparedness from DoE to facilitate the development and implementation of a broader range of activities, aimed at mitigating impact of conflict on the education sector.

17. The complexity of the issue will require that a brief and sequenced plan, encompassing the proposed activities, be developed for immediate initiation. The review underscored that involvement of and coordination with relevant stakeholders – teachers, parents and other representatives of civil society apart from agencies with a particular expertise – should be part of development of activities as well as the implementation. Relevant teaching skills are considered essential in this context.
18. The review expressed a readiness to supply technical assistance as required. ADB and Denmark made a commitment to support the development and implementation of the plan in the form of financial support to pilots and other forms of implementation.
19. Collecting data is one key element to understand the nature and the scope of the impact of conflict on children, teachers, schools and communities. As it is important to learn the lessons from development and implementation of the plan, it is recommended that monitoring and reporting is integrated into the implementation itself.

### **SLC Study findings**

20. Following an introduction, the review expressed its appreciation of the importance of the SLC Study as presented. The review expressed a desire that the study is completed and the final report submitted as soon as possible.
21. After completion of the study, the MoES is recommended to come up with a prioritisation of the recommendations as deemed necessary. Some of the findings may be well known, but the implications of implementing the recommendations will have impact on secondary education. The review consented that the MoES should take the lead in the process of examination reform as many of the recommendations reflect the functions and the quality of the education system.
22. To ensure the balance between quality and access, the implications of the merging of the Findings and Recommendations and the measures taken will be included in the MTR.

### **Finalising the budget for the fiscal year 2005/06**

23. Based on a presentation of changes discussed in the SESP monthly meeting on 20 October 2005 and as a follow-up to the May review, the partners finally endorsed the budget for the fiscal year 2005/06.
24. The major changes to the proposed budget consisted in construction of additional 40 schools in the PIDs. DoE will identify the sites for the additional construction among the 10 PIDs. The conflict package was consented. In addition to scholarships for Chepangs, children with disabilities and children living in hostels, the proportion of scholarship is now set at 60.000 for marginalised children of which 2/3 will be girls. The scholarship is set at Nrs. 1.700. It was also agreed to support learning materials for science labs. The financing of the Security Printing Press was agreed to. Yet, partners will consult with printing experts as soon as possible.
25. DoE will forward a formal request for approval of changes with the finalised budget and annual work plan attached, to partners.

## **ASIP for the fiscal year 2006/07**

26. DoE presented an initial analysis of the education sector budget, including the ceiling for SESP and the process for developing the ASIP. The ASIP process involves two consultations with NPC and MOF. Partners will be consulted on the ASIP template.
27. The indicative work plan and budget will be changed as per the MTR process if and when feasible.
28. The review consulted with the honourable member of the NPC, representatives of MoF and FCGO on the issues of perspectives for the sector development, the annual planning and budgeting and employment of temporary engineers and overseers.
29. The member of NPC stressed that the main concern of NPC is the coordination between donors and the MoES, as the Government intends to continue to increase funding of education up to 19% of the national budget. This is to be met in 2009. Further, it was shared that a feasibility study of the expansion of primary education to Grade 8 is being commissioned this fiscal year.
30. One of the key challenges is to prioritise initiatives to achieve a balance between access to and quality of education, reflecting availability of funds. It was a general understanding that possible changes to SESP should be consistent with the Core Document and only take place after proper tripartite consultations. The considerations by DoE to initiate process of consultations with NPC and the MoF on the ceiling for and the content of the annual work plan and budget were consented to. Furthermore, it was consented that tripartite consultations should take place regularly, before, during and after reviews. It was agreed that NPC and MoF will participate in the MTR.
31. Finally, it was concurred to find a solution to ensuring quality of and technical supervision for school construction and rehabilitation for the remaining programme period through contracting one or more engineering companies for this assignment.

## **Interaction with education agencies**

32. The review interacted with management and staff from the National Centre for Educational Development (NCED), the Office of the Controller of Examinations (OCE) and the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC). Issues concerning management and implementation of SESP were discussed.
33. With regard to NCED, it was noted that the ownership of the former Secondary Education Development Units (SEDUs) is solved. Letters of authorisation are available and renovation of SEDUs should be initiated. NCED presented a policy framework on school level certification program through open schools which could be further explored and discussed. The issue of substitute teachers should be looked into and solved as soon as possible. Distance tutoring for SLC students should be continued and firmly located in NCED. Although ambitious, the institutional linkages were appreciated. It was also felt that attention should be given to strengthening the capacity of the NCED. As an example, it was mentioned that a functioning distance education traditionally requires a considerable initial investment and availability of

specialised staff. The provision of further technical assistance could facilitate the development of a critical mass of professional staff competences in this as well as other areas.

34. OCE shared current activities. The visit underscored the need for institutional development and change. Aspects of the capacity needs were highlighted.
35. At CDC, efforts to bring issues of curriculum and assessment forward through own studies and incorporation of recommendation from, say the SLC Study, was appreciated. The review was again presented with general needs for capacity building and institutional development, including needs for information technology support and international exposure.
36. Based on general observations, the review recommends that steps be taken to address the capacity building needs of NCED, OCE and CDC in a comprehensive manner. The review considers the functioning of and collaboration between the agencies as essential for improvement in the quality of education. Needs for capacity building and institutional development, especially with regard to the institutional structure, staff retention, networking and international exposure should be reflected and sufficient allocations made in the ASIP 06/07.

### **Loan Covenants**

37. The compliance with the loan covenants was appraised. The functioning of the School Inspectorate is expected to be included in the MTR. It was noted that the development of the curriculum for the 10 months pre-service training is in process. The SESP monthly meeting will with due consideration to SESP indicators discuss requirements for a programme benefits and performance monitoring system. Technical support from the programme will be supplied, when required. A revised update of the “Compliance with Loan Covenants” will be attached to the Status Report. The Status report is recognised as the Progress Report of September 2005.

### **Project Performance Audit Report**

38. The follow-up issues for The Project Performance Audit Report for the Secondary Education Development Project (Loan 1196-NEP(SF) between ADB and HMG/N were highlighted.
39. The MoES will submit a progress report addressing the four issues addressed in this report by December 2005.

### **Next steps**

40. The MTR was planned for 6-15 March 2006. A Terms of Reference for the MTR will be formulated on the basis of the review discussions and the paper circulated earlier and attached to this Aide Memoire.
41. The next SESP review is planned for May 2006 in Kathmandu. It will be short and connected to the EFA review.
42. Documentation for the MTR will be forwarded to partners no later than 20 February 2006.

43. Draft supporting documentation for the May review will be presented to SESP monthly meeting in March 2006 and final versions forwarded to partners 14 days before the review.
44. After consultation, terms of reference and programmes for the MTR and May review will be forwarded to partners no later than one month before the reviews.

**Attachments**

- TOR and programme (revised)
- Participants
- Action plan
- MTR TOR