I. Introduction

In Ethiopia, the education sector in general and the basic education sub-sector in particular is characterized by low access, efficiency, quality and an equitable distribution of educational opportunities. Realizing this fact, the current Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has adopted an Educational and Training Policy (ETP) along with its sector strategy in 1994.

The Policy clearly outlined the mission and goals for the education system of Ethiopia to achieve the present and future national and social economic goals. And, the country has set a goal of universal primary education by the year 2017.

To realize the goal of the education and training policy, a program action, the first Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP-I) was launched in 1997/98, and concluded in July 2003. The three years second Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP-II) has been completed and ESDP-III (2005-06-2010/11) has started, in line with the new Ethiopian PRSP, called PASDEP.

The education sector in Ethiopia has seen dramatic growth in enrolments in recent years. Enrolments in Grades 1-12 rose at about 9% a year between 1992-93 to the present. This is a remarkable achievement given the patterns of stagnation, reversals and uneven growth in the past. The emphasis has been on Grades 1-4, the first cycle of primary schooling, reflecting the government's commitment to expansion of schooling opportunities for the poor. The gross enrolment ration (GER) for primary education, a common indicator for measuring coverage, more than tripled between 1993-94 and 2003-04, from 20 to 68.5%. There has, in particular, been impressive progress on girls' education - with girls' primary GER going from 47% in 2000/01 to 59.1% in 2003/04.

As impressive as the expansion of the education system has been, signs of distress are emerging. Since 1993-94, key indicators of quality have been in decline. The Ministry of Education must now ensure that quality - including the
provision of textbooks, teaching materials, classrooms and trained teachers - improves to match increases in enrolments.

The past Joint Review Mission Reports and Annual Review Meetings of ESDP-I & ESDP-II have pointed out that the quality and efficiency of the education system is very low because there are too many children in one classroom for an effective teaching-learning process, there are no 'enough textbooks, not enough libraries or reading rooms, and there is a shortage of qualified and experienced teachers. Moreover, a continuing theme that hinders the implementation of the ESDP is the lack of capacity in all involved government bodies or departments in the education sector at the federal, regional, and woreda (district) levels. So, greater attention has to be devoted to capacity strengthening than has been the case in the past, to equipping staff at all levels with the tools and transport that they need to carry out their functions, to organize the massive training in accounting and Procurement that was initially planned to precede ESDP implementation.

II. CONTEXT:

As mentioned earlier, ESDP (Education Sector Development Programme) is a twenty-year, long-term plan (1997-2017) to improve overall education while achieving greater social equity. It also aims at achieving basic universal education by the year 2015.

ESDP-I covered the first five years (1997-2002) of the programme. Over this period, the programme was designed for the expansion of primary education with special attention to girls' education, rural and under-served regions, the improvement to the quality of education and a more equitable distribution of education opportunities.
ESDP-II covered the period 2002-2005. ESDP-III, covering the period 2005-2010 in line with the new PRSP (called PASDEP), has just been approved by the Council of Ministers and Federal parliament. It has began implementation in Ethiopia fiscal year of 1999 (2006).
The group wants the experiences of East Asian countries which they have accumulated over the periods after their independence on the following key education policies and programmes. Our government is making effort working on these issues but many challenges are struggling against the efforts for which we need urgent solutions by learning the experiences of these countries. Following is the presentation of the key elements for the tour.

I. Student learning and assessment in primary and secondary education

In parallel to the expansion of education, the need for maintaining quality and assessing progress overtime are imperative. The First National Educational Assessment (FNEA) and the Second National Educational Assessment (SNEA) were conducted in 1999/2000 and 2003/2004 respectively on the first and second cycles of primary education, grades 4 and 8. The main objective of the first National Learning Assessment was to establish baseline data on students learning achievements while the objective of the second one was to monitor its progress overtime. The result of the assessment indicated much has be done to improve students performance.

The findings of the national assessments, however, draw on output only. There is a need to put in place other quality assurance mechanisms. In this regard there is a plan to introduce international assessment schemes which could show where we stand in terms of quality compared to other countries. Expanding the learning assessment exercise to post-primary level needs also to be considered.

The following are the major problems

- Low teachers perception of students learning and instructional quality
- Inappropriate use of instructional materials by teachers
- Students background and shortage of teachers’ guides and syllabus
Areas of experience needed

- Interactive, child centred learning approach and classroom management particularly in large size classrooms.
- Appropriate utilization of the production of cluster resource centres by satellite schools teachers and the management of the centres.
- Maximizing education materials including curriculum syllabus to reach teachers.

II. Establishment of sustainable national systems for textbooks

The issue of student-textbook ratio in Ethiopia needs to be tackled in order to increase the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process. In this case, the availability of quality textbooks in sufficient quantity and quality is quite indispensable needless to mention about the need for supplementary educational content. The Government has targeted to provide textbooks to each student at least for core subjects. However, meeting this target is still a challenge due to lack of resources. The major of problems observed in this regard include but not limited:

- Lack of comprehensive textbook policy
- Inadequate financial resource
- Lack of expertise pertinent to textbook management, planning, preparation, utilization and other pedagogical issues
The Ethiopian Government needs assistance in the following areas

- Capacity Building in textbook policy formulation and related pedagogical issues
- Technical assistance in textbook design and preparation
- Financial assistance to meet challenges related to establishment of sustainable national system for textbook design and preparation.

III. Use of multi-grade teaching in rural schools

Running multi-grade classes is not a new invention for Ethiopia. Such classes in Ethiopia are usually identified as religious schools where there is one teacher but graded students based on their level of study and age. However, this approach has been adopted in some area and has shown promising results. The study conducted to evaluate the program indicated that the system provided opportunity for those who were not able to go to school, obtained genuine support from the community, increase ability of teachers to manage students of different abilities in a single class.

Based on domestic as well as international experiences we are putting efforts to use multi-grade classes, especially in areas where student population is very small.

In this regard the following are considered as major challenges:

- Lack of appropriate training courses and materials to train multi-grade teachers.
- Teachers are not well trained in pedagogy and management of multi-grade students
Textbooks are not modified in such a way that self-learning approaches and exercises are not incorporated to meet the needs of a multi-grade class student.

Hence, we need the following experiences:-

Capacity building on developing the actual textbooks and related teaching materials on multi-grade teaching
➢ Training materials for teacher education institutions in pedagogy of multi-grade teaching

IV. Education System Financing

Since 2000 G.0 Ethiopia's government has been spending more on education, restoring aggregate public recurrent spending on education to the 3% of GDP that prevailed in 1993-94 G.0

The main source of education finance are government subsidy, own revenue collected at the various levels, loans, grants/donations and community contributions. Contributions in labour and kind are usually converted into monetary amounts and included in budgets.

The major challenges are:-

. How to prioritize the scarce resources? (over which levels of education, which types of expenditure)
• How to identify the options for reducing costs to align with available resource? (service delivery alternatives, lower targets etc...)
The Ethiopian Government needs assistance in the following areas:

- Resource mobilization and creativity in the utilization
  - In order to address the above problems, capacity should be created at all levels to analyse the relationship between various input and output outcomes of education process to focus on achieving maximum return out of scarce resource.

V. Strategies for scaling up lower secondary education, especially in the junior cycle, in response to progress toward universal primary education

During the past years more emphasis has been given to primary education with the focus of achieving UPE by 2015. This has created increased pressure to expand post-primary education. Most of this growing demand is coming from the rural areas because there is huge enrollment increase at primary level as a result of the educational opportunity created to the rural children. This requires to create secondary education with reasonable distance to sect”” the population. Hence, the response to meet this growing demand needs serious planning.

The following are the major problem encountered:

- The demand and supply mismatch regarding schools and teachers
- Curriculum relevancy to satisfy the labour market.
The Ethiopian Government needs assistance in the following areas:

- Expanding access to post-primary education, while improving quality, efficiency and equity and without diverting scarce resources from primary.

- Developing a sustainable financing strategy with the right balances between the levels, and between sources of financing;

- Designing an effective strategy on transition rates primary-secondary and secondary-TVET/university

- What should the educational pyramid look like in light of the drive to achieve primary completion and the expansion of the TVET and university systems?

- Encourage the private investors to involve the education sector.

- What specific actions if taken are most likely to result in rapid gains in quality standards?

- What steps are most likely to prove most beneficial in redressing inequities in access between boys and girls?