

**Statement by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
at the Second GoM – External Partners Technical Meeting,
October 9-10, 2006, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**

**Esteemed Chair,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am very pleased to present a review of most recent developments in the education sector and the projection of future steps in the GoM-donors' cooperation in this area.

The Master Plan Process

As you may remember, the education has become the lead sector in institutionalizing a sector-wide approach framework in the cooperation between the GoM and the donors. This comprehensive sector-wide framework began to emerge more than a year ago under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and a strong commitment by the lead donors in education such as the ADB and the Embassy of Japan as well as such organizations as UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank.

An Education Donors' Consultative Mechanism with participation of the MECS, the MoF, the Embassy of Japan, and major intergovernmental and non-governmental donors was established at the time when major strategic assessments and development plans for the education sector had been initiated such as the Education For All Assessment, Fast Track Initiative (FTI) Assessment, the ADB Third Education Development Project Proposal, and the most significant strategic document to date – Mongolia's Education Development Master Plan for 2006-2015. The Master Plan was approved by the Government of Mongolia on 16 August this year and has become the single most important document identifying long-term objectives in the education sector approved by all national and international stakeholders in Mongolia.

The Master Plan is a roadmap towards achieving two strategic goals in 2015: reducing poverty and social inequality by making Mongolia's education more accessible and inclusive, and improving the quality of education to reflect the needs and challenges of a contemporary society. The international emphases on the Education For All and the Millennium Development Goals have provided an extra impetus in the drive to concentrate on the above two issues. The development of the Master Plan rested on the following major principles: (1)government leadership, (2)cross-sectoral and intersectoral mechanism, (3)donor coordination mechanism, (4)central and local

government and institutional responsibilities, and (5) participation of civil society actors and broad partnership of all stakeholders. The implementation of these principles along with dedication and commitment of all experts and officials involved explains the success of the Master Plan development and its recognition by the stakeholders. Using this opportunity, permit me to express the Ministry's appreciation and gratitude to all persons and institutions that participated in developing the Master Plan, in particular, the education donors with whom we have shared all difficulties and achievements alike and a deep sense of a common goal.

Now, what are the major lessons learnt from the process of developing a common master plan for Mongolia? The major lesson is that aid harmonization is possible in Mongolia if all actors unite on the basis of one platform and have a working mechanism to ensure their concrete and effective joint action. Another important lesson is the existence of a committed group of Mongolian and foreign officials and experts that can drive the process and lead it to completion.

The third important lesson is the reflection of all international standards of education planning in the Master Plan including financial estimates and projections and monitoring and evaluation frameworks for the first time in a strategic document of such magnitude. The planning framework could be used for other sectoral and multisectoral planning exercises including the preparation of Mongolia's development strategy, and implementation and monitoring frameworks for National MDGs.

The Next Challenge: Implementation and Continued Aid Harmonization

We understand very well that implementing the Master Plan will be a continued test of our commitment, intelligence, and capacity. This challenge is fully perceived and shared by the donors as well, as testified to by the Fourth Meeting of the Education Donors Consultative Mechanism that was held just a week ago on 28 September 2006.

The meeting discussed preparations for the current Technical Meeting, future steps in implementing the Master Plan including the issue of potential funding from the FTI Catalytic Fund to bridge the funding gap identified in the Master Plan's financial projections. The potential grant may become the first budget support to be implemented by the GoM together with the donors in the history of Mongolia's cooperation with the donors. The preconditions for FTI funding include the existence of a sector development strategy, a working donor coordination mechanism, and government's commitment to continued education funding at 20 percent of budget

expenditures. This development is the direct achievement of the Master Plan process and donor coordination in education.

Now, the next logical step for education partners is to agree on an action plan that sets out activities and targets for implementation of the Master Plan. As agreed by the EDCM, there would be a single action plan that includes all education subsectors and all partners' (GoM and the donors) activities. The FTI action plan and monitoring framework will be an integral part of the sector-wide action plan. The EDCM Meeting established deadlines for development and approval by education partners of the Action Plan that also includes the FTI exercise. As agreed at the Meeting, the Ministry would like to present an initial guideline on priority areas for FTI grant funding for 2007-2009. Grant funding of FTI will be used in primary education in particular improving facilities of primary schools and dormitories as well as strengthening the quality of primary education teaching.

The most important future goal is to institutionalize and operationalize the implementation mechanism as envisaged in Chapter 6 of the Master Plan. It includes two major exercises: (1) moving towards a full sector-wide approach in education through continued aid harmonization, and (2) development of annual implementation plans to reflect fully the Master Plan operations and financial commitments in the government operations' and budget plans. These two important tasks will require institutional capacity-building at the MECS and establishing of an effective working relationship between the MECS, MoF, and the external partners. Of course, strengthening of the EDCM according to a concrete plan should become a priority on the agenda.

To make the Technical Meeting more practical and effective, I would like to suggest the following Draft Joint Action Plan for GoM and Development Partners. This Draft has been discussed by the MECS and the donors over a series of consultations that were held last week.

**Draft GoM and Education Development Partners Joint Action Plan
(October 2006-March 2007)**

Purpose of the Action Plan:

- To develop AIP of the Education Master plan for 2007 (including FTI proposal)
- To set up the institutionalized, sustainable SWAP based Management for achieving Education Master Plan

Activity steps of the Action Plan:

	Tasks	Responsibility	Completion Date
Objective I: Development of annual implementation plan AIP for 2007 with monitoring framework			
1	<p>To operationalize the development of the AIP for 2007:</p> <p>(i) To set up the preparation team of AIP (including FTI proposal) at the MECS</p> <p>(ii) To set up the inter-sectoral team (MECS and MOF) to identify framework and directions of FTI proposal</p> <p>(iii) Recruit the consultants to support the AIP development using ADB TA</p>	<p>(i) MECS</p> <p>(ii) MECS and MOF</p> <p>(iii) MECS and ADB</p>	<p>(i) First week, October, 2006</p> <p>(ii) First week, October, 2006</p> <p>(iii) Second week, October, 2006</p>
2	<p>Preparing AIP for 2007 with a monitoring framework, including FTI requirements:</p> <p>(i) Activity framework of the AIP and FTI proposal will be available based on priority actions of Master Plan by 2015</p> <p>(ii) Each development partner to provide information on all</p>	<p>(i) MECS</p> <p>(ii) Development partners</p>	<p>(I) End of October, 2006</p> <p>(ii) End of October , 2006</p>

	ongoing and planned projects, resources and schedule.		
	(iii) First draft of the FTI proposal (including budgetary and monitoring framework) within the framework of AIP	(iii) MECS	(iii) 31 October, 2006
	(iv) FTI proposal will be reviewed by Government and Donors	(iY) MECS, MOF and Development partners	(iY) 10 November, 2006
	(v) First draft of the AIP (including budgetary framework) and final FTI proposal will be available	(Y) MECS	(Y) 1 December, 2006
	(vi) Finalize AIP	(Yi) MECS	(Yi) First week, December, 2006
	(vii) AIP for 2007 will be endorsed	(Yii) MECS and Development partners	(Yii) Third week, January, 2007

Objective II: Establishment of institutionalized, sustainable SWAP based Management for achieving Education Master Plan

3	To operationalize the implementation mechanism as required in MP including:		
	(i) To set up the inter-sectoral policy council (including MOF and other line Ministries)	MECS	(i) Beginning of November, 2006
	(ii) To set up the management mechanism in charge of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Master plan at MECS	MECS	(ii) End of November, 2006

