

WARM WORDS, LITTLE ACTION FROM G8 SAYS GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) has issued a guarded welcome to the constructive wording on education offered up in this year's G8 communiqué but is dismayed that yet again these promises aren't backed by enough real and specific funding commitments.

Campaigners say the text of 'Growth and Responsibility in Africa' is a broadly positive reiteration of rich countries' responsibility to support Education For All (EFA). Of particular note is the affirmation of the Dakar pledge that 'no country seriously committed to 'Education for All' will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by lack of resources'. This goes further, even, than the 2005 Gleneagles communiqué, GCE analysts stated. They also greeted with pleasure the strong endorsement of the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative (launched in 2002 to accelerate funding for universal primary education), and their promise to pay attention to low-income countries and fragile states.

Yet whilst these statements are undeniably welcome, GCE gave a more subdued response to the financial commitments offered up today. Eleventh-hour negotiations led to the G8 reaffirming the 2005 aid targets – a hard-won result but one that represents the status quo, rather than the progress campaigners had hoped for. Activists at the summit commented that on aid overall, the G8 are running to stand still.

Education activists have been urging the G8 to make a firm pledge to close the financing gap for education – estimated by United Nations at \$6 billion per annum for universal primary completion and as much as \$13 billion for the full EFA agenda. The communiqué contains just one statement on financing EFA, obliging the G8 'to work with partners and other donors to meet shortfalls in all FTI-endorsed countries...around \$500 million for 2007'. This ambiguous and limited statement falls far short of the stated plan to get 80 million children into school and end the scandal of global illiteracy with one in five adults currently unable to read or write.

"We trust that the G8 will be as good as their word and come up with this \$500 million immediately," said Kailash Satyarthi, GCE President "but it is just a fraction of what is needed to meet their own promise to provide universal education. The G8's share of the financing gap is at least \$5 billion per year. Campaigners in over 100 countries won't be satisfied with this measly offering ."

"We welcome the words on education that you've produced. But close to 1 billion people still can't read what you've written. Only when you've put your words into action and pledge the money you know is needed will this change"

David Archer (GCE Board Member & ActionAid International)

"We've heard these words before back in 2000 at the World Education Forum - that rich countries will stick to their side of the bargain in providing education for everyone. This is good only if these words are made a reality. Since this promise was first made millions have reached graduation age without ever going school. How many millions more will miss out before the G8 puts the resources behind their warm words on education."

Sita Dewkalie (GCE Board Member & Oxfam International)

8th June

GCE ASKS G8 "LIVE UP TO YOUR POTENTIAL, GIVE EVERYONE A CHANCE TO GO TO SCHOOL"

"As you enjoy the sea air in Heiligendamn, remember us. Eight of you have the potential to give 80 million children and 800 million adults an education. Do your maths homework, and add some extra lessons in morality. This year, the world's children should learn that promises result in action.

Rasheda Choudhury, GCE Board Member

On the eve of the G8 Summit, the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) is uniting to call for action on aid and on basic education. Two years ago in Gleneagles, the G8 committed to increase aid by \$50 billion overall by 2010. GCE is deeply concerned that, at this late stage, there is not even agreement to reiterate the 2005 commitments, desperately needed to achieve Education For All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals. Specific commitments on education seem even more remote, as the Summit becomes mired by deadlock on climate change and Russia's controversial stance on defence.

Yet campaigners press the case that global attention to education is urgently needed. GCE recently published a 'School Report', which grades rich countries' performance in giving aid to achieve EFA. It shows that aid to basic education is actually falling – and at least another \$6

billion per year is needed. The report highlights that the some of the worst 'class performers' are the G8 nations. The US, Japan, Germany and Italy are the most miserly of the rich countries, collectively giving just 10% of what is needed to keep their own promises of universal education by 2015. The reports says that G8 class captain, Angela Merkel, urgently needs to pull her socks up to find the additional \$472 million a year needed for Germany to be funding its 'fair share' of the costs of giving all children a decent primary education.

Just ahead of the Summit, US President George Bush made a modest announcement of extra aid to basic education – calling on Congress to fund \$525 million over the next five years. Increases are long overdue; US performance has left them sitting near the bottom of GCE's 'class' in recent years. But although welcome, this diffident effort is way below what is needed to improve their class position. In fact, the US must increase aid by \$2.5 billion per annum to achieve an 'A' grade in the GCE School Report. Increases on a similar scale are also needed from Germany, Japan, Italy and France.

Education is the best weapon the world has against illness, disease, poverty and conflict. With good education, in time, comes jobs, national development, growth, empowerment and prosperity. Just one year of schooling increases a woman's future earning potential by 10-20%, and if a woman completes school her children are 50% more likely to survive past the age of five. Moreover, if every child went to school seven million cases of HIV/AIDS could be prevented in the next decade.

"Every year world leaders in fancy hotels debate whether they can afford to give a tiny proportion of their national wealth to help every girl and boy get an education. But they should be thinking about the cost of inaction. Every year that progress on education is held up sees another generation condemned to hard labour, poverty, ill-health and despair. Will this create the stable global society that all nations – including the G8 – strive for?"
Kailash Satyarthi (President of the Global Campaign for Education)

"In over 100 countries, millions of people of all ages have joined up to taking demand their right to go education. Now we're addressing just eight people from eight rich countries – can you do the same?"
Elie Jouen (Chair of the Global Campaign for Education)

6th June

GCE, ANCEFA AND GNECC ASK AFRICAN FINANCE MINISTERS TO REMEMBER EDUCATION

The Africa Network Campaign on Education For All (ANCEFA) led GCE's campaigning with the help of Ghana's National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC) at the Financing for Development Conference of African Finance Ministers, May 30-31st in Accra. Although the theme of energy took centre stage at this meeting, education was still a hot topic. Erich Stather State Secretary at the German Development Ministry opened the session on progress on Gleneagles by promising that Germany would fulfil its aid commitments. This is good news considering the G8 is only days away! Honourable Minister of Finance of Ghana, Mr. Baah-Wiredu gave a summary of progress since the Abuja meeting in Nigeria last year and called on donors to give their fair share for education. Only the Minister of Education of Ghana was able to give a review of his ministry's 10 year plan. ANCEFA welcomed the attempt to review the progress on "10 year costed education plans", a commitment made by African Finance Ministers at Abuja last year. However, as energy took the limelight at this conference, another opportunity to review the quality of all the 10 year costed plans is needed. It is clear that more homework is required from both African Finance and rich country Finance Ministers.

1st June

AHEAD OF G8 CHILDREN 'MOVE THE WORLD' IN BERLIN AND DEMAND EDUCATION FOR ALL.

Over 100 children joined hands in solidarity and moved the world through Berlin's famous Brandenburg Gate in demand that the G8 take steps to make sure that money be made available so that everyone can have an education. Campaigners carried on the theme of people & human chains and pushed a huge inflatable globe along the chain to symbolise children 'moving the world'. Thousands of paper chains were delivered from other countries asking Merkel for more action. The event was a huge success attended by Reuters TV, APTV, DPA Radio and other media outlets.

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30th May

VERDICT FROM GCE'S PRESIDENT, KAILASH SATYARTHI ON 'KEEPING OUR PROMISES' CONFERENCE

Once again the world's richest nations have failed the world's poorest and neediest children. The ministers came with their notebooks, not their chequebooks.

Initial analysis indicates that the new money announced today will be enough to get less than 1 million children into school, a tiny fraction of the global total. The eighty million children missing an education were promised they would get the chance to go to school, all they have learnt today is that rich countries break their promises.

The very richest countries should be embarrassed about their continuing failure to deliver aid to basic education – particularly key G8 members like the US, Germany and Japan. Millions of children will continue to be denied the chance to go to school because these countries refuse to pay their fair share. It should be a source of embarrassment to the governments in Washington, Tokyo and Berlin that they are performing less well on aiding basic education than smaller countries such as the Netherlands and Belgium.

It is vital that the political leaders do not disappear for another 5 years –they must attend the annual High Level Group meetings on education from now on. Donors must also address the full Education for All agenda, not just universal primary education. The time for warm words is over. The time for action is now.

16th May

NOT UP TO SCRATCH! NEW REPORT SLATES WORLD LEADERS' PERFORMANCE IN FUNDING EDUCATION ON EVE OF CRUCIAL DONOR CONFERENCE

Today the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) released a damning report showing a significant fall in rich country aid to funding basic education in the poor world. On the eve of an exceptional high-level event, the report shows that the US, Japan, Germany and Italy are the most miserly of the rich countries, collectively giving just 10% of what is needed to keep their own promises of every person having the chance of an education by 2015.

Co-convened by Louis Michel, Gordon Brown and Paul Wolfowitz the 'Keeping Our Promises

on Education' is the first donor conference on education in five years. It is a crucial opportunity for world leaders to secure the breakthrough needed to keep the promises on basic education, but activists are concerned that their recent record shows they do anything but.

'Not up to Scratch,' is the title of GCE's 2007 annual 'School Report' which gives an assessment and ranking of the 22 world's richest OECD countries, and holds them to account for their promises on aid for education. George Bush, President of the wealthiest country in the world comes a shocking 20th in the class, followed only by Greece and Austria who trail at the very bottom of the class.

Germany's Angela Merkel, current 'class captain' of the EU and G8 will need to significantly pull up her aid socks and find the additional \$472 million needed each year to fulfill her promise. Currently leading the G8 on aid for education, the UK comes fourth in the class overall, with a B average. Top of the class is the Netherlands and Norway.

According to the report, aid to basic education is less than a third of the amount required to achieve even the minimal target of getting all children into school. Reaching \$9 billion annually would at least give the 80 million children currently denied an education, the chance to go to primary school. And a bigger challenge is on the horizon; none of the G8 nations is anywhere near giving its fair share of the total \$16 billion needed per year to reach their own Education for All (EFA) goals which include tackling adult literacy and pre-school education, and to help orphans and vulnerable children.

"Giving only 39% of her fair share to basic education is simply not good enough for this important nation. Angela Merkel needs to show better leadership if she's to encourage her G8 and EU classmates to make the team effort needed. If the G8 leaders pulled their finger out, kept their promise and provided \$5 billion, this would enable 75% of all out of school children to go to school. Seven countries could make that happen. That same amount is what is spent in 5 weeks on subsidizing farmers in Europe via the EU Common Agriculture Policy."

Kailash Satyarthi (President of GCE)

Attendees of the conference on education in Brussels on 2 May will be left in no doubt of the GCE's seriousness of intent. Former child slave, Freeman Gadri from Ghana, will open the conference on education with a personal testimony of how education liberated him from a life of slavery and ignorance. Taken from his mother at the age of 6, Freeman spent most his

childhood working for a fisherman until, when free schooling was introduced in Ghana, he was rescued, reunited with his mother and started school for the first time. His and other testimonies of child labourers from India and Colombia will bring the message to the heart of the conference.

Imagine what a different world we would live in if all children could complete school; if the millions of children currently left waiting at the school gates, were taught and inspired by teachers that fed their dreams and nurtured their intelligence. We could give young people this chance. The chance to take part in democracy, to protect their family from illness, to communicate in times of conflict, to be future citizens of the world and lead the world out of extreme poverty.

Rasheda Choudhury

(GCE Board member and Director, Campaign for Popular Education, Bangladesh)

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION URGES DONORS TO GIVE RESOURCES NOT RHETORIC; EDUCATION CONFERENCE IN 50 DAYS

Activists from hundreds of organizations around the world, united under the banner 'Global Campaign for Education' (GCE) today welcomed Louis Michel, European Commissioner for Development's announcement of an exceptional high-level donor conference on education in Brussels this spring. Michel used the informal meeting of EU development ministers in Bonn to announce 'Keeping Our Promises in Education' which he will convene along with, the World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz, and UK Chancellor Gordon Brown on May 2nd.

Campaigners say the event offers the best opportunity in five years for rich countries to cast aside the remaining obstacles to the achievement of Education for All, including making real and substantial financial commitments to support countries' education plans. At the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar, governments agreed to a range of targets to give every child and adult a fair chance at a decent education by 2015. GCE therefore looks forward to top-level participation in the donor conference to deliver a breakthrough, including, crucially, from the EU Presidency and G8 Host, Germany, say spokespeople.

We see this as a key moment for achieving the long-awaited resolution of an education crisis that leaves 80 million children out of school and almost a billion adults unable to read and write. Since 1999 we have been waiting for world leaders to pledge and disperse serious money to end this global scandal. With just fifty days between now and the donor conference,

campaigners will be calling on their governments to make 2 nd May a remarkable day for future generations.

Kailash Satyarthi (President of the Global Campaign for Education and Global March against Child Labour)

Education supporters noted that progress on May 2nd is crucial, as the next two years are decisive in reaching Education for All by 2015, the targets agreed by world leaders. For example, to meet the goal of universal primary completion by 2015, all children need to start school by 2009.

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Rasheda Choudhury

Director, Campaign for Popular Education, Bangladesh

Recent research findings show that progress is possible; since 2000 the number of children out of school has gone down from over 100 million to 80 million, and the gender gap in education is closing. Aid to education – especially in poorer countries – is inching up, but much more needs to be done. Seven years since the World Education Forum in Dakar the resources required have not been committed. The Global Campaign for Education estimates at least \$12 billion per year extra will be needed to achieve EFA. This is equivalent to just 0.1 per cent of global military expenditure annually.

GCE's rallying cry for 2007 is 'JOIN UP Education Rights Now'. The theme was inspired by Nelson Mandela's words to young GCE campaigners in April 2006: "You might think that you are powerless, but if all the world's children join together, they can be more powerful than any government". In 120 countries, including the world's richest nations, campaigners will be coming together to form the world's longest chain to remind the powerful of their promises. Activities will intensify during GCE's Global Action Week, 23 rd – 29th April, when supporters will be taking the chance to maximize pressure ahead of the May 2nd meeting. The message

they will be sending to politicians is – Do something great! Give everyone an education!

We're relieved that world leaders have not forgotten the promises they made in Dakar seven years ago, but we don't need another talking shop on education; let us see a new chapter of actions, not words.

Gorgui Sow

Co-ordinator African Network Campaigns on Education For All