

Report on the 135st Brown Bag Lunch

Theme: More and Better Aid for Education – the UK's Approach to supporting Education in Developing Countries –

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I . Lecture by Mr. Desmond Bermingham

Thank you and good afternoon to everyone. I always feel a bit nervous when I am talking to people at lunchtime, because I am sure you have other things on your mind than education and development. But I will try to be as short as I can and give lots of space for questions and then discussion, because I really want to have a conversation with you, rather than just talk at you.

Let me start by saying thank you to Foundation for Advanced Studies on International Development (FASID) and in particular the Director of FASID for inviting me to speak here this afternoon. I also want to thank the Director General of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for taking the time to meet with me before this session.

I have worked in education and development now for nearly 20 years and in my work for DFID around the world, I frequently come across very high quality professionals from Japan working for Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or as volunteers in the education system in countries in Africa and Asia. It is a real pleasure to be coming here to this institution which has been responsible for training many of those individuals, so it is a real pleasure and an honor, and thank you again, Director, for inviting me.

My talk is entitled “More and Better Aid for Education.” I have deliberately chosen to talk about “better” as well as “more” aid. The challenge for all of us working in development over the next few years will be to ensure not only that there is an increase in aid, but also that this aid is used effectively so that – in education - more and more young people receive a high quality education. So that is what I will focus on during my discussion this afternoon.

I do not think I need to make the case to any of the colleagues in this room about the importance of education. The phrase I often use when I am giving these presentations is I would see education as being the key to unlocking the door of ignorance. Education, as we all know, builds human resource capacity, it promotes economic growth and it has a positive impact on people's health and their wellbeing. One statistic will serve as an example: a young woman in Uganda who has had a secondary school education is four times less likely to become HIV/AIDS positive than if she has had no education at all; it is clearly essential that girls and young women are given opportunities to complete their education.

Education empowers people to take control over their own lives. I am sure many of you are familiar with the work of the great Indian development economist Amartya Sen and his work on development and freedom. Sen makes a very strong case for investment in education to give people the freedoms and the capabilities they need to make decisions in their own lives.

Education also has a key contribution to make in building stronger and safer states. In an increasingly insecure and unstable world, the right kind of education - and I stress the right kind of education - can build tolerance and understanding between peoples of different race, creed and culture. The fact that I can sit here today and share views and experiences despite our very different cultures and backgrounds is in no small part due to the high quality of education that we have received throughout our lives.

I am sure we all share a commitment to doing whatever we can to ensure that the tens of millions of children around the world who are still denied even a decent basic education are given the chance to change their lives through education and training.

The case for investing in education is clear. Let me turn then to the approach that the UK to supporting education in developing countries through the Department for International Development

Let me give some background first on DFID. DFID is the government department responsible for the UK aid program across the world. It was formerly the Overseas Development Administration and it was then a department of the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I think slightly similar to the situation you currently have in Japan. It became a full government department in 1997 when our development secretary

Clare Short became the first Secretary of State for International Development. The current Secretary of State for International Development is Hilary Benn. Also in 1997 DFID became a full government department and the Secretary of State for International Development sits in Cabinet with the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and our Minister of Foreign Affairs. This has been extremely important for the department over the past eight years because it has allowed a degree of independence and a budget separate from the Foreign Office – although obviously we work closely together to ensure that we are following consistent policies.

The total annual budget for DFID is approximately £4.3 billion, \$7.5 billion. This is set to rise over the next two to three years to £5.3 billion pounds, or \$9 billion. We estimate approximately 10% of that goes to education in various different ways. We are predicting that our total investment in education over the next 3-4 years will be over £1.4 billion.

The department has two principle objectives: to promote sustainable development and to reduce poverty. We have an act that was passed in 2001 which made it illegal for us to use our aid budget to do anything else apart from supporting sustainable development and reducing poverty. I was saying to colleagues from the Ministry of Education earlier this afternoon that this sometimes puts us in a difficult situation when we are talking to colleagues from our Department of Trade. Because UK development assistance is untied and can be used to pay organizations or institutions from any part of the world, there is no requirement to use UK aid to support UK trade. Sometimes our colleagues from the Department of Trade wonder why that should be the case. The reason we give is that there is very strong evidence to show that untied aid is up to 30% more effective. Those of us who work in education can fully understand that, if you want to build capacity in India or Pakistan, then probably you could invest your money very effectively in high quality universities and colleges in India and Pakistan. The untying of aid has meant important changes for all of DFID's work

Turning then to DFID's approach to supporting education. I think over the past 10 years I would say that we have learned some very importance lessons on how to best support education in developing countries. The first lesson we have learned is the need to move from project towards program support. I suppose the lessons we have learned come from several examples where the United Kingdom has supported and invested large amounts of money in projects in India, Pakistan, Kenya, and many other countries, has invested that money over three, five, sometimes 10 years, but then we have found that

when we withdraw our assistance to those projects, the projects very often collapse and there is not the sustainable development that we had hoped for. So the lesson we have learned from that is that we need to think about supporting whole education programs that are actually owned by the government of the country themselves so that when we have removed ourselves, they will continue the process. I know your Ministry of Foreign Affairs is working in that way in several countries including in some countries in partnership with the United Kingdom.

The second lesson we have learned is the importance of taking what is commonly known as the sector-wide approach to supporting education (SWAp). Now I can remember the Minister of Education from one of the countries we were supporting saying to me when I visited, “Desmond, what is this thing a SWAp? What does a SWAp mean?” And I said to him, “Minister, as I understand it, it is basically the approach that your Ministry is already using. Your ministry has to make plans for the whole education sector, from nursery to tertiary for the whole country. You cannot just focus on primary education or just focus on secondary education, or just focus on universities, you do not have that luxury. You have to provide teachers and services to all of the education system. That for me is the sector wide approach.” The difference is that now donors are recognizing that that they should be providing their support for education in this way too. We should be working in support of the whole of the education sector, even though we might prioritise the primary sector and focus on the universal primary education goal – we know that we have to invest across the whole sector. I will return to this point later in my presentation.

The third lesson we have learned is how important it is to provide support for country-led development, and let me explain a bit what I mean by that. I think very many of us have seen examples where donors or education experts come in with their own plans or policies and try to persuade governments to adopt them. Ten years or more of experience has shown that this simply does not work. You cannot impose policy solutions from the outside. Each country has its own unique cultural, historical and social context. And all development interventions must be adapted to suit this context. The process has to be genuinely led by the country itself. The politicians, the officials, the people of the country have to say, “We are committed to education, we want to improve the education sector. Will you, as a group of donors, help us to achieve that?” That is when development really works.

There are many examples of this. Take Kenya. where in 2003 the new Government

went to the electorate and said, “If you elect us we will remove fees for all primary school students. We will not charge children to go to primary school.” The opposition party won the election on that promise. So when they came into power their first measure was to make primary education free. The result, as many of you will know, was a million extra students in school almost overnight including one man who was 85 years old enrolling at primary school for the first time in his life because he did not now have to pay a fee. I think our advice to the government in Kenya in the future would have been, “Take it more slowly next time and do not do it overnight.” But nonetheless there was a clear commitment to education from the people and the government of Kenya. The donors are now trying to find the additional finance to help the government of Kenya improve the education quality as well as improving access to education.

The fourth lesson that the United Kingdom has learned over the past decade is the importance of working through national systems and, wherever possible through national budgets. We have learnt that in many countries, and Kenya would be included in this, there will be problems in these systems, but the best way to improve those systems is to use them and work in partnership with the government to make them better. In many countries in Africa the UK Government will provide money to support a government’s budget and it will work with the national audit office to monitor the expenditure of UK money as well as local money. Our experience has been that this helps to improve these systems overall not just one part of them.

Lastly, and this is a very recent lesson for us in our analysis, is that it will become increasingly important to invest in education in what are sometimes called fragile states. countries that are weak for various different reasons, often because they are affected by conflict, countries like Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, parts of Asia. Our analysis indicates that there are maybe 30 or 40 million children living in these countries who do not have access to education at all. They often have to move around the country to escape the conflict, or may have fled to another country because they have fled the war. The investment in education for those children up until now has been quite small, usually through United Nations (UN) agencies such as United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). We have made a commitment to increase that investment and to work more closely with children in those countries.

So that, in broad terms, is DFID’s approach to supporting education in developing countries.

I want now to turn to the importance of **partnership** in all of our work in education. We have recognized that no donor agency can tackle the huge problems of education in the developing world by working alone. We need to work with others; we need to take the partnership approach. I think I would say partnerships on three different levels: partnerships with governments, which I have talked about already; partnerships with other donors and international agencies such as the World Bank and the UN agencies; and also crucially partnerships with Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and civil society organizations. I know that your government and many people in this room have had long experience of working in this way. The purpose of partnership in my view is to ensure that we are working together to make the best use of our support. If you remember I said the title of my presentation was “More and Better Aid.” Open collaborative partnerships are fundamental to achieving the goal of more effective aid. We need to ‘harmonise’ our approaches to supporting education so that even if we are not all using exactly the same methods we should at least all of us be seeking to support the national education sector plans.

I think sometimes for governments that we work with, it must be very confusing, because you will have the United Kingdom come and visit the Ministry of Education one week and we will say you should concentrate on primary education, you will have another country come in another week and they will say you must concentrate on universities, and you will have another agency saying you should not be doing education at all, you should be looking at health. I wonder what governments must feel when they are having donors coming in and telling them different things. So for me the very important part of partnerships between donors and international agencies is that we work closely together and agree to at least be singing the same song.

As I said, many of your colleagues from JICA and the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs are working in donor groups in many countries around the world in exactly this way. They will meet once a month together as a group of donors, they will explain their different programs, and they will discuss with the Ministry of Education how they can best work together to move forward. I think this is a sign of good progress. I will say more later in my presentation about the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) which is designed to encourage and improve that **partnership** between donors..

Before I move on to the FTI let me say a little more about **building local capacity** as I know it is an important topic for many colleagues working in development in Japan. I

have talked a lot about money, but I think we would all recognize that it is not just about money. That building capacity and building human resources is also extremely important and is the key to sustainable development. Capacity at all levels: capacity in governments, capacity in schools, capacity in civil society organizations, and even capacity among donors needs to be improved.

Now capacity building is a much-used term, but I wonder if we all fully understand what we mean by it. Let me have a go and say what I think we mean by good capacity building. I think firstly capacity building actually means making the best use of existing capacity. I am sure we have all had the experience of working in organizations where very skilled people are not working to the best of their capacity for whatever reason—maybe they are not motivated, maybe they are badly managed, maybe the organizational structures are not helping them to deliver. One example of this which is very stark for me is that in many countries of the world, the levels of teacher absenteeism from school are as high as 30 or 40%. Now in that case where you have got teachers who are trained and qualified and being paid but not going to school to teach, then clearly the government and the ministry are not making the best use of the existing capacity in that country. So there, the question of capacity building is not about providing more training, it is about managing and motivation the teachers already in the system to make sure they go to school.

Capacity building also involves making difficult decisions about the best use of limited resources. If we had endless amounts of money we could do anything, but none of us has endless amounts of money so we have to prioritize. I am sure you have all had experience of the difficulties of encouraging partners to prioritize and to say what we will not do.

Capacity building is also about providing training in a way that is relevant and appropriate for the local context.. Capacity building does not happen as a result of a one week workshop where I come in, I give a talk and then I go away. . Capacity building is a long-term process and requires investment in universities, colleges and training institutions over an extended period of time. Think how your own professional development has been supported during your careers, and think how your organizations build the capacity of individuals within it. I think we need to be taking the same approach with the countries that we work with.

Then I lastly would mention the capacity of donors. I think there is a need for us all who

work in donor agencies to make sure that the people who work for us have got the right skills in development—I again commend FASID for its work in this area. For me, a very important skill of anybody working in development is to be a very good listener. I have just come back from a visit to Beijing to attend the UNESCO Education for All Meeting there, and heard one colleague say: “My advice to DFID if it wants to help to make a difference in China is : be patient, be humble, and be wise.” I thought those were wise words for all donors to hear.

Building capacity is key, but so too is finance. As I am sure you will be aware the UK Government has made a very strong push this year as part of its presidency of the G8 to increase the levels of ODA overall and including for education. Why have we done that? We believe that there is a moral as well as geo-political case for addressing the imbalance between rich and poor in the world. We believe that we cannot sustain in world in which millions of people still live in abject poverty. Nor should we. We also believe that we must increase aid for education to ensure that some 115 million children around the world are given the chance to go to primary school. In Africa alone there are an estimated 4 million additional teachers required to teach those children. Those teachers will need to be trained and paid a salary. That will require greater investment. Most of this money – we estimate between 75% and 80% - will come from the governments of the countries themselves, but there is also a strong case for more aid for education until the poorest countries are able to support themselves.

The Global Monitoring Report estimates that an additional \$7 billion a year will be required to achieve the primary education goal. Now that sounds like a huge amount of money, but just as a comparison the Ministry of Education in the United Kingdom’s total budget is over \$50 billion a year and that is just for one country. So in comparison \$7 billion a year for the whole of the developing world is not so much. I suppose the question I would ask is for us to think about the cost of not investing, the cost of leaving those 115 million children without an education for another generation, the cost to all of us of the outcomes of that.

The G8 summit in Scotland in Gleneagles ended with some very important commitments to double aid by 2010. The heads of the G8 countries made a commitment to provide an additional \$50 billion per year. The purpose of that aid will be to help all low-income countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We are already beginning to see the results of those commitments for example in the Debt Relief Programme. This is the start, but much more will be needed to be done. In our analysis

we estimate that education systems in developing countries could absorb at least 15% to 20% of that extra aid which would provide an additional \$7 - \$10 billion per year. That money would come either directly through education programs or through support to government budgets. I am optimistic that that extra finance will come and there is evidence to show that it is beginning to increase. But I think there is a lot of responsibility for all of us working in education and development to continue to advocate and to make sure the finance does come through.

There have also been some very interesting and creative proposals to increase the levels of ODA overall. I am sure many of you are familiar with the proposal of the French Government to start an airline tax to increase aid and target that particularly on the health sector. Some of you may be familiar with the proposal from our own Treasury Minister Gordon Brown on the International Financing Facility where he is arguing that donors should support an international bond issue to generate an additional \$10 billion to \$20 billion a year for aid overall. 2006 will be the important year to demonstrate that we intend to honour these promises and commitments.

As well as the promising signs of increased aid there has also been significant progress on improving aid effectiveness. Many of you will be aware of the recent Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness which was signed by all of the major donors and aid agencies. If you are not familiar with it, it is available, I think, on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) website and perhaps the organizers of the conference could circulate that to people. This is a very important document. It has commitments from all of the donors to change their practice and change the way that they provide assistance, to make it more harmonized, more coordinated, and to align it more closely with the plans of the government.

We are already starting to see the impact of these commitments in our work on the ground. We are seeing more joint planning and joint reviews rather than separate reviews for each donor. There are also commitments to increase the proportion of support as provided to sector programs rather than in different project support. And there are commitments in there to making our aid more predictable.

Just as an aside on aid predictability I sometimes wonder how we can expect ministries of education to plan three years ahead or five years ahead when they do not know how much assistance they will get sometimes even 6 months ahead or 12 months ahead and we change the levels of assistance that we give them in very short periods of time. So it

is a commitment to increase the amount of our money that we are saying to governments, “we will give you this amount of money over the next three years, over the next five years so that you can plan and you can budget to use that assistance.” Now I know for some countries, that is easier than for others, and I know for many countries it will be a question of even if they are not able to give firm, binding commitments, to at least give a serious expression of intention to provide that assistance, so that unless things go very wrong in the country or in their own domestic budgets, they will provide that level of aid.

And lastly there is a commitment in the Paris Declaration to use national systems and national institutions wherever possible rather than setting up separate systems for aid delivery. In education this will mean fewer projects, more support through SWAps, and it will mean closer partnerships between all of us. I think we would all feel that was a good thing.

I mentioned earlier the Fast Track Initiative. I want now to talk about this Initiative in more detail as I see it as being a crucial part of the effort to deliver more and better aid for the education sector.

The Fast Track Initiative was launched in 2002 by the G8 ministers’ meeting in Canada in Kananaskis. The FTI is supported by over 35 agencies, including the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, and all the major bilateral donor agencies, including the United Kingdom and Japan. The United Kingdom is currently the co-chair with Belgium. Russia will take over as the co-chair in 2006.

Its objective was to accelerate progress toward the Education for All (EFA) goals in particular the goal of universal primary education. There was a feeling that if we continued to go at the same pace, we would not meet the education goals that we had set ourselves by 2015, so we needed to speed up.. I think I would say now, and as the current co-chair of FTI I have a strong interest in this, that it is at a stage where it is ready to provide something very important. The key change in my view for the FTI, was a move away from the idea of a centralized, global fund driven from Washington, to move away from that, to something that was led at the country level, supported national sector wide approaches, and that was integrated into the sector plans. So the FTI now provides finance and assistance to donor groups and sector plans at the country level.

The FTI is focused on the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary

education. As we discussed before the FTI prioritises investment in the primary sector, but it recognizes that you need to take a sector-wide approach to achieving the UPE goal. The FTI currently supports 18 low-income countries. More information can be found on the FTI website (EFA FTI).

The FTI has committed over \$140 million in direct support to something to the FTI Catalytic Fund, and I will say more about that in a moment. But perhaps more importantly, significant additional finance has been raised through the country programs. So the 18 countries have seen an increase in aid for education at the country level of over 30%. Donors working at the country level have increased their programs. The FTI has also provided support to capacity building programs, both in the country and at the regional level.

There are three main aspects of the FTI. Firstly there is the **in-country process**. That is the process that I have described where governments and donors work together at the country level to increase access to education for all children. FTI supports this process and provides additional finance where needed. For example the government of India has recently made a very significant increase in its investment in primary education. It has been supported by a joint program from the World Bank, the European Commission, and the United Kingdom worth a total of \$2 billion over the next ten years. That \$2 billion represents about 20% of the total cost of the program. The other 80% is being met by the government of India. So that is the fastest track. And what FTI does in those countries is that it encourages donors to come together and work together in a sector-wide approach and to harmonize their aid.

The second aspect of the FTI is the **Catalytic Fund**. The purpose of a catalyst is that you add something to make a bigger thing happen. And that is the idea of the Catalytic Fund. It is short term aid added to the government's budget directly from the FTI, which then should bring in more money from donors in the longer term. The Catalytic Fund has already provided nearly \$100 million to support education programmes in the first 18 countries and there has been some success in encouraging donors to step in to fill the long term financing gaps. Although I would say that there is a need to look again at the Catalytic Fund to think about how it can provide longer term financing, because at the moment it is simply providing financing for a maximum of three years.

The last component of the FTI is the Education Program Development Fund (EPDF), and your own government of Japan has expressed a strong interest in learning more

about this. This fund is designed to support capacity building activities, to support the preparation of sector plans, and to help knowledge-sharing activities.

As I said, the FTI currently has 18 countries in it, but the projections are that it will expand to over 40 countries over the next two to three years. That would cover 60% - 70% of all of the children out of school. This is clearly an important initiative. The OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) has recently described FTI as one of the most promising initiatives to provide effective aid to the education sector. I think this for me was a very important comment on the FTI from a body that is highly respected and is outside of the FTI process. There is a lot of interest in FTI from other sectors that see it as a possible model for scaling up support in areas such as health and infrastructure. I hope during our discussion we will have a chance to exchange questions and views on FTI.

Let me conclude.

I would say that all of us working in education and development really are at a point of historic opportunity. I do not think we have been in a situation in the past 20 or 30 years where the industrialized countries have made such strong commitments to increasing investment in aid and really tackling the levels of poverty and injustice around the world. It is an exciting time for all of us working in development. There is a chance for all of us to make a very significant difference and to help to provide a better future for tens of millions of children in the poorest countries of the world.

The UK Government has recently produced a set of papers entitled “From Commitment to Action¹,” including papers on education, health, and growth and infrastructure. These are joint papers between DFID and our Treasury, our Ministry of Finance. The messages in all four papers are the same. We need to move urgently from making promises to delivering actions. In the course of preparing these papers we carried out some analysis on how that can best be done. I will leave you with a message from the paper which is, “now is the time to act.” Thank you very much for listening so patiently. I hope that at least some of what I said was of interest. Thank you.

¹ Papers are available on DFID website : www.DFID.gov.uk

II. Questions and Answers

Question 1

Thank you Mr. Bermingham for your very informative lecture. You talked mainly about primary education in developing countries. I worked as an Ambassador in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan for about three years and as you know in these former socialist countries the primary education is rather well developed thanks to the legacy of the socialist times, but I encountered two big problems or issues related to education in these areas. One is education and governance. I heard a lot about bribes made in order to get good marks at universities. Sometimes we do not find any connection between education and governance, but there is some. I know that DFID also is very active in Central Asia, particularly in Kyrgyzstan, so how do you see this problem, and how are you trying to tackle this problem? This is my first question.

The second problem I encountered is education and jobs. Although students are graduating from universities, they do not find jobs in the country. So there is a mismatch between higher education and the availability of jobs. I think this is also a big problem in some developing countries. If they get a good education, they tend to work abroad, so it does not contribute to the development of their own country. How to tackle this problem is also, I think, a big issue, so I would like to pose these two questions. Thank you.

Question 2

My question is the linkage of your presentation with research done by UK universities and scholars which are in many cases funded by DFID. What you talked about today echoes many discussions in the international arena about educational assistance, but I think the research done by scholars in the United Kingdom is more specific about educational issues on the ground. So I am wondering how this research and the knowledge about specific issues feeds to DFID's assistance or each country's educational development. Thank you.

Question 3

As you mentioned, in the year 2003 the government has changed and all of a sudden a huge amount of money entered into the country, particularly in the education sectors.

For example, a middle-scale school, like a 300-400 pupil population received I think around \$10,000 so far. And one interesting point is that in all countries, the people simply thought we are free from education, we are not responsible for education anymore. The people felt that. And actually in Kenya, historically, they participated in classroom construction and school construction. All were responsible including parents. And all of a sudden the money came and they relaxed actually. When I look at the school, I am interested in some points like facility improvements. So far, some schools are really investing in teachers' rooms and furniture. And some schools of course invest in classroom innovations. This difference came from the power of the head teachers or the relation between the head teacher and the community members. You mentioned three levels of partnership. I can not see a good partnership with civil society or NGOs so far in this scheme. This is my question: Do you have any idea for encouraging this partnership?

Mr. Bermingham's Answer to Question 1, 2, 3

Some difficult questions, but I will try and answer to the best of my ability. Question 1 regarding the situation in the Former Soviet Union and socialist countries—I think you are right. There are problems emerging at all sorts of different levels in those countries that we need to address urgently, do we not? And before they get too much worse. The most interesting work I have seen in this area around education and corruption is a series of studies that is being commissioned by the UNESCO International Institute for Education and Planning (IIEP) in Paris. And they have done quite a bit of research into corruption in the education sector at various different levels, ranging from parents being charged when they should not be charged to send their children to school. But also is this particularly worrying situation that you have mentioned about people buying their qualifications. And this goes right to the heart of the education system, does it not? Because if you do not need to go to school or college and you can just buy your qualifications, the whole system is undermined. The UK approach in those countries, as I am sure you are aware, is through our dialogue at the political level and at the governance level across the board to try and strengthen accountability structures. But I think there is a gap, in my view, on the particular lack in the education sector on the corruption issues, and that we have certainly signaled a strong interest to work with the IIEP in analyzing that further. Having said that, you are right I think to say that in most of those countries, the primary sector historically has been strong. I think we are beginning to see in some countries, and Kazakhstan is one of them where primary enrollment is now beginning to fall down because of the poverty and the difficulties of

people going to school. So I think it would be a real tragedy if we let that happen, and I think there is a role for the work in primary education to be strengthened in those countries as well.

As far as education and employment is concerned, I fully agree that it is a priority issue. And I think it is particularly a priority issue in Africa. When you look at the education sector plans in most countries in Africa, very often the vocational training section is not there at all, and if it is there it is a very small section. We have encouraged the governments we work with to think about low-cost and appropriate training schemes for the agricultural sector, for example, which is where most of their employees are. And some countries are beginning to make progress in that area. Similarly on the issue of people leaving the country, it is an important issue. For me, an interesting development in the analysis on this recently is actually the positive side of migration. When people do go abroad, they learn different skills, and very importantly, they send money home. The remittance investment in many African countries exceeds the aid investment in those countries. So it is a very important additional part of the picture. Our dialogue with ministries of education on this issue tends to be around trying to encourage them to put systems in place so that if people want to come back, they can come back, and their experience overseas is given credit. So they are not penalized for being out of the country, but a teacher who leaves and goes and works in the United States or the United Kingdom for five years could be given the opportunity to come back at a senior level because they would have a lot of expertise and experience that would be very valuable. Some ministries of education are willing to do that, and others are more resistant. But I think it is an important part of the picture.

Regarding Question 2 on the research program, I share your perception. For those of you who are not aware, there is a bi-annual conference in the United Kingdom called the Oxford Conference where the researchers working on education development come together to share their work. And my sense of it is that a lot of that research is focused on a very narrow area—curriculum development programs in one country in a period of three years—and is not really looking at the bigger picture as often as it needs to. The United Kingdom—and it would be good for FASID to have a dialogue with you on this—the United Kingdom has recently started three major research consortia with the lead institution based in the United Kingdom, but with partners around the world in developing countries and other donor countries. And those research consortia have been asked to look at some of the big issues relating to education and development: access, quality, and the long-term financing pictures. So we are hoping as a result of that way of

working, we will improve the relevance of research on education and development and improve the dialogue between those of us working on policy and those people doing research. I do not know what your experience is like here in Japan, but certainly in the United Kingdom I would say there is quite a big gap between the policy makers and the researchers. And we feel that we need to bridge that gap. As I say, I would welcome a chance to talk further about that.

Regarding Question 3, your comment on Kenya is very relevant. I was in Kenya two weeks ago at the Joint Education Review there. And two observations, I would say, in response to your question, there were some civil society representatives in that discussion. There was a nun from a church organization who was working with slum children in Nairobi, and there were two or three representatives from universities and private sector organizations. But I would say it probably is not enough. And clearly the message you are giving me about what you are seeing on the ground not being necessarily what the government of Kenya is telling the donors is a very important part of the dialogue. The approach that we take is that when we are assessing whether an education sector plan is a credible plan, is a good plan, we must also assess the extent to which civil society and NGOs have been involved in the preparation of that plan. And we need to have some way of measuring and monitoring that. And if in our view the plan has been prepared without consultation with NGOs and civil society organizations, we would encourage the government to carry out that consultation, because for me, it is essential that we get that voice into the discussion with governments of the reality on the ground. I thought that the system that the government had set up of school committees and money to the school committee, I think, in principle, that is a very good system. But I take your point that sometimes head teachers will dominate that system and use that money inappropriately. And I think your involvement and your organization's involvement in helping make sure it does not happen is very important.

Question 4

I am the focal point for health, reproductive health and population, so I am not really familiar with education. I was impressed to know DFID's approach to supporting education. It seems like DFID is focusing on programs owned by the government and from the sustainability and ownership point of view I think it is very important. But in case where there is a gender imbalance in education, I would like to know DFID's approach to girls' education. Thank you.

Question 5

I do have some work experience with the World Bank and seeing how the SWAp developed. I was involved myself and also saw how the FTI initially emerged. So your criticism is very well received by me and I exactly know the meaning. My comment, it is not really a question, but it may stimulate your feelings. For example one thing, the perspective from the sustainability and country ownership standpoints, I think these are very important features of what you have described. For sustainability, I look at the figure, not that you personally presented, but the global community say \$7 billion additional is required, but it does not include the quality improvement aspect. For the program, for EFA to be sustainably effective, it also of course has to pay more attention to the need of the next level of education, that is, secondary education, because without sufficient attention paid to secondary level of education, the sustainability of any program at the primary level will also be undermined. That is very clear. But up to now, intentionally or not, I do not know, that message has not been very clearly transmitted. Of course if we do that now, our attention will be dispersed and it may damage the whole effort. So it is for a wise reason, but it is rather dangerous. And of course, the point is we need to have a more balanced sense of approach in focusing on whatever the subject we are talking about. That is one comment.

The second one is about country ownership. I totally agree with everything you have mentioned, but from the same one person involved in international development activities, the more we focus on the long-term donor commitment, foreseeability of donor input is one, and the programmatic approach is one, increasingly we are looking more at the country's own education program and policy. And we tend to be more involved in that process of policy formulation as well as its implementation. Necessarily, it requires more input of the donor into that process. So how can that process can be compatible with what we say is a purely donor-owned and donor-led process? I think that is a great challenge we have to be aware of.

Question 6

We organize the Japanese NGOs for a network on education. We are working for education issues together with Japanese NGOs. I have actually three questions, but one question has already been asked by someone, so I would like to ask two questions. One is: we are regularly in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Japanese government. Talking about the funding schemes, SWAp is a good approach for us, but

the Japanese government is a little bit hesitant to support SWAp. We have very few examples. The reason is the issue of accountability and transparency. Would you give us your comments on how to talk to the government of Japan? That is one question.

The other one is FTI. One question was already raised about the capacity of the country states—how to develop and how to formalize the education plan, and especially the need to link to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). That is very hard work for them, so how do we help them from the donor side?

The last question is also an FTI issue. One big issue is teachers' salaries. The government of Japan is not so supportive of FTI and one reason is that FTI includes teachers' salaries. Taxes cannot pay for teacher's salaries, that is their explanation. How does DFID solve these issues?

Mr. Bermingham's Answer to 4, 5, 6

The questions are getting more difficult so I will take my jacket off. Regarding Question 4 on gender imbalance and girls' education, I think this is a critical one. At the beginning of this year, the United Kingdom launched a paper on girls' education—I do not know if you have seen it—where we try to bring to everybody's attention the urgency of more action on getting more girls into school. I think in our analysis at least 60% of the 100 million children plus are girls. Our main approach to that is that when we are discussing with governments their policies and their priorities, we would expect and on occasion insist that there are particular targets relating to increased girls' enrolment, or at the very least there must be an analysis of the gender gaps in the education sector. No education sector plan could be considered credible unless it has got gender disaggregated data. If there is a gender gap identified, there must be specific measures proposed to reduce that gap. We are increasingly seeing these measures in the education sector plans that we are receiving from the governments, so I think that is promising.

Secondly, we have worked very closely with UNICEF to encourage them to take on an advocacy role at the global as well as at the national level on girls education. I think that is important because UNICEF have the mandate, in our view, to be the champion of educating girls and redressing gender imbalances. What we have tried to encourage UNICEF to do, and I know your government has done the same, is to participate in the SWAp process. UNICEF is beginning to hear that message, I think, and beginning to

react. I would hope that in every country I go to, there is a UNICEF person there who is involved in the SWAp dialogue with the government and with the other donors and is just reminding people again, and again, and again of the importance of focusing on educating more girls and making sure they complete their education. I think we are starting to see progress in some countries. There have been some countries that have made remarkable jumps forward, but there are many more that need to do a lot more.

Regarding Question 5, I am very glad I mentioned that criticism of FTI. I did not realize there was somebody in the room who knew it from the outset. But yes, it had its bad times. There were two parts to your question—the quality aspect and the secondary aspect. As far as quality is concerned, you are absolutely right. The \$10 billion, in the analysis we have done for the Commitments to Action paper does include an estimate of what additional investment raising quality would require as well as an estimate of the costs of removing school fees. Often in our view, raising quality is not necessarily about additional finance, but it is about making better use of the existing resources. Changing curriculum and changing assessment systems are not very expensive actually, are they? But they can have a huge impact. Simple things like making sure every child has access to a textbook or making sure that teachers have a basic level of pre and in-service training are all very high impact interventions.

I think one interesting development in this area is the focus on assessment systems, and in particular sub-regional comparisons between assessment systems. I do not know if you are familiar with the work of the Southern African Development Community (SADEC) group in Southern Africa, but they have done some very good work in this area where they have tried to get make regional comparisons between assessment systems. I think that is an interesting intervention. Certainly when the United Kingdom, comes number 9 or number 10 in the league table of educational achievement, it does have an impact on the government and they do try to take measures to improve quality. Most of the ministries of education I talk to recognize the importance of increasing attention to quality, particularly as they come closer to 100% enrollment. So I think that is going to become an important part of our dialogue over the next two to three years, certainly.

On the secondary education question, I could not agree more, and this is why I think it is so important that we take a sector-wide approach, even though the focus might be on primary. For lots of reasons, but two main ones: Firstly, we are starting to see already in countries which are coming close to 100% enrollment at the primary level, parents are

withdrawing their children from school because there is no chance of them being able to go on to secondary when secondary enrollments are as low as 20% or 30%. And then secondly, the message we hear again and again from ministries of education is, “Our teachers are being trained in secondary schools. If we do not increase our capacity in secondary schools, we will not have the teachers to teach at the primary level.”

So, I think the approach to that is if you are providing support for the sector as a whole, and if you are providing sector budget support in particular, the ministry can then decide how it allocates the finance across the whole sector. Some donors find it difficult to put give money into government budgets and prefer therefore a more project based approach. But I think the way to handle that is to recognize that if the ministry of education is able to take the project money to cover one aspect of the education system, it can then move its own money to cover another aspect. In this case, I think we should accept that funds are fungible and we should accept that governments will make rational decisions about how to allocate their resources across the various sub-sectors. I would become concerned if I began to see a steep decline in investment in primary and a reallocation of that finance to secondary or the university sub-sector, because as we know, it is often the wealthier children of a country who get to go to university and the poorer children who go to primary. But I think the strong message we give to governments is that it is not one or the other. You have to do both.

Question 6, the last set of questions, which are fascinating ones, on talking to your government about SWAp—I of course will not comment on what you should be saying to your government. But let me just say how we respond to our Treasury and our National Audit Office when it comes to issues of transparency and accountability. Perhaps it would help if I gave one specific example. There was one country where we provided support for the education sector budget. We were asked by our National Audit Office in the United Kingdom to identify a budget line item that was comparable to the amount of money we were investing. We identified teacher salaries, because roughly speaking, our money was equivalent to the total cost of teacher salaries for all the primary schools in one year. It was £10 million. We agreed that we would work with the government to track whether teacher salaries were being paid fully and on time. The UK National Audit Office worked with local audit office to monitor the process. In the first year, we found that a significant proportion of the money was not reaching teachers’ salaries.. The government commissioned an internal review and actually dismissed the director of finance as a result of that review.. The following year, 100% of teacher salaries were paid. Our conclusion was that although it seemed as if some of the

UK aid had been misused, in the long run we had helped to improve the financial systems not just for UK funds but for all funds going into the education budget. Now you do need to have a very strong minister of finance who is prepared to accept that risk, but I think the lesson we have learned is that the importance of helping the country to strengthen its own systems for transparency and accountability.

The second example I would give is a country where the ministry of education has taken the measure of publishing the budget in the local newspaper so that the parents of that community know how much money that school should be receiving. Our experience has been that this has been a very powerful means to improve local accountability and thereby help to improve the transparency of the system.

These are just two examples of measures that we have encouraged governments to take that allow us to justify supporting national budgets and supporting the SWAp overall.

Your question on the FTI and on how to support governments' ministries of education in preparing a sector plan is a very important one. As you know, the principle of the FTI is that a country has to have a Poverty Reduction Strategy in place and the sector plan must be linked to that. In my experience, many ministries of education do not always have the expertise in the ministry of education to prepare those plans, particularly the economic analysis that is required. I think in a way what we can help them to do is make sure that their financial and economic analysis is robust and reliable so that they can make their case to their own ministry of finance for increasing investment and returns. It is a slow process, and in my experience, it usually takes at least two cycles of planning over five or six years. On the second cycle, you begin to see a ministry of education become more confident in conducting the analysis and more confident in its dialogue with the ministry of finance. It takes time but it is a very worthwhile investment of resources, because in the long-run, you are preparing real plans that actually have a chance of being implemented.

And then your last question on the teacher salary issue, just so that I am clear, is that the target in the indicative framework of FTI of 3.5% of GDP per capita? Is that the teachers' salary question that the government here has an objection to? I think my answer to that is to stress that those indicators are supposed to be guidelines, but cannot be imposed. And in some countries, in Africa in particular, the salary is much lower than that. In some countries, it appears to be higher as a proportion of GDP per capita, but still it is not a livable salary in that country. So therefore it would not be a sensible

decision to take to actually lower salaries. So I think we have underlined to all of the donors in country that those indicators are guidelines, but they are not supposed to be prescriptions. Nobody is saying that this is the answer, because obviously, in different economic circumstances you would need to adjust accordingly. But I am not sure that message always comes across and I think sometimes, that indicative framework is used as a sort of blueprint and you have to follow that. But that would not, in my view, be the sensible approach at all as circumstances will vary so widely from one country to the next.

Just briefly on this point, there have been some interesting interventions by Education International, which is the international body for teacher unions, based in Geneva but with membership all around the world, on this question of teacher salaries. They have been interesting because they have not taken the standard line that perhaps you would expect from a teacher union that we need to increase salaries everywhere. They have taken a strong line that teacher unions must be involved in the dialogue and that teacher unions have a very important part to play in promoting teacher professionalism as well as discussing salary levels. And for me, I think that is extremely important. I mentioned the point about teachers being absent from school. Teacher unions I think, have a crucial part to play in identifying why those teachers are not going to school and in encouraging their own members to act and work as professionals and to live up to the standards that are set by them as a professional body.