



## PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK ON THE WORLD BANK

### World Bank Consultation on its Education Strategy 2020

10 June 2010

The World Bank is currently developing a new 10-year Education Strategy (2010-2020). In the early stages of this work, and in an attempt to produce a strategy that reflects the concerns of various stakeholders, the Bank is holding an online consultation as well as multi-stakeholder meetings in a number of countries. PNoWB participated in the meeting organized on 10 June 2010 in Paris.

Ms. Elizabeth King, Director for Education within the Human Development Network of the World Bank, presented the reasoning behind the Bank's new strategy. She explained that changing demographics, growing populations and increasing urbanization world-wide will exacerbate education challenges in the coming years, especially in Low Income Countries (LICs), which have higher dependency ratios (i.e., adults take care of a higher number of children) and a lower tax-base.

Economic growth in some LICs has improved recently, which creates the potential for investment in education. However, demographic challenges could negate these opportunities. In addition, in many countries, primary education enrolment has increased, but this in-turn creates a demand for secondary and tertiary education, making the situation more complex. Enrollment gaps between rich and poor in LICs remain high, and one of the most pressing questions is how to provide services to meet increasing demand in countries where the school-age population continues to grow.

Ms. King reminded participants that a good start in life begins not in the classroom, but in the womb, with proper pre-natal care for mothers to allow for good fetal development and a holistic focus on early-childhood health, nutrition and stimulation as the prerequisites for successful students later in life. She also reminded participants that education is crucial to a country's wealth and development prospects, as these depend on the knowledge and skills of its workforce.

The World Bank's priorities for its new education strategy include investing in and strengthening education systems as well as raising international awareness of education challenges and policy. In its education strategy, the World Bank seeks to reconnect education to the broader development agenda. This will involve effective partnerships as well as precise measures of results and impact.

Mr. Michel Quéré, Director of Evaluation, Planning and Performance at the French Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, explained that the focus cannot be only on one level of education alone. He agreed with Ms. King that a multisector approach through partnerships is key. He expressed concern about the fact that, in many LICs, income still acts as a discriminatory element in access to education. He further suggested testing the link between

education and employment-- that is, whether populations are educated for the jobs available in each country. He further stressed the importance of life-long learning, adding that it is important to improve the coherence of the education systems itself among different levels.

Mr. Daniel Vitry, Head of the Universities Department at the French Revenue Agency, considers education as a life-long learning process. However, he pointed out that when applying reforms, it can take time before seeing results. Teachers also need time to adapt to the new system. Reforms must also reflect the type of education needed in a particular setting to ensure employment.

Comments from the audience included that education can also impact on demographics. This means that when women in LICs are more educated, they generally have a tendency to have fewer children, which in turn limits the strains on education systems. One of the challenges is that in some countries, fully educating women requires a paradigm shift. Participants agreed in general that an education system needs to be adapted to the job situation of a country. In general, participants also commented that they would like to see locally-led education strategies and coherence between education and economic policies.

According to participants, it is vital that the definition of “education” remain broad and that it includes vocational skills and communication and social skills. Further comments echoed the importance of focusing on not only on increasing enrolment, but also improving education quality. Participants also identified the need for improved statistical measurement related to education programs, including the need for improved indicators.

#### **Participation of PNoWB members in the consultation**

The final strategy paper will be published in February 2011. Before that, the phase II internal and external consultations on the Bank’s Education Strategy 2020 will run from September to October 2010 on the first draft of the strategy paper to be published on 15 August 2010. Prior to the second phase of consultations, the World Bank will publish the discussion questions, which PNoWB members can answer either online or during face-to-face consultations meetings.

Once the consultation [webpage](#) it is up to date during the second part of August 2010, PNoWB strongly encourages its members to submit their comments and check the calendar for relevant events in their countries. Participation in the consultation can be either on an individual basis or as a team for a particular country.

Participating in consultations increases the chances of better informed policies and it helps draw attention to issues not previously considered. In particular Parliamentarians in developing countries should take an active role in the Bank’s Education Strategy 2020 as it will have a direct effect on their countries population and development strategy.

#### **PNoWB International Secretariat**

66, Avenue d’Iéna 75116 Paris, France

T +33 (0)1 40 69 30 55 / F +33 (0)1 40 69 31 64

E-mail : [secretariat@pnorb.org](mailto:secretariat@pnorb.org)

Check our website at <http://www.pnorb.org>

