

## High Level Steering Group Meeting - Minutes

Thursday, 19 April 2018, 7:00-8:00am at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Washington D.C

### Participants:

Gordon Brown, United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education (Chair, ECW HLSG), Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, (UNHCR), Nikolai Astrup, Minister for International Development, (Norway), Ulla Toernaes, Minister for Development Cooperation, (Denmark), Sigrid Kaag, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, (Netherlands), Stefano Manservigi, Director-General, International Cooperation and Development, (European Commission), Matthew Rycroft, Permanent Secretary, DFID, (United Kingdom), Tariq Al Gurg, Chief Executive Officer, Dubai Cares, Tove R. Wang, CEO Save the Children Norway, (Norway), Jo Bourne, Associate Director/Global Chief of Education (replacing Henrietta Fore), (UNICEF), Svein Osttveit, Director of the Executive Office, Education Sector, (UNESCO), Julia Gillard, Chair, Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Chris Tinning, First Assistant Secretary, Multilateral Development Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, (Australia), Diane Jacovella, Deputy Minister of International Development, (Canada), Julie Cram, Deputy Assistant Administrator of the E3 Bureau, USAID, (United States), Cecilia Scharp, Assistant Director-General and Head of the Department for International Organizations and Policy Support, SIDA, (Sweden), Dean Brooks, Director, Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, Annemiek Hoogenboom, Managing Director, Deutsche Postcode Lotterie, Novamedia, Yasmine Sherif, Director, Education Cannot Wait

**Apologies:** Henrietta Fore (Executive Director, UNICEF)

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### Meeting Minutes

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking ECW for its work and the progress achieved to date in streamlining work processes. He handed over to the ECW Director for a short presentation on the key results accomplished up to 31 March, 2018.

#### 1. Presentation of results from ECW investments in crisis-affected countries

- The ECW Director explained that the results report had been frontloaded by two months and thus presented in advance of its due date (June 30) so as to demonstrate results at this meeting. She highlighted that:
  - Over \$80 million has been disbursed in 15 countries, the latest being the DRC.
  - Over 650,000 children have been reached to date, of which 48% are girls
  - Programmes include 4 initial investments at the country-level, 11 ongoing first responses, and 4 multi-year programmes ready to launch this Spring.
  - 19% of funding has been disbursed to national or local responders (the target set at the World Humanitarian Summit was 25% by 2021).
- A short video clip was played that demonstrated the rapid educational support provided to Rohingya children in Cox's Bazar through ECW's First Response funding, including from Dubai Cares via ECW, and the work of ECW implementing partners on the ground, such as UNICEF, UNHCR, Save the Children and local NGOs.

The Chair concluded this section by underlining that detailed information is available in the results report. The Chair then opened the floor for brief comments on the results presentation.

- UNHCR commended the Director for the work undertaken to date. The High Commissioner suggested that ECW produce an easy to read document on a quarterly basis that reports on progress. Highlighting that education should always be a national effort, UNCHR encouraged ECW to continue its efforts to involve national governments in all education programmes and to consult more people on the ground to help with

prioritization. UNHCR thanked ECW for its swift engagement in Bangladesh in the fall of 2017, stressed the need to pay attention to Gaza, and underlined that there are many more educational needs that have yet to be met.

- DFID thanked ECW for its achievements to date. DFID asked for more information in a future meeting on how risks are managed in the difficult operating environments in which ECW works and on progress on the development of indicators.

## 2. Approval of the ECW Strategic Plan

- The Director summarized the strategic objectives and outcomes as defined in the Strategic Plan, including the gap that represents the so called 'relief-development gap,' around which ECW facilitates joint programming with ECW partners: Governments, UN agencies, NGOs, civil society, refugees and affected communities. On ECW's specific engagement with host-governments, the Director highlighted that governments have been involved in all the multi-year programmes to date, as they co-chair the education working groups in their respective countries. She further mentioned the political break-through reached with the Government of Bangladesh, which had agreed to a [renewable] two-year duration for the ECW-facilitated joint programming for refugees and host-communities (increasing the duration from previous 6 -12 months); and, the humanitarian/development multi-year education programme for refugees and host-communities in Uganda signed by the Minister of Education just a few days ago.

The Chair thanked the Director for the summary. He stated that ExCom reached an agreement at its last meeting on 27 March 2018 to recommend HLSG approve the Strategic Plan and opened the floor for comments.

- Norway was very impressed with the results achieved to date. The Strategic Plan is ambitious and there is a long way to go to deliver on the promise on quality education. Norway announced an additional support of 50 Million NOK for 2018. They requested a discussion on developing realistic financial targets up to 2021 at the next meeting, given that additional funds are needed. They further requested a specific policy on conflict of interest and clarity on how funding decisions are made.
- Denmark was very impressed with the work to date and fully endorsed the Strategic Plan. Denmark highlighted that girls' education in crisis is a top priority for the Danish Government and that accountability is key. Denmark asked to receive more information about the 48% of girls reached. Does this percentage capture girls at the beginning of their education or at the end? The focus should be on ensuring that girls stay in school and obtain skills beyond primary education. Denmark further asked where ECW stands in terms of funding and attracting other donors, particularly from the private sector.
- The Netherlands expressed its support for the Strategic Plan and underlined the importance of remaining connected to the field. The Netherlands asked how ECW can scale up, and stressed that quality of education should be a key focus, particularly given that quality is often low pre-crisis. Emphasis should be given to the youth agenda in crisis contexts, as well as to mental health. Netherlands asked how the transition from non-formal to formal education is being achieved and how this could be better monitored. The Netherlands asked for further clarity on how to work through the IFC. Banks are looking at risk financing for health in crisis. Could the same be done for education? The Netherlands is launching an initiative on mental health and psycho-social support in crisis. Current interventions seem old fashioned and new approaches are needed.
- Canada congratulated ECW on its Gender Strategy and encouraged ECW to build the required gender equality capacity on the ground and ensure careful monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy in the field. It appreciated the focus on results and encouraged detailed reporting, even where there is less progress. Canada highlighted the need for a broad diversity of implementing partners in line with the Grand Bargain and

encouraged ECW to strengthen this area. Canada launched its Feminist International Assistance Policy last June which focuses on empowering girls and will use its current G7 Presidency to bring attention to gender equality issues including girls' education.

- The European Commission encouraged ECW to focus on shortening the time span between humanitarian and development phases, and ensure strong linkage between humanitarian aid and development through investment in multi-year programmes. The EC further encouraged enhancing and accelerating dialogue with national governments.
- UNICEF welcomed the focus on youth as well as on disability and gender and asked for an explicit protocol around the conflict of interest and decision making on the ground to ensure transparency. UNICEF requested that the Secretariat provide options on financial projections, for discussion at the next meeting.
- Save the Children highlighted the need for discussion on fundraising and suggested that the ECW replenishment activities be brought forward before the September meeting.
- The US supported the Strategic Plan as a whole and underlined that ECW has the opportunity to deliver improved learning outcomes. Referencing the work done by the Boston Consulting Group the US emphasized that ECW was created to be a catalyst for change and requested greater detail about the Acceleration Facility. USAID would further like to see greater private sector investment.
- GPE thanked the ECW Director for the work done and stated that ECW is not only 'trying to move a mountain but a mountain range'. The bridging between the humanitarian and development field is complex and requires commitment from all sides, including from the HLSG. GPE underlined the need to focus on inspiring political commitments from host governments and referred to the Rohingya refugee crisis as an example. All involved parties need to work with the Bangladeshi Government for it to acknowledge that this will be a multi-year situation.
- The UK voiced its support for the Strategic Plan and highlighted the importance of the financial projections and RM targets. The UK agreed with the Netherlands on the importance of focusing on the quality of education. The UK also asked to see high-level targets and milestones developed up to 2021 at the next HLSG meeting to further illustrate ECW's value added, the ECW's model and capacity to support programmes.

The Chair thanked the participants for their interventions and highlighted the importance of focusing on girls and protection issues. He summarized the importance of focusing on quality and the request to provide updates on a quarterly basis, including financial updates. Over the coming months, ExCom will prepare the groundwork for this HLSG discussion in September. In the meantime, the ECW Secretariat will convene a ½ day briefing and dialogue in the coming 2-3 months for HLSG members to elaborate on the issues raised on ECW results, modus operandi and progress.

The Chair made the formal request outlined in the decision paper and invited HLSG to approve the ExCom recommendations:

1. The 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, including the Country List, incorporating any comments from HLSG.
2. Take note of the Attachments
3. Note that a further discussion on resource mobilization targets and associated implications will be on the agenda of the next HLSG meeting in September in New York.

The HLSG approved the Strategic Plan and its related point 2 and 3. The Chair confirmed HLSG approval of the above.

### **3. Hosting Review**

The Chair handed over to the ExCom Chair who briefly summarized the hosting review process and recommendations put forward by the review team. He explained that ExCom discussed the review results in two meetings and that a unanimous decision was reached by ExCom on 27 March, 2018 to recommend to HLSG to:

1. Extend ECW's incubation (physical and administrative hosting) at UNICEF until 2021.
2. Defer the choice of permanent host of ECW until the end of the incubation period. A decision will be reached on permanent hosting through the evaluation scheduled for 2020/21.
3. Delegate to ExCom to take a decision regarding the transfer of financial hosting to MPTFO at the next ExCom meeting in July.

The Chair made the formal request outlined in the decision paper and invited HLSG to approve the ExCom's recommendations.

The HLSG approved the continued hosting of ECW during its incubation period to 2021 and its related point 2 and 3. The Chair confirmed the approval of the above.

#### **4. Resource Mobilization and Advocacy**

The Chair moved on to resource mobilization and advocacy and underlined that this is an ongoing discussion that is not being deferred to September.

- The ECW Director presented the trends in financing education in emergencies and highlighted the steady increase since the Humanitarian Summit in 2016.
- ECW's role in this trend is to keep the donors' commitments extending beyond the current 4% of humanitarian financing channeled to education, and illustrated how ECW had contributed to the trend upward by 0.2%.
- The Director concluded by highlighting ECW's fundraising target for 2018, setting out funding requirements for the humanitarian/development multi-year programmes that have been developed in Uganda, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

The Chair acknowledged the Director's statements and underlined that this discussion will be continued.

- Dubai Cares stated that mobilizing funding is not easy and that it is often asked why money should go to ECW and not to the donors' original partners. Dubai Cares suggested addressing the added value of ECW in this regard more prominently in the Strategic Plan. Dubai Cares also emphasized that education actors should work towards a holistic approach across the education sector.
- UNESCO commended the work and achievements of ECW. UNESCO also welcomed ECW's inclusive and positive partnership-building, both at the country and global levels.
- Sweden appreciated the openness of the process and the opportunity to be an observer on the development of the Strategic Plan and Gender Strategy. Sweden announced that it had decided to become a partner of ECW and will provide flexible multi-year funding support to ECW. Sweden encouraged others to follow this path.
- The Chair thanked Sweden for the good news and pointed out that resource mobilization is undertaken over time and that it is important to consider how we can streamline our efforts.
- UNHCR underlined the need to factor in fundraising for education through coordination to avoid overlap and competition.
- EC urged flexibility with fund allocation depending on the needs on the humanitarian or development sides.
- The Netherlands would like more focus on the critical mass that can be achieved when donors and agencies come together, and avoiding fragmentation.

The Chair emphasized that ECW is making a difference and demonstrating efficiency. The ultimate aim is to have more money allocated to education and support joint programming. This New Way of Working in the humanitarian-development nexus was ECW's unique value. Before thanking everyone and closing the meeting, the Chair thanked Tove Wang of Save the Children who is retiring, for her longstanding contribution to establishing ECW, and her tremendous work as a civil servant serving children in need.

The next HLSG meeting will be held in September 2018 in New York on the margins of the General Assembly week.