

Minutes of the Education Cannot Wait High Level Steering Group Call

Tuesday 28th February, 2017

Participants: Ambassador Tarald Brautaset (Norway); Dean Brooks (Director, Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies); Gordon Brown (UN Special Envoy for Education and Chair, Education Cannot Wait High Level Steering Group); Sarah Fountain Smith (Assistant Deputy Minister, Canada); Julia Gillard (Chair, Global Partnership for Education); Marwan Hamadeh (Minister of Education, Lebanon); Alicia Herbert (UK DFID); Marjeta Jager (European Commission); Anthony Lake (Executive Director, UNICEF); Preeti Law (UNHCR); Annina Mattson (Dubai Cares); Charles North (USAID); Svein Ostveit (UNESCO); Tove Wang (CEO, Save the Children, Norway).

Chair's introduction

The Chair welcomed participants and drew attention to the purpose of the call, which was to make decisions on critical operational, governance and investment proposals. The next face to face meeting would be in April, during the Spring Meetings. The Chair thanked everyone involved in the preparation of the work for consideration today. The Chair noted that donor funds were now coming into ECW, and thanked USAID for their early contribution which had enabled the operational and governance design work to take place.

The Chair updated on recruitment for the Secretariat, which was underway. Having recognised that ECW required a Director of more seniority, the recruitment of the Director had taken longer than originally envisaged, but was now advancing with a number of high-caliber candidates. The Chair thanked DFID for their secondees now in place and encouraged others to provide secondees where this had been agreed.

The Chair outlined the agenda for the call, comprising:

- the Operational Model and Results Framework, Secretariat and Financial Update and Budget, and Initial Investments as consent items;
- the Governance and Hosting Review items for discussion and decision; and
- an update on ECW funding and resource mobilization.

Agenda

1. Operational Model and Results Framework

The Chair outlined the progress in developing the Operational Model and Results Framework since the last HLSG meeting in September. He thanked the external consultants and the officials' Task Team which had developed the work through a consultative process, including through a meeting of the Senior Officials' Group in January. Some key changes requested by the Senior Officials' Group had been incorporated, including further articulation of the Theory of Change and logic chain, greater disaggregation of different groups (girls, youth, refugees) and greater focus on learning and education quality as a key outcome of the fund.

Several HLSG members commended the Operational Model and Results Framework and the robust and consultative process of its design. The following additional points were noted by HLSG members:

- The Operating Model confirmed that ECW was a learning organisation and the HLSG should therefore be open to modifying the Operational Model and Results Framework in future, if needed;
- ECW also needed a strategic planning process which took into account existing education initiatives in order to avoid duplication of effort and ensure complementarity; and
- ECW should continue to ensure that issues around gender, disability, and violence were prioritised, including in the Acceleration Facility.

The HLSG approved the proposed Operating Model Design and Results Framework for ECW.

2. Secretariat and staffing and budget

The Chair presented the paper on the Secretariat, Finances and Budget for consent. Approving the budget, which had been endorsed by the Senior Officials' Group, would allow the Secretariat to get fully staffed and able to deliver. The HLSG may need to come back to the Secretariat structure and budget in September to reassess in the light of developments over the next six months.

In response to a question about UNICEF's role in supporting ECW delivery, Anthony Lake confirmed UNICEF's hosting of the Funds Support Office, which was now up and running, and would be managing ECW's finances.

The HLSG approved the core 12-month budget (January 2017 – December 2017) of the Secretariat and Funds Support Office as described below:

Fund Allocation Matrix				
Recipient	Purpose	Allocation – ECW Trust Fund (US\$)	Allocation – Bilateral agreement	Total US\$ (million)

		million)	(US\$ million)	
UNICEF	ECW Secretariat and UNICEF Funds Support Office for the period January 2017 – December 2017	2.9	1	3.9

3. Initial Investments

Charles Tapp (GPE and interim ECW Secretariat Co-Director) provided an update on ECW's initial investments, specifically:

- The proposal for inside Syria had been approved last week by the Recommendation Panel, chaired by Ambassador Brautaset. Reaching a final proposal had required significant engagement by the ECW Secretariat to bring partners together, and had therefore proved the concept of ECW, helping to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development actors. The proposal was innovative, with partners working together to address system-wide issues. The HLSG approved the allocation for Syria last September; the Recommendation Panel had now approved the proposal to go ahead.
- HLSG approval was being requested today on funding for Ethiopia. It was a strong proposal, approved through the Recommendation Panel, with a consultative process on the ground and the potential for good outcomes.
- The final initial investment yet to be approved by the Panel was the Global Public Goods proposal being developed by the Education Cluster, INEE and UNHCR. The Secretariat was working with these partners to pull together a strong proposal and expected to be in a position to approve this in April.
- There were many lessons learned in developing the initial investments, but overall the process had demonstrated strong proof of concept of ECW.

Ambassador Tarald Brautaset commented that the Syria proposal had required an important and time-consuming process to get to the point of approval. One of lessons learned was the need to bring all parties together, with local partners, to work through the details.

In response to a question on the nature of the Syria proposal, Ambassador Brautaset confirmed that the grant agent was UNICEF and that the proposal specified that assistance would be provided to children in all parts of Syria, regardless of political control. A further point was made about the need to explain to partners what was meant by catalytic, to ensure best use of ECW funds and staff time.

The HLSG approved \$15m funding for Ethiopia under ECW initial investments; and confirmed that a total of \$55.5 million be released to support the initial country investments, and that \$2.5 million be released to the Global Education Partners pending approval by the Review Panel of their final proposal, as follows:

Fund Allocation Matrix			
Recipient (and grantee)	Allocation – ECW Special Account (US\$ million)	Allocation – Bilateral agreement (US\$ million)**	Total Allocation (US\$ million)
Chad (UNICEF)	6.15	3.85	10
Syria (UNICEF)	12.1	2.9	15
Yemen (UNICEF)	9.3	5.7	15
Ethiopia (UNICEF)	7.6	7.4	15
IASC Education Cluster (UNICEF)	2.5	0	2.5
Total	37.65	19.85	57.5

4. Governance

The Chair introduced the proposed ECW Governance Model for discussion and decision. This had been developed through a consultative process, with discussion at the Senior Officials’ Group. This work had benefited from the expertise of external consultants who had benchmarked ECW’s governance against global best practice. The governance structure was intended to balance speed and agility, with robust oversight and transparency.

Some of the key features of this governance structure included:

- ECW’s overall direction, strategy and advocacy remained the responsibility of the HLSG;
- A new senior officials-level Executive Committee would provide operational oversight of ECW on behalf of the HLSG, and would be able to take decisions in between the six-monthly HLSG meetings. Members of this Committee would be nominated and agreed by the HLSG. This Committee would create Task Teams to support the Secretariat;
- An Independent Proposal Review Panel would provide independent review of grant proposals and recommendations to support decision-making by the Executive Committee and HLSG;
- The HLSG TOR had been refined to reflect these changes.

HLSG members welcomed the proposed new governance model, making the following points:

- The document should specify that the HLSG would include a senior civil society representative from the north and one from south – that is, developing country representation;
- A key priority was to quickly clarify membership and criteria for the selection of governance bodies. Ensuring clarity on the oversight of risk for ECW was critical;

- Membership of the constituencies of the HLSG should be clarified, at some point in the near future.

These points were agreed and the Chair suggested considering the point about constituencies at the next meeting.

The HLSG approved:

- i. the new Governance Model and Structure for ECW;***
- ii. the Terms of Reference for the Executive Committee, and the Independent Proposal Review Panel; and***
- iii. the proposed revisions to the HLSG Terms of Reference approved in June, 2016.***

5. Review of permanent hosting arrangements

The Chair said that while UNICEF had volunteered to host ECW in the interim, the HLSG had previously agreed that a review and decision on permanent hosting needed to take place in due course. The proposal on the table now was that Terms of Reference for the review be drawn up and brought to the April HLSG meeting. This was about setting up a discussion, rather than making any immediate decision on hosting.

The TOR would include detail on the process and criteria for the review, the expected skills and experience of the reviewer, and a timetable for the review, which we currently envisaged as being completed by Autumn 2017. The UK had offered to work with the Secretariat to support the review, including developing TOR on consultation with partners and funding and procuring external support to conduct the review.

HLSG members agreed to this proposal. One comment was that it was essential for the success of the fund that the review prioritised the need for ECW to be adaptable, flexible, and able to respond to needs in a timely fashion.

The HLSG tasked the Director, Education Cannot Wait and Executive Committee to develop a Terms of Reference for an Independent Review of ECW Hosting and to submit the TOR for agreement by the HLSG at its April meeting. The TOR should include: criteria against which the independent review will be conducted, review methodology and process, and the expected skill set and experience of reviewer/review team. The TOR should recommend a timeframe for the review, which is currently anticipated to conclude by Autumn 2017.

6. Resource mobilization

The Chair updated the HLSG on ECW's resource mobilization. ECW had mobilized \$113 million since its launch in May 2016, against a target of \$153 target million by May 2017. Work was being conducted urgently to fill the immediate financing gap, including through active discussions with UAE, Japan and Korea. The Global Business Coalition for Education would be holding a roundtable with around 40 companies in

April. A nomination from the private sector for membership of HLSG was hopefully due soon. There was further interest in ECW from some foundations and a charity had offered some expertise on fundraising, to target non-traditional donors, in particular. A narrative on ECW, GPE and the new MDB facility had been developed by the officials involved to ensure clarity about roles and financing needs.

The following points were made in discussion:

- The main education funding and pledging moments needed to be coordinated, especially concerning GPE and ECW, avoiding competition for resources;
- Julia Gillard confirmed the GPE Board was meeting this week in Washington DC. GPE replenishment would be at the end of this year or very early next year. There was a great deal of cooperation between the GPE replenishment team and the ECW team; there was potential for a virtuous circle – working together and being mutually reinforcing;
- The NGO sector was also working on education financing, including through a meeting last week in London with 25 organisations. There had also been a strong education focus at the Conference in Oslo last week on Lake Chad; and
- The next HLSG would mark almost one year on from ECW's launch and a suitable communications moment should be considered, to celebrate the results achieved so far.

Conclusion

The Chair concluded the meeting by thanking all who had been involved in setting up ECW so far and in preparing the HLSG papers. The need was urgent; the coordination and common spirit needed to respond was very important

The next meeting of the HLSG would be face to face on Friday, April 21 at 7:30am in Washington, DC.