

## **PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

### **UK National Commission for UNESCO Calls for Increase in Education Spending**

**London, UK – 13 April 2006.** The UK National Commission for UNESCO has called on the Government to significantly raise the share of its aid budget spent on basic education as part of the worldwide drive to ensure every child gets a primary education.

It has also urged the Government to encourage a national effort for pupils, teachers, schools and local education authorities to create international links with counterparts in developing countries.

Christine Whatford, Chair of the Education Committee of the UK National Commission, said, "Millions of people responded to the Make Poverty History campaign last year and are wondering what they can do now. This is one way that every teacher, school and LEA can make a difference."

"Sharing learning and expertise can make a huge impact in schools at both ends of the link, with teachers on both sides gaining confidence, skills and professional knowledge. Doing joint curriculum projects enriches learning for children on both sides of the partnership. Everybody gains."

At least 100 million children in the world do not get a chance to go to school and an estimated 862 million adults cannot read or write.

UK National Commission's Education Committee, in its response to the Department for International Development's latest White Paper consultation document, "Eliminating World Poverty" on Friday (April 7) praised the UK government for taking a lead in lobbying for more aid to basic education internationally and in raising its own commitments. But it said much more needed to be done if the internationally agreed goal of achieving education for all children by 2015 was to be achieved.

For instance, a significantly greater commitment was needed to the World Bank's Fast Track Initiative, a global fund for helping poor countries with sound reform plans to abolish school fees and provide universal primary education.

Ms Whatford said: "It is vital that the Government places basic education at the heart of its aid policies. It's the most valuable way to enable people in the world's poorest countries to change their lives for the better."

The Education Committee called for special funding for teacher training institutions to form partnerships on curriculum development and provide fast-track basic training for countries seeking emergency solutions to extreme shortages of qualified teachers and curriculum expertise.

It urged funding to scale up international professional development visits for teachers and make them reciprocal.

It also called for a an enlargement of government-funded school linking schemes and a national publicity drive to encourage LEAs, teacher training institutions, curriculum developers, headteachers and teachers to amake their own personal contribution to Education for All by creating mutally beneficial links to share teacher expertise and encourage collaboration between pupils in Britain and Africa and Asia.

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**For further information, please ring the UK National Commission for UNESCO on 020 7766 3491.**

**Notes to Editors**

- ***The UK National Commission for UNESCO** is an independent body set up by HM Government to act as the national coordinator for UNESCO's activities and policies in the UK; and as a focal point for UNESCO HQ, HM Government and UK Civil Society. For more information, visit [www.unesco.org.uk](http://www.unesco.org.uk).*