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**Financing Basic Education in Developing Countries:
An Analysis of International Commitments
to the EFA Fast-Track Initiative**

Yuto Kitamura *

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* Associate Professor
Graduate School of International Development
Nagoya University

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**Financing Basic Education in Developing Countries:
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Yuto Kitamura
(Nagoya University)

Introduction: Four Critical Gaps

Representatives from various national governments, international agencies and civil society organizations met at the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000) to reaffirm the vision statement agreed on at the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 5-9 March 1990). The Dakar Framework for Action adopted at the Forum states that:

all children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be (UNESCO, 2000a, p. 8).

However, current conditions around the world show that much progress remains to be made in order to realize the goals of “Education for All (EFA).” Different stakeholders have thus introduced various attempts for improving conditions of basic education, particularly in developing countries .

One of the most widely recognized of the programs to have been put forth is the Fast-Track Initiative (FTI) proposed by the World Bank in 2002. However, in the process of promoting this initiative, four critical gaps in the areas of “policy, capacity, data and financing” have appeared, according to the World Bank (2003), that need to be closed if EFA goals are to be achieved across the world. In this paper, I will analyze the example of the FTI in order

¹ In order to develop this paper, the author has received research grants from Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. An original version of this paper was submitted to Center for International and Development Education at University of California, Los Angeles as an unpublished background paper in Fall 2004.

to see how the international community might close these four gaps and assist developing countries in promoting EFA.

Criticisms against the EFA Movement

Since the Jomtien Conference, members of the international community interested in promoting EFA around the world have occasionally expressed their frustration over the pace of progress. For instance, at the Mid-Decade Meeting of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All (Amman, Jordan, 16-19 June 1996), key decision-makers, such as ministers of education, and representatives from bilateral and multilateral donors as well as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) examined the results of a worldwide mid-decade review of progress toward EFA undertaken in 1995. The review included reports submitted by countries and donors on their experiences in basic education along with transcripts from a series of seven regional seminars since 1990. The “Amman Affirmation” adopted at the meeting’s conclusion stressed that “in the quest for EFA, enhanced political will, greater financial and material resources and improved management” were required.² It is important to note that at the time of this mid-decade review meeting, the existence of the four gaps pointed out by the World Bank (i.e., policy, capacity, data and financing gaps) was already broadly recognized. Even though some progress had been made since the Jomtien Conference, these gaps basically remained open throughout 1990s.³ As a result, the international community had to reset targets and timetables at Dakar in April 2000 for achieving EFA by 2015.

The Dakar Framework for Action emphasizes the need for improving access to basic education as well as its quality. In order to improve the situation around basic education in countries, the Dakar Framework for Action repeated the importance of “political will and stronger national leadership” that “must be underpinned by resources” (UNESCO, 2000a, p. 9) including those of a financial, material and human nature. As stressed in the Dakar Framework for Action, efforts by the various stakeholders to close the four gaps should be undertaken not separately but rather in a mutual and complementary fashion.

The Dakar Forum took up the following three issues: (1) ownership and partnership; (2) financing; and (3) monitoring. The international community has been critical of the fact that the process of formulating and implementing educational strategies and policies has not remained in the hands of governments in developing countries. It is also been critical of the failure to develop appropriate partnerships among donors and governments.

² The Amman Affirmation, the final communiqué of the Mid-Decade Meeting of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All, was adopted by acclamation on 19 June 1996.

³ Dramatic changes were not expected in educational situations around the world during the 1990s. There are still more than 100 million children out-of-school, 60% of whom are girls. However at the same time, some progress has been made in certain areas that should not be neglected. For instance, primary enrolments increased by an average of 10 million each year throughout the 1990s, almost twice the progress recorded in the 1980s. It was also observed that the number of illiterates decreased from 895 million in 1990 to 850 million in 2000 (UNESCO, 2001a).

To examine the partnerships' situation, it is necessary to recognize that there are three different collaborative and cooperative relationships involved: those between (a) different donors; (b) governments and donors; and (c) different ministries within countries.

These issues of ownership and partnership are in fact deeply related to problems concerning the financing of educational development. Various criticisms have been made of the ways donors have provided their financial supports to developing countries. The aid delivery mechanism in the South has not been functioning well due to a lack of appropriate coordination among donors. Furthermore, similar coordination failures have also been seen among different ministries within the governments of developing countries⁴ (King, 1999).

Mechanisms to Promote EFA

Members of the international community have created various mechanisms to promote EFA since the Dakar Forum. Each mechanism has been aimed at contributing to fill one or more of the World Bank's four gaps. For instance, as mandated in the Dakar Framework for Action, the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has annually convened the High-Level Group Meeting on EFA (HLG) since fall 2001. The main objective of this meeting is to "serve as a lever for political commitment and technical and financial resource mobilization" (UNESCO, 2000a, p. 10). Another mechanism has been the opening of the regional and national EFA forums that function as "both a vehicle of partnership and dialogue and a coordinating mechanism focused on the planning, analysis and monitoring of progress toward the goals" (UNESCO, 2002a, p. 13). These forums, as well as the annual Working Group meetings on EFA (WGEFA) organized by UNESCO to discuss technical issues, are helping countries to focus on emerging issues in education and mobilize material, human, and to some extent financial resources.⁵

Furthermore, many stakeholders in the EFA process have repeatedly emphasized the importance of monitoring. For instance, both discussion at the 1996 Mid-Decade Review Meeting and the EFA 2000 Assessment⁶ presented at Dakar revealed that the lack of continuous monitoring has been a serious problem for developing countries as well as donors because it makes it difficult for them to identify the obstacles faced by developing countries. In response, UNESCO has been commissioned to publish the annual *EFA Global Monitoring Report*. Prepared by an independent editorial team, the report should help improve the mechanisms for data collection by

⁴ Of course it should be noted that coordination failures have been seen among different ministries in the governments of industrialized countries as well.

⁵ For more details about the HLG, the WGEFA and the EFA forums, please refer to UNESCO (2002a).

⁶ The EFA 2000 Assessment, the most in-depth evaluation of basic education ever undertaken, was conducted in more than 180 countries. The Assessment reviewed the current status of basic education in each country and evaluated the progress achieved since the Jomtien Conference in 1990. The results of the Assessment were presented at the Dakar Forum in 2000.

mobilizing various stakeholders through the HLG and WGEFA meetings and the regional and national EFA forums. It will also collect data through the EFA Observatory set up in the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. By collecting EFA data from countries, agencies and civil society organizations, the *Monitoring Report* should help not only the international community close the data gap but also develop the capacities of developing countries to collect data, encourage donors to provide financial support to the necessary areas as identified in the *Report*, and raise political awareness on current problems in basic education. The strong influence of the *Report* and support for it from EFA partners has been manifested on various occasions; for example, one might consider the interventions made by ministers, representatives of agencies and NGOs during the 2002 High-Level Group meeting on EFA (Abuja, Nigeria, 19-20 November 2002)⁷ and the report on the FTI prepared by the World Bank for its Development Committee (World Bank, 2003). Reactions to the *Report* have been both positive and negative, but even most critics support the continued publishing of an annual review of this sort.

Yet, despite the creation of the various mechanisms described above, many stakeholders in the EFA process remain critical of the seemingly slow pace to promote basic education around the world. In response, the World Bank proposed focusing on a specific area and pouring maximum financial and material resources into it. This was the idea of the Fast-Track Initiative.

How the FTI Idea Arose

As already noted, the World Bank planted the germ of the FTI idea in 2002. That year the bank laid out a financing framework intended to create “a forum in which lead donors in country, and internationally, can respond coherently to country demands for technical and financial assistance in developing and implementing national education strategies.”⁸ The World Bank was clear that this framework was not intended to create a global fund, as some stakeholders have mistakenly believed. The Bank expects to mobilize additional financing for the education sector in developing countries from various sources; this would include loans provided by the International Development Association, debt relief, bilateral aid, funding from private sector and a trust fund for donors. The FTI came out of the concept of this financing framework. The original idea of a framework for promoting basic education was surprisingly flexible and open to various possibilities. However, the process of “synthesizing” this idea into the FTI has made it rigid and narrow; it now provides support only for universalizing primary completion in a limited number of countries, to be described later in this paper.

⁷ For details of the meeting, please refer to UNESCO (2003).

⁸ This statement is cited from an untitled draft outline for paper on financing framework prepared by the World Bank, which was adapted into the paper for 2002 Development Committee Spring Meeting (World Bank, 2002a).

Taking into account points made in criticisms of the financing framework, the World Bank developed an action plan to promote EFA. Entitled *Education for Dynamic Economies: Action Plan to Accelerate Progress Toward Education for All*, it was presented to the Development Committee of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) at its spring meeting in April 2002 (World Bank, 2002a). The action plan outlines measures to close the four crucial gaps in 88 countries that seem to be “not on track” to achieve universal primary completion by 2015. It is important to note that for reasonably capturing the reality of primary education system coverage and student attainment in developing countries, the World Bank emphasized the use of completion rates (not enrolment rates, as traditionally used) as the basic measure of progress toward the EFA goal of universal primary education (UPE).⁹

The *Action Plan* proposed that the Development Committee provide increased and immediate support to the 10 of the 88 countries that had finalized their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) to put them on “track” toward achieving the goal of UPE as “fast” as possible. The international community has been frustrated over the lack of progress toward achieving EFA in many countries. Bloom and Cohen (2002) emphasize that lack of political will has been widely recognized as the greatest problems obstructing the progress toward EFA goals. The World Bank is of a similar mind, arguing that it is necessary to focus on those countries that have shown high political commitments to improve basic education in their countries. Thus, one should expect to see better outcomes if the international community concentrates its financial and technical assistance on a limited number of countries that have shown higher willingness to develop their society. The Bank, therefore, took the fact of a government’s finalizing its PRSP as evidence of a high level of political commitment to development issues. It explained that:

the fast tracking would be done within the PRSP/CDF¹⁰ framework and implemented through a multi-donor education consortium that would align the external financing needs of these countries with available financing support from donor agencies (World Bank, 2002a, p. 5).

⁹ Notably, even though it was the World Bank that asserted the importance of shifting a basic measure of EFA progress from enrolment rates to completion rates, the Bank did not seem to be strict about promoting this conceptual shift at the beginning. For instance, when World Bank President James Wolfensohn explained EFA goals to members of the Development Committee at its Spring Meeting in 2002, he said they included “achieving full enrolment of all primary school aged children by 2015” despite the fact that universal primary completion was clearly stated as one of the EFA goals in the Dakar Framework for Action. For the text of Wolfensohn’s statement, see “World Bank President Outlines Post-Monterrey Action Plan to Development Committee” (The World Bank Press Release, No. 2002/280/S, Washington, D.C., April 15, 2002).

¹⁰ In the late 1990s, James Wolfensohn proposed developing a holistic long-term approach to development that seeks a better balance in policymaking by highlighting the interdependence of all elements of development. This approach has been called the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF). For more details, see the World Bank web site <<http://www.worldbank.org/>>.

In its Communiqué of April 2002, the World Bank's Development Committee endorsed the *Action Plan* and encouraged "all countries to place education at the heart of their poverty reduction strategies, reform their education policies to achieve Universal Primary Completion and monitor progress toward the 2015 education goals *in line with an enhanced focus on results*" (emphasis added).¹¹ This concluding phrase indicates the agreement with the idea of providing concentrated financial and technical support through the FTI to those countries with high political commitment. To realize the *Action Plan*, the Committee stated further that: "We committed ourselves to work together in a much more coherent way to help bring this about and to provide the necessary additional domestic and external resources."

Preparations for launching the FTI began right after the Development Committee meeting. The World Bank consulted with other EFA partners, including major donor countries and international agencies such as UNESCO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), over the FTI. Because many partners expressed concerns over the number of countries eligible for the FTI and the eligibility criteria, the World Bank had to modify its criteria for selecting countries. In its proposal for the FTI, the World Bank explained that the initiative would "begin with a pilot phase, including about 10 countries, to be followed quickly by an expansion phase encompassing a broader set of countries" (World Bank, 2002b, p. 2). However, many partners preferred to increase the number of countries covered in the pilot phase in order to gain maximum impact for the Initiative as well as avoid criticism from developing countries that might not be selected. Many partners also thought making completion of the PRSP the only criterion would not be sufficient for judging a government's level of political commitment. They argued that the criteria needed to be more flexible and comprehensive. Thus, the criteria were expanded to include preparation of a national education strategy, such as a national EFA action plan. This was added because EFA partners agreed that preparation of a national education strategy demonstrated a government's commitment to improve the conditions of its country's education system. Some partners like UNESCO had also proposed providing additional assistance to countries with larger populations. Even though these populous countries may not have finalized their PRSPs or may be in a better economic situation than other developing countries, they definitely have the largest absolute numbers of out-of-school children.¹²

Finally, the World Bank invited 18 countries to participate in the pilot phase of the FTI. Coming from Sub-Saharan Africa (11 countries), the Middle East (one), Southeast Asia (one), Latin America and the Caribbean (four) and East Europe (one), these countries would be eligible to receive additional financing support to improve

¹¹ This Communiqué was adopted by the Development Committee on 21 April 2002. The full text is available on the World Bank's website at <<http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/DCS/DevCom.nsf>>.

¹² UNESCO has supported the E-9 Initiative, which was launched in New Delhi, India, in 1993, on the occasion of the EFA Summit of the Nine High-Population Countries (Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, and Pakistan). These countries represent more than half of the world's population. For more details, see UNESCO (1993) and UNESCO (2001b).

their primary education programs (World Bank, 2002c). Most of them (except Albania) are in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) category and all have been preparing PRSPs. Five other countries that have the largest numbers of children not in school were invited from Sub-Saharan Africa (two) and South Asia (three) to also join in the pilot phase of the FTI. It is important to note that many of the countries at the highest risk of not achieving EFA by 2015 are found primarily in these two latter regions. Among the five countries selected, only the Democratic Republic of Congo is an HIPC country and most (except India) have been preparing PRSPs.¹³

Accelerating the FTI Process

The various steps taken to implement the FTI as outlined above reflect the policies and strategies of major donors to support developing countries in promoting UPE. For instance, in the Communiqué of the Genoa Summit held in July 2001 the G8 members recognized the importance of education in development and reaffirmed their commitment to help countries in need by improving the effectiveness of their development assistance in support of locally-owned strategies. The G8 governments specifically mentioned that resources should be made available through the HIPC initiative. They also decided to set up a Task Force on Education composed of officials from G8 countries. In consultation with various stakeholders, the Task Force then prepared a report that was submitted to the summit meeting of G8 leaders in Kananaskis, Canada, in June 2002. The report voiced support for the World Bank's FTI proposal; in response, the G8 leaders agreed to increase significantly their bilateral assistance for "countries that have demonstrated a strong and credible policy and financial commitment" to EFA goals.¹⁴ At both summits, the G8 demonstrated the focusing of their interests on promoting UPE, giving particular attention to gender equity.

Two international conferences were also held that helped the international community focus on the issue of resource mobilization development. These two U.N.-hosted conferences were the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August – 4 September 2002). By strengthening partnerships among various stakeholders, major donor countries and agencies at these conferences agreed to mobilize more financial resources behind key development issues. Their goal was to realize the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, two of which —UPE and gender equity—were also EFA goals. Discussions held at these conferences have accelerated efforts of the international community to develop the FTI.

¹³ The first EFA Fast-Track countries are as follows: 18 countries (Albania, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam, Yemen and Zambia) and five countries with high-population (Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Nigeria and Pakistan).

¹⁴ This is a citation from the Kananaskis Summit Chair's Summary. For documents relating to the G8 Summits in Genoa (2001) and Kananaskis (2002), such as the Communiqué and the Chair's Summary, see the G8 website at <<http://www.g8.gc.ca/sumdocs2002-en.asp>>.

The Influence of Civil Society Organizations

The World Bank was not the originator of the idea of concentrating additional financial resources on a limited number of countries. In 2000 at the World Education Forum in Dakar, representatives from Oxfam International¹⁵ proposed a *Global Action Plan* for basic education that seems to have a strong influence on the development of the Fast-Track Initiative (Murphy and Mundy, 2002). Oxfam's action plan is aimed at mobilizing resources and political will to make international development targets, particularly those on EFA, achievable. Taking a core part of this plan into account, representatives of civil society organizations adopted the *NGO Declaration on Education for All* on 25 April 2000 in Dakar (one day before the World Education Forum started), which urged donors to finance their contribution to developing countries through "increased aid and debt relief" and establish "clear mechanisms for financing, implementing and monitoring" those countries' efforts in this area.¹⁶ The *Declaration* further called for donors to increase aid to basic education to at least 8% of total aid budget (UNESCO, 2000b).

In April 2002 and ahead of the spring meeting of the World Bank/IMF Development Committee, the Global Campaign for Education,¹⁷ a coalition of international and national NGOs working in the field of education, indicated that the key to success in achieving EFA by 2015 "will be whether Finance and Development Ministers can agree to launch a financing framework that will ensure" providing necessary resources to seriously committed countries to EFA. The Campaign proposed that finance and development ministers of donor countries mandate the World Bank "to work with donors to create a financing framework to fill financing gaps in specific countries" (Oxfam, 2002). This was in fact a message from civil society organization asking donors to seriously consider the launch of new initiative like the FTI. As one of the most influential members of the Global Campaign for Education, Oxfam played a central role in lobbying donors to accept this proposition.

At the press conference held in Washington, D.C. on 12 June 2002, James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, acknowledged the strong influence of Oxfam in the decision-making processes of the Bank and other donors to promote EFA. He stated that "Oxfam has been extraordinarily supportive, both in terms of putting the case and in terms of implementation" (World Bank, 2002d), including the development of the FTI in line with the consensus made at Monterrey in March 2002. While Wolfensohn has recognized the importance of listening to

¹⁵ Oxfam is an international development, relief, and campaigning nongovernmental organization. It was one of major NGOs behind the creation of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), which is a coalition of civil society organizations working in the field of education and related areas both in North and South.

¹⁶ For the full text of the *Declaration*, see UNESCO (2000b).

¹⁷ The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) is a representative organization, driven by its members. The campaign was founded in 1999 before the Dakar Forum by a group of NGOs and teachers' unions, including Education International, Oxfam International, Global March Against Child Labor, ActionAid, and national NGO networks from Bangladesh, Brazil, and South Africa. Since then, many other major international, regional, and national groups active in the fields of education, human rights, social justice and the eradication of poverty have joined the coalition. The GCE encourages and supports the formation of national platforms, bringing together community groups, unions, education NGOs, churches, youth, women, and other stakeholders to create broad-based citizen pressure for action on the EFA goals. For more details of its activities, see <<http://www.globalcampaignforeducation.org>>.

voices coming from civil society, he also stressed that bilateral and multilateral agencies are core partners in promoting EFA. Wolfensohn pointed out that the World Bank had held a series of discussions regarding the process of developing the FTI with various EFA partners, including a number of countries, UNESCO, UNICEF and the European Union (EU). He emphasized that the FTI is “an initiative that has gained a lot of coherence and support from others, and it is not just something that we're dumping on the community today or, indeed, seeking to assert primacy” (World Bank, 2002d) for the World Bank.

Questions on the Eligibility of Countries for the FTI

Problems have arisen over the eligibility of countries for the FTI. Prior to the 2002 spring meeting of the Development Committee, the World Bank and the Dutch government organized a conference entitled “Accelerating Action toward EFA” (Amsterdam, 10-11 April 2002).¹⁸ Participants of this conference included representatives of UNESCO, UNICEF, and the EU; ministers and senior education officials from 16 developing countries; and virtually all of the bilateral donors active in the field of education. The assembled representatives endorsed the World Bank’s *Action Plan*, which was later submitted to the Development Committee’s meeting, and called for immediate actions to launch the proposed FTI (World Bank, 2002b). It was on the basis of discussions held at this conference that the World Bank developed the financing framework that became the basic framework for developing the FTI. In its paper on the framework, the Bank states that current efforts in assisting developing countries to promote EFA are “too piecemeal and ad hoc” and “aid flows remain concentrated on a small number of countries that are often neither the most needy nor the most able to make effective use of resources to tackle poverty.”¹⁹ The Bank emphasizes that the FTI would be an attempt to solve this kind of problems.

Considering ways to mobilize more adequate financial support to the most needy countries in an effective manner seems reasonable; however, the World Bank’s statement is in fact contradictory, since the “most needy” countries are often at the same time the countries “most unable” to use resources effectively. Because of this, donors did not select such “unable” countries as the Fast-Track ones and instead chose those countries that may not be the most needy but at least are able to make effective use of additional financial resources (see TABLE 1). Under such circumstances, the FTI will still leave out those most needy countries.

¹⁸ For more detailed background on a series of meetings which discussed about the preparation of the Fast-Track Initiative, see World Bank (2002b).

¹⁹ These statements are cited from the above-mentioned draft outline for a paper on financing framework (see Note 7).

TABLE 1 Possibility of Achieving UPE in Countries Selected for the Fast-Track Initiative**(Based on data in 1999/2000)**

UPE Possibility	Countries
Countries that have achieved UPE	Bolivia, Vietnam
Countries with “high chance”	Bangladesh, Honduras, Uganda
Countries with “low chance”	Burkina Faso, Dem. Rep. of Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia Mauritania, Mozambique, Nicaragua
Countries “at risk”	Guyana
Countries at “serious risk”	Guinea, Niger, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia

SOURCE: UNESCO (2002b) and World Bank (2002c)

NOTE: Among the FTI countries not analyzed in this study, only Ghana seems to be having a serious problem to universalize primary education. Information on either net enrolment ratio (NER) or gross enrolment rate (GER) for each country are as follows: Albania 100% NER in 1999/2000; Ghana 75.3% GER in 1990/1991; India 100.9% GER in 1999/2000; Pakistan 96.0% GER in 1999/2000; Yemen 88% NER in 1998/1999 (Data from UNESCO (2001a) and UNESCO (2002b)).

Furthermore, it is not clear how the international community would assist countries other than the 23 selected for the first phase. As already described in this paper, among such major players as donors and international agencies, it was difficult to reach an agreement on the number of FTI eligible countries. Even though the stakeholders increased the number from 10 to 23, there has been still a question on what would happen to other countries. As a UNESCO study shows (UNESCO, 2002b), 50 of the 128 countries analyzed achieved the UPE benchline goal, i.e., net enrolment ratios (NER) of 95% or more, in 1999/2000. The study divides the other 78 countries into four categories: (1) 21 countries with a “high chance of achieving the goal;” (2) 16 with a “low chance of achieving the goal;” (3) 20 “at risk of not achieving the goal;” and (4) 21 at “serious risk of not achieving the goal.”²⁰ Many countries categorized as “countries at risk” have not been selected as the FTI countries. As Table 1 shows, only 6 out of 41 countries at risk have been selected.

It is to some extent understandable that donors would like to concentrate their additional financial assistance on those countries that have a better chance of achieving universal primary completion. It should be also noted that

²⁰ This categorization is based on an analytical framework developed by the EFA Global Monitoring Report Team. In this study, the NER value of 80% is utilized as a border to categorize countries either with a chance of achieving UPE or at risk of not achieving it. The analytical framework permits glancing over and comparing current situations of basic education in countries. For details, please refer to UNESCO (2002b, pp.89-97).

one of the criteria to be eligible for the FTI is the level of political commitment to promote education; many of the countries categorized as “at risk” may not have adequately demonstrated such in the past (e.g., by not finalizing PRSPs and/or education development strategies, etc.). However, at the same time, we cannot forget about these countries seriously suffering in developing their education environments. It has been widely recognized that many are countries donors have not deemed as favorable beneficiaries of financial support due to various problems including a lack of “good governance.”²¹ I propose that there should be some kind of mechanism to ensure these countries of receiving assistance from the international community as well. For instance, a donor consortium could be established to monitor how countries would utilize financial assistance in order to plan and implement the FTI appropriately.²² Furthermore, it is still questionable if additional resources need to be provided to those countries “on track,” since some among them have already realized universal primary enrolment.²³

Financial Challenges and Promises Made

Most of the reasons for the inadequate progress made toward meeting the EFA goals during the 1990s were country-specific; however, Delamonica, et al., (2001) indicate that “one explanation stands out in virtually all countries: inadequate public finance for primary education” (p. i).

The World Bank conducted case studies on 47 low-income countries and estimates that these countries would need to increase their expenditure on primary education from the annual \$7.4 billion they are currently spending to an average of \$16.4 billion per year by 2015 (World Bank, 2002e).²⁴ These 47 countries would require \$2.5 billion to \$5 billion per year in additional external resources as an absolute minimum. This estimate is three to five times more than the amount they currently obtain in external aid for primary education.²⁵ Furthermore, as

²¹ The issue of “good governance” has been always a concern for donors providing financial assistance to developing countries. For instance, at the G8 Summit held at Evian, France in June 2003, the G8 leaders discussed how to ensure good governance as one of their main agenda items. They emphasized that donors should provide more assistance to countries that have been making efforts to establish good governance.

²² I am aware that there could be negative reactions toward my proposition of creating a donor consortium since it may make the process of assisting countries more complicated and “donor-driven.” However, a transparent mechanism is necessary for checking how external financial resources will be utilized inside countries.

²³ It should be remembered that in case of five populous countries, the criteria for FTI eligibility were slightly different from that for the other 18 countries. Since these five countries have larger absolute numbers of out-of-school children, donors have decided to support these countries by providing additional financial assistance.

²⁴ For detailed information on simulation results for 47 off-track low-income countries, see World Bank (2002f).

²⁵ The \$2.5–\$5 billion estimate appears different from the estimate of \$10–\$13 billion per year presented in the *Financing for Development* (FfD) Report, jointly prepared by the World Bank and IMF in Fall, 2001 (World Bank, 2001). (The \$10–\$13 billion estimate was included in the overall estimate of \$40–\$60 billion per year which should be required to reach all of the Millennium Development Goals.) This difference between \$2.5–\$5 and \$10–\$13 happens because the FfD calculation reflects the total incremental resources required for all developing countries, while the World Bank’s Action Plan on EFA (World Bank, 2002a) analyzes only 47 poor countries. Furthermore, the Bank’s Action Plan introduces a more restrictive normative framework, which assumes a substantial domestic resource increase, thus making its estimate of external financing gap much smaller.

indicated in a report prepared by the World Bank (2003a) for its Development Committee, it has been estimated that additional \$32–\$37 billion would be required annually for achieving universal primary completion across the world.

While various studies have indicated the great need to increase the amount of development assistance in not only the education but also other sectors, it is necessary to describe how donors have been responding to those needs. Here, I would like to show the trend of development assistance in general through briefly describing some examples of new financial commitments recently expressed by major donors.

There is a generally agreed need to increase international financial assistance, which requires providing \$50 billion more per year. At the Monterrey Conference, participants reconfirmed that developed countries would make concrete efforts toward the target of 0.7% of gross national product (GNP) as official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries, and in particular 0.15%–0.20% of GNP to least-developed countries. Major donors at the Monterrey Conference made two significant promises. First, the EU committed itself to provide an additional \$7 billion for its ODA by 2006, which will make available at least some \$20 billion extra over the period 2000–06. ODA from the EU represents more than 50% of all ODA distributed worldwide, including humanitarian aid, totaling \$25.4 billion in 2000. Second, the government of the United States promised to seek a 50% increase in its core development assistance over the next three budget years. This will result a \$5 billion annual increase over current levels. Moreover, Canada announced an offer of \$500 million to establish a fund for supporting African countries and also announced an 8% increase in its aid budget.²⁶

For financial assistance to the education sector in developing countries, the Netherlands has decided to contribute 135 million euros to help finance the EFA initiative, mainly for achieving UPE and eliminating gender disparities. The Netherlands emphasizes the importance of creating a supplementary mechanism to support countries where none of the donors have major programs. Furthermore, since 1997 the U.K. has committed around \$1 billion to education across the world and recently it set up the Commonwealth Education Fund. Norway has also committed to increase the share of education in its development budget from 8% to 15% by 2005. This would increase Norway's ODA/GDP to almost 1%.

Even though the Monterrey Conference was successful in terms of increasing international financial assistance to developing countries, the Monterrey consensus itself stresses the importance of mobilizing domestic financial resources for development. The World Bank's *EFA Financing* paper points out that 90% of the incremental recurrent costs of achieving EFA have been financed by the countries themselves (World Bank, 2002e).

²⁶ For more details about donor commitments announced at the Monterrey Conference, see <<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/>>. International targets to increase ODA were set based on international dialogues and agreements made during the U.N. Decades for Development from 1960s to 1980s and at the U.N. Conferences of the Least Developed Countries since 1981. For details of the latter conference, see <<http://r0.unctad.org/conference/>>.

Financing Gap and the Indicative Framework

In the Monterrey Consensus, major donors pledged to increase their ODA. To operationalize it, the World Bank emphasized that new financial resources should be provided, preferably in the form of grants and concessional assistance, and proposed the FTI. Donors have been discussing how to close the financing gap by mobilizing external financial resources in the education sector, particularly for primary education, through the FTI. The World Bank has indicated two points as strategies unique to the FTI, the introduction of an indicative framework and the emphasis on assisting recurrent costs in education sector.

In preparing for the FTI, the World Bank has developed a set of technical benchmarks for primary education efficiency and quality based on findings from the research of Colclough and Al-Samarrai (Colclough and Al-Samarrai, 2000). The Bank has explained that the benchmarks should be understood as “norms” to guide service delivery and financing reforms (World Bank, 2002a). As the Bank itself has claimed, the idea of introducing the indicative framework should be recognized as a unique and interesting attempt since it could be the first “common frame of reference for all countries” (World Bank, 2002a, p. 11) to take sufficient account of financial and policy implications. The indicative framework is composed of the following parameters (World Bank, 2002b)²⁷:

- Government spending on education about 20% of the recurrent budget
(assuming government revenues in the range of 14-18% of GDP);
- Spending on primary education about 50% of education spending;
- Average teacher salaries about 3.5 times per capita GDP;
- Average pupil-teacher ratio about 40:1;
- Non teacher salary share of recurrent spending about 33%; and
- Average repetition rate below 10%.

Prouty (2002) explains that the indicative framework could encourage some countries to change their policies since “some policy changes are a simple question of leadership” (p. 2). Referring to a lack of hours of primary schooling in developing countries, Prouty points out that governments need to make efforts to change the situation of education in their countries and the indicative framework should guide them. Furthermore, the World Bank indicates that key outcomes should be judged by the degree of improvement in the following three rates:

²⁷ These parameters have been developed particularly for low-income countries, which need to more drastically improve conditions in their education sector. For some FTI countries which have better conditions, the situation may already fall within the boundaries of these parameters. Here, we see a problem regarding the selection of eligible countries in FTI process.

primary completion rate for girls; primary completion rate for boys; and net intake rate into first grade for girls (World Bank, 2002b).

It is important to recognize that of the indicative framework's six parameters, two —pupil-teacher ratio and repetition rate— could imply the progress in improving quality of education. The World Bank has been often criticized for paying too much attention on enlarging educational opportunities and neglecting the importance of ensuring quality of education; as a consequence, it is clear that the Bank has been more sensitive to the issue of quality in the FTI process. For instance, the World Bank stresses that “true and sustainable learning begins to occur only after the completion of at least five to six years of primary education of reasonable quality” (World Bank, 2002a, p. 2). The Bank is aware of the fact that “unlike universal enrolment, universal primary completion cannot be achieved without ensuring sustained household demand for education, students' learning progress and school quality—all of which are interlinked” (World Bank, 2002a, p. 7).

Another issue raised by the World Bank deals with external assistance to recurrent costs in the education sectors of FTI countries. Delamonica, et al., (2001) point out that “recurrent expenditure on primary education will have to increase by about \$6.9 billion per year” (p. i) in order to achieve UPE by 2015 all over the world. The World Bank asserts that ensuring the increase of recurrent expenditure would be a key to success for many countries to promote UPE. For instance, a study conducted by UNICEF indicates that in order to realize UPE, average recurrent expenditure on primary education in Sub-Saharan African countries will have to be 54% higher in 2015 than it was in 2000 and South Asia will have to achieve an increase of a more than third (Delamonica, et al., 2001).

The indicative framework presented by the Bank could serve as a good reference for donors to examine the possibility and adequacy of providing external financial assistance through the FTI to support the recurrent expenditures of eligible countries. There are broad concerns among the donor community that the external assistance to recurrent items in the educational budgets of developing countries could easily make them dependent on external financing. This is problematic for sustainability of educational development, because some countries may not make a necessary effort to reallocate and/or increase domestic financial resources to cover the required recurrent expenditure in its education sector. If donors for some reason had to stop support of recurrent costs in these countries, these countries would not be able to maintain their educational system sufficiently.

This has been an issue during last decade but the donor community has not yet reached any consensus over it since each donor has its own philosophy, interest, or policy regarding providing development assistance. For instance, representatives from donor countries discussed this issue as one of the main topics at a meeting on “Basic Education: Donors Roles and Responsibility” held at the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for

Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC) in Paris in 1992. They could not build any consensus on this issue at this meeting.²⁸

However, the attitude toward this issue among donor countries seems to be changing recently. For instance, the G8 Education Task Force, established after the G8 Genoa Summit in 2001, points out in its report to the G8 leaders that “there is a high recurrent-cost component in basic education” for countries seeking to achieve the goal of five years of UPE. Meeting this cost would require about 20% of country’s recurrent budget on education, and half of this would have to go to primary education (G8 Education Task Force, 2002). Members of the Task Force thus support the World Bank’s FTI to provide additional support to countries.

Though it is still not easy to make any judgement on the correctness of supporting recurrent costs, donors should be able to use the indicative framework as a reference and encourage developing countries to be conscious about their national budget and not depend too much on external assistance. This issue will be covered further in the following section’s analysis of the Japanese government’s attitude toward educational development assistance. Such an analysis could provide suggestions on the kinds of problems and possibilities donors might face in the processes of promoting basic education in developing countries in general and developing the FTI in particular.

Financial Assistance from Donors: The Case of Japan

Japan continuously increased its ODA levels during the 1980s and 1990s, rising from \$3.8 billion in 1985 to \$15.3 billion in 1999, the peak year in the history of Japanese ODA. However, in 2002 Japan cut its ODA level by 10% because of the recession in Japanese economy ongoing since the mid-1990s. Nonetheless, it is necessary to examine the Japanese policy toward development assistance by analyzing how the government has allocated its ODA to different sectors. For example, the amount of ODA to the education sector has in fact increased even during this period, except between 1999 and 2000 (see TABLE 2).

²⁸ For details of discussion held at this OECD/DAC meeting on basic education, see Utsumi (2001). Utsumi was a member of the Japanese delegation to the meeting.

TABLE 2 ODA Targeting Education and Basic Education from the Top Five OECD/DAC**Member Donors (in \$million and as percentage of total ODA)**

	2001		2000		1999		1998	
	Education	Basic Education	Education	Basic Education	Education	Basic Education	Education	Basic Education
Japan	788.6 (6.8%)	80.37 (0.7%)	733.4 (5.6%)	44.8 (0.3%)	1,333.1 (8.7%)	61.3 (0.4%)	627.8 (5.9%)	31.9 (0.3%)
United States	319.3 (3.3%)	205.1 (2.1%)	255.0 (2.7%)	189.5 (2.0%)	292.6 (3.2%)	109.7 (1.2%)	149.4 (1.7%)	43.9 (0.5%)
Germany	573.7 (16.4%)	43.2 (1.2%)	553.1 (11.0%)	61.2 (1.2%)	926.5 (16.8%)	104.8 (1.9%)	1,082.7 (19.4%)	139.5 (2.5%)
United Kingdom	193.6 (7.1%)	67.6 (2.5%)	173.1 (3.9%)	70.7 (1.6%)	331.2 (9.6%)	103.5 (3.0%)	274.3 (7.1%)	54.1 (1.4%)
France	776.2 (24.0%)	185.9 (5.6%)	755.8 (17.9%)	50.1 (1.2%)	1,544.5 (27.4%)	n.a. ?	1,751.3 (30.5%)	n.a. ?
Total of DAC Countries	3670.4 (8.6%)	894.8 (2.1%)	3,523.9 (6.6%)	684.4 (1.3%)	5,917.4 (10.7%)	745.9 (1.2%)	5,326.1 (10.6%)	603.4 (1.0%)

SOURCE: Prepared by the author based on data available from the OECD/DAC database in the International Development Statistics online (IDS/o) (www.oecd.org/dac/stats).

The increase of Japanese ODA to education sector implies that Japan has recognized the importance of education in development, largely from its historical experience of achieving economic success based on having sufficient human resources in the form of well-educated people. But it should be noted that Japan's focus has not been on basic education. In fact, Japan has been more interested in providing support for secondary and post-secondary levels of education in developing countries. For instance, Japanese assistance has normally had its comparative advantage and competence in science and mathematics education at secondary and tertiary levels. It is obvious from Table 1 that Japan has provided less financial support to basic education than other big donor countries in terms of both proportion and actual amount. Japan's contribution to basic education in developing countries has

been far below from the target proposed by civil society organizations at the Dakar Forum, i.e., at least 8% of total aid budget, as mentioned earlier in this paper.

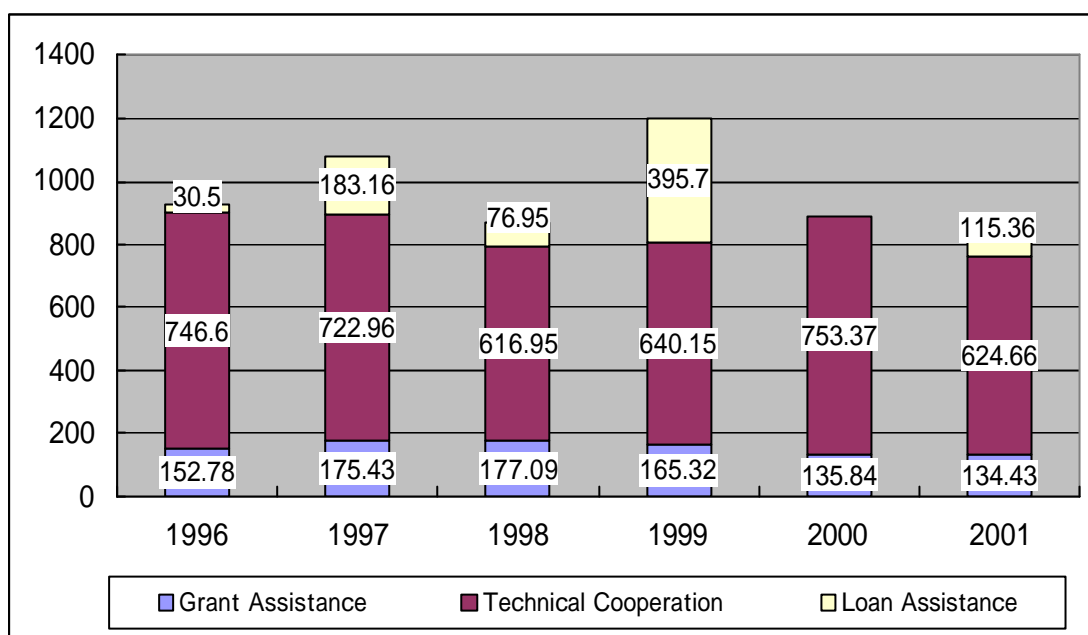
However, recently there have been some different trends regarding the allocation of Japanese ODA within education sector. In 2001, Japan provided \$788.6 million to the education sector, of which \$80.37 million (more than 10% of education ODA) was spent for basic education. Furthermore, Japan has been providing more technical cooperation and grant assistance rather than loan assistance to basic education. Compared with financial assistance to education sector as a whole (see FIGURE1), it is quite clear that Japan has been providing grant assistance mainly to basic education (see FIGURE 2).

It should be noted that there are some incompatibilities between Figure 1 and Figure 2 about the amounts of grant assistance. While the first figure shows that Japan provided \$165.32 million to education sector as grant assistance in 1999, the second figure indicates that Japanese contributions to basic education in the form of grant assistance totaled \$173.12 million. In theory, such a discrepancy should not exist, since the contribution to basic education must be smaller (or at least same as) the one to education sector as a whole. The same discrepancy is seen for the data from 2001, with \$134.43 million earmarked to education versus \$137.34 million to basic education.

There seem to be several reasons why these incompatibilities occur. First, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has created these two graphs from two different data sources. While Figure 1 was prepared based on the data provided to OECD/DAC, Figure 2 on basic education was developed based on the Japanese government's own data. The two data sets use different criteria for the selection of data. For instance, OECD/DAC data sometimes exclude capacity-building projects in non-formal sector, which the Japanese government normally includes with education data, and include only projects in the formal education sector such as school constructions. Furthermore, while the Japanese government's data include projects at both primary and secondary level in basic education data, OECD/DAC data normally include only those at the primary level. Second, the Japanese government's data was first calculated in Japanese yen and converted into U.S. dollars based on the OECD/DAC exchange rate. Incompatibilities seen on these two graphs might have arisen during the currency conversion. This is in fact an interesting case illustrative of how the Japanese government's development assistance to the education sector has been sometimes misinterpreted by the international community.

FIGURE 1 Japanese Contribution to Education by Scheme Type (1996–2001)

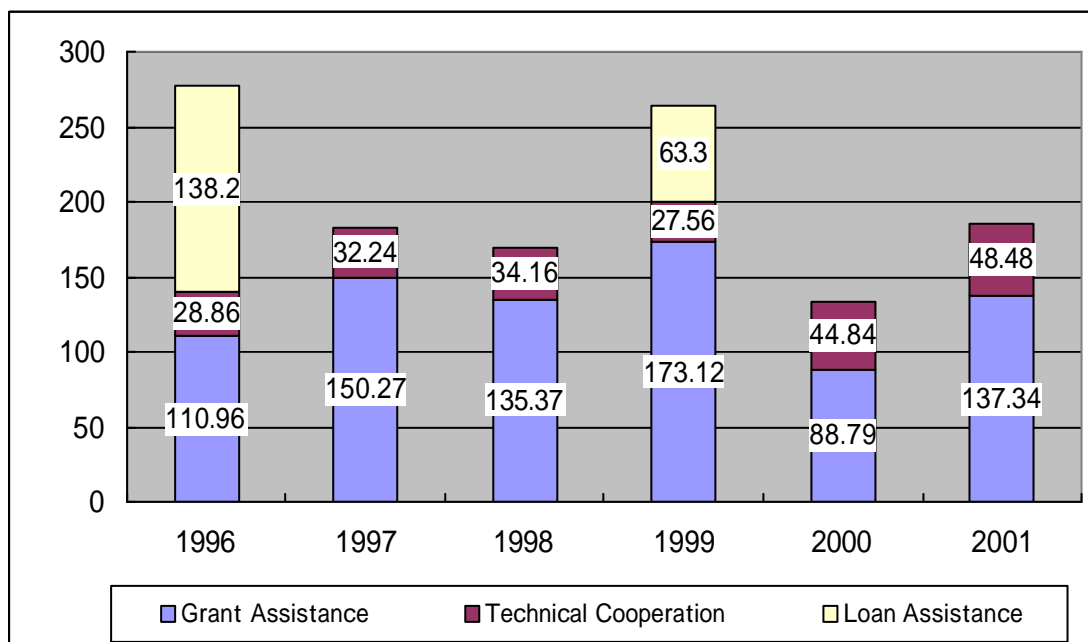
(in US\$ million)



SOURCE: MOFA (2003)

FIGURE 2 Japanese Contribution to Basic Education by Scheme Type (1996–2001)

(in US\$ million)



SOURCE: MOFA (2003)

New Approaches to Provide Financial Assistance

There are two ministries and one implementing agency within the Japanese government that have been mainly dealing with educational development assistance: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

At the G8 Summit in Kananaskis, the government of Japan pledged to provide more than 250 billion Japanese yen (approximately \$2 billion) of ODA for education assistance over the next five years in order to assist developing countries²⁹ in achieving the Dakar goals. This additional financial resource seems to have had a considerable impact on the EFA movement, particularly since in line with this pledge, the Japanese government has introduced its new initiative called Basic Education for Growth Initiative (BEGIN)³⁰ to promote basic education in developing countries. However, it is important to take a careful look at the content of this pledge. Even though Japan has promised to provide more than \$2 billion in new financial assistance, these funds will be allocated to not only basic education but also other areas of the education sector. From documents prepared by MEXT (2002), it is not clear how much allocation the Japanese government is planning to provide to basic education through the BEGIN. But the international community seems to have had the impression that Japan would spend all \$2 billion only on assistance for basic education in developing countries. To better understand the Japanese government's goals, it is necessary to examine real contents of Japanese support for the FTI promised at the Donors Group meeting at Brussels in November 2002. According to a report prepared by MOFA, no new financial resource will be added to support the FTI. Instead, the Japanese government has emphasized the volume of financial contributions to be provided through the BEGIN, which may not be as flexible as developing countries expect and would not be utilized much for the support to the FTI.

The Japanese government has been often criticized for not providing clear messages to the international community as well as the people in Japan about what its development assistance policy is. The announcement of the launch of BEGIN seems to be another such unclear message. If the government continues to repeat its offering of this kind of logical deception, Japan will lose the trust of the international community. Regarding Japanese support

²⁹ In this context, the Japanese government recognizes 72 developing countries as their targets (49 LDCs listed by OECD/DAC and 23 countries of which GNP is less than \$760).

³⁰ BEGIN lays out a framework for promoting basic education in developing countries and has a particular focus on following areas: school construction, girls' education, non-formal education (particularly literacy training), use of ICT in education, science and mathematics education, teacher training, school management and policy planning. The Japanese government also plans to develop new efforts in utilizing in-service Japanese teachers for sharing and providing their experiences with teachers in developing countries. For this purpose, the core universities (Hiroshima University and Tsukuba University) will provide technical support to teachers. This is called a "cooperation bases system" (as stated in MEXT, 2002) and the government has been trying to promote the involvement of universities in development assistance through it. In order to provide technical and financial assistance in these areas, Japan will make further efforts at cooperation with such international organizations as UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). For more details of BEGIN, see MEXT (2002).

for the FTI, it should be integrated into the BEGIN process in order to maximize its impact in terms of both financial and human resource contributions.³¹

Even though the Japanese government has been against the idea of supporting recurrent expenditure in education sector, there seems to be some possibility of providing financial support to recurrent budget of FTI countries. One scheme for providing financial support to developing countries is a reserved fund called a “counterpart fund.” While the JICA normally provides program-type aid to recipient countries, there are also several categories of funding, including the counterpart fund, that could be received as monetary aid and/or spent to support sectoral expenditures. After the governments of Japan and the recipient country sign an exchange of notes, the recipient country will be requested to set up a reserve fund (i.e., the counterpart fund) in local currency equivalent to the Free on Board (FOB) value of the procured equipment and material provided by the Japanese government.³²

There seems to be the possibility of asking the governments of FTI countries to allocate the counterpart fund to their Ministries of Education in order to cover recurrent expenditure in education sector.³³ This is an innovative idea for donors such as Japan, which have some limitations on providing financial support to recipient countries. However, at the same time, the situations need to be carefully monitored by donor countries since various critics have been made over how recipient countries utilize the counterpart fund, particularly with respect to the transparency of the process of allocating the fund. Many critics have noted that the counterpart fund has been sometimes linked with corruption and embezzled by government officials.

Conclusion: Challenges and Possibilities

In this paper, I briefly described how different actors in the international community have been collaborating in the process of developing a new initiative called the FTI to promote EFA, with a particular focus on universalizing primary education. I also briefly analyzed how the government of Japan has been providing its financial support to education sector as one of the biggest donors. In my analysis, I have tried to highlight the problems that have arisen in relation to the four crucial gaps indicated by the World Bank in the areas of policy, capacity, data and financing. Through my study, it has become clear that more people are aware of the importance of supporting education, particularly basic education, and the international community has been exploring more effective frameworks to

³¹ As of May 2003, only one official in MOFA has been working on the FTI as the representative of the Japanese government; this fact seems to be creating some problems such as a lack of communication between ministries, particularly between MEXT and MOFA. With few exceptions, there has been little collaboration between these two key ministries in the Japanese government’s efforts regarding the FTI. On the other hand, having only one person working on the issue does make it easier to make the government’s policy toward the FTI more coherent.

³² The JICA website (<<http://www.jica.go.jp/>>) shows some cases on how to utilize the counterpart fund. For more general information on various categories of funding, see White and Toye (1996).

³³ In interviews with MOFA and JICA officials conducted in Tokyo, May 2003, I was told that MOFA and JICA have been actually exploring the possibility of asking the governments of some FTI countries in Latin America to allocate the counterpart fund to education sector for covering recurrent expenditures.

provide its assistance to developing countries. Among the various frameworks that have been suggested and implemented, that of the FTI seems to be one of the most influential and innovative initiative; however, there still seem to be a number of problems regarding the preparation for the FTI. In this concluding section, I would like to raise some issues that may hinder effective implementation of the FTI.

First, the country-level development of human and institutional capacity should be recognized as the most urgent and fundamental problem in order to ensure effective implementation of the FTI. Many developing countries have been struggling to improve the managerial capacity and system (Buchert, 2002). International EFA partners should always remind themselves that it is primarily the responsibility of the countries themselves to promote EFA. Thus, capacity-building at country level is key to ensuring “country-driven” development.

Second, there have been two opposing concerns expressed by several donors in a series of meetings to develop the FTI.³⁴ Some donors have criticized the process as being too slow and taking too much time to actually mobilize resources at country-level. Stronger criticisms have been raised by civil society organizations. For instance, ActionAid has criticized the FTI process as in fact “back-tracking” since donors have failed to deliver additional finance and are abandoning the timetable for expansion (ActionAid, 2003). On the other hand, other critics have cautioned that the process should not be too fast and stressed that donors need to take enough time to examine proposals submitted by countries, otherwise the quality of this initiative would not be ensured. Both criticisms are reasonable and the promotion of good donor coordination could be one of key aspects to suffice these two points.³⁵

For better donor coordination, at the first donors meeting on FTI held in Brussels on 27 November 2002, the donors group agreed that donors should collaborate “within the context of existing structures at the country-level. It was also proposed that a “champion” (normally the lead donor for the education sector in each country), be the focal point for mobilizing and coordinating donor support” (Good and Boer, 2002). This agreement seems to be reasonable, but in reality donors vary in terms of their flexibility in providing financial support, as the issue of supporting recurrent costs shows. It should be also considered how much flexibility recipient countries could have

³⁴ Since the Spring Meeting of the Development Committee in 2002, there have been a series of donors group meetings held in Washington, D.C., Paris and Brussels. One meeting held in Brussels on 27 November 2002 was the first “official” donors’ meeting on the EFA Fast-Track Initiative to be attended by basically all donors concerned (representatives from 25 bilateral and multilateral agencies). This meeting was convened by UNESCO and the World Bank, co-chaired by Canada and the Netherlands, and hosted by the European Commission. The complicated manner in which the meeting was put together shows how much the donors group care about promoting to the international community the importance of partnership in developing the Initiative.

³⁵ As of spring 2003, the FTI process has been delayed due to the lack of good coordination among donor countries and international agencies. For instance, an FTI Secretariat was established at the World Bank in Washington, D.C., in late 2002. Even though donors and agencies have agreed to support this secretariat, only a few have provided assistance both in financial terms and as human resources (e.g., seconding specialists). One reason for this seems to be that the World Bank took too much time to establish this secretariat. It has recently come online and I hope it would start functioning sufficiently as soon as possible.

when they receive donor support. Thus, for instance, the government of Japan points out that “the financing modality for FTI should be as flexible as possible and should have a broad range of delivery schemes” (Government of Japan, 2002, p. 3). Furthermore, there have been communication gaps between the headquarters of donor agencies and field offices at country-level. It is the donors’ responsibility to develop better coordination among as well as within themselves.

Third, as described above, the World Bank/IMF Development Committee basically agreed with the Bank’s proposal of the FTI, but at the same time it also warned the Bank to pay careful attention to different circumstances between countries, view them within a particular country’s context and pursue the FTI as part of integrated poverty reduction strategies (World Bank, 2002g). Regarding the issue of good donor coordination, it is also important for all stakeholders to discuss how to ensure the ownership of country in the process of formulating the FTI proposal and implementing it by promoting a country-driven approach.

Fourth, more financial resources need to be mobilized to ensure proper implementation of the FTI. The World Bank has been aware from the outset that the estimated \$2.5–\$5 billion per year in external financing required for the FTI could be “a lower-bound estimate of the total cost of achieving EFA” (World Bank, 2002h, p. 3). This awareness comes from the knowledge that the estimate did not include the needs for assistance beyond the 47 low-income countries studied by the Bank.

There is broad recognition that sound economic and education sector policies are required to achieve EFA. For instance, to ensure adequate mobilization of external as well as domestic financial resources, Japan has stressed that a credible EFA national action plan (or national education strategy) “should be integrated in national development strategies with a clear commitment to ensuring national resource mobilization” (Government of Japan, 2002, p. 1) and that the FTI should be developed in this line. A World Bank team that conducted a case study on Yemen also points out that policy and institutional reforms, along with significant support from donors, are the keys to the success of FTI (World Bank, 2003b). Thus, it is crucial to link the FTI process with such existing development strategies/frameworks as PRSPs and the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF). Furthermore, consideration should be given regarding how the FTI could be implemented within the existing political bodies/frameworks. For instance, various political networks/partnerships have been developed in Africa, such as the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD).³⁶ EFA partners will need to effectively mobilize these partnerships in the process of developing and implementing the FTI.

³⁶ ADEA was established in 1988 and has developed a network among the various stakeholders that have been working in the field of education and development, including education ministries, development agencies, specialists and researchers, and NGOs. NEPAD was established in 2001 by the initiative of some prominent African leaders. It is important to note that this partnership has been developed by African leaders themselves. Thus this partnership could be a key for

Fifth, serious data gaps have emerged since the 1990s during the so-called Jomtien Decade, as briefly discussed in this paper. The Japanese government has been critical of the weakness in “the synergy between the FTI process and the outcomes of *EFA Global Monitoring Report*”-(Government of Japan, 2002). As described at the beginning of this paper, a range of stakeholders have established a global mechanism to promote EFA, but that mechanism has not been fully utilized in order to improve the situation. Furthermore, some ministers in the World Bank/IMF Development Committee have stressed that the parameters and benchmarks should be realistic. Ensuring that the indicative framework is adequate to the task, the Committee argues, will require a comprehensive approach to collect up-to-dated data at country-level (World Bank, 2002h).

Last but not least (and in fact most fundamentally), the EFA movement as a whole is aimed at promoting not only primary schooling but also various fields of basic education. The FTI seems to be an innovative attempt to bring donors together; however, I am concerned about the possibility that other important areas in basic education, such as literacy, may be neglected. The international community must view the EFA movement in a comprehensive manner.

I conclude this paper by citing the words of Nelson Mandela, the great political leader who has fought for liberating the oppressed people in African continent.

I have discovered the secret after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. . . . I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended (Mandela, 1994, p. 751).

His statement reminds us that the EFA movement is a project that will not end until all people around the globe can enjoy the opportunity to have access to basic education of good quality. It is the responsibility of all of us who have had such opportunities in our lives to promote basic education in all corners of the world.

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