

Press Release

21 October, London
For immediate use

“Post-secondary education in Africa must be the focus for EU” – former Schools Minister

STEPHEN TWIGG, Director of the Foreign Policy Centre, and a former Minister for School Standards today said:

“Thanks to G8 leaders, over the next 5 years the EU has \$100 billion to spend on African Development. On Monday and Tuesday, Hilary Benn will meet with his EU counterparts to discuss how that money is spent. I urge those Ministers to read the Foreign Policy Centre’s action plan, “*Leeds Manifesto; How to Spend \$100 billion for Africa*” and give a new focus to investing in post-secondary education in Africa.

“We must see education in the round – it is not just about books for school-children, but it is a means for people of all ages to escape poverty. Post-secondary education in Africa must be the focus for the EU.”

“What a complete tragedy that South Africa and Nigeria - the two largest economies in Africa have a post secondary education enrolment rate of just 15.2% and 4.3% respectively. In the UK it is 59.5% and in the US it is 72.6%. Should primary education simply remain the priority for UK aid? We all agree that school children are Africa's future. However, if no effort is made to educate and train their older brothers and sisters as well as their parents Africa will not be able to meet the Millennium Development Goals. If we wait for a 100% primary school enrolment rates it will be too late.

“We recommend that 10% of new aid should be invested in adult skills, through a massive programme of direct financial support to African tertiary students studying in Africa or abroad. This should be accompanied by increased spending on new teaching posts and higher direct salaries in African tertiary institutions, including technical and vocational colleges as well as universities. A further 10% of aid should be committed to salaries for Africans working in key institutions such as health, education and agriculture.

“Managing change in Africa is not just about money, it is also about ideas, people and excellence. Developing best practice will come from establishing African centres of excellence and supporting those that already exist. These can be universities, hospitals, schools, businesses or other centres of learning and development. New ideas will not just come from the top down – we must support Africa’s own potential to enact permanent change.”

ENDS

Editor’s Notes

“*Leeds Manifesto; How to Spend \$100 billion for Africa.*” was launched today (21 October 2005) following an FPC event on 10 October at the Commonwealth Secretariat (London) in association with the Royal Institute of International Relations -

RIIR-KIIB (Brussels). The pamphlet was authored by Greg Austin (FPC Research Director), and Claude Misson (Director General of RIIR-KIIB). The pamphlet is available at <http://fpc.org.uk/publications/177>

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