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Dated: the 20th November, 2009.

Dear

I write to you on some major issues concerning the Annual Work Plan & Budget (AWP&B) exercise, which you would be initiating for the SSA, KGBV and NPEGEL for the year 2010-11.

2. Several important initiatives have been taken in the last couple of months, including the (a) notification of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, and (b) regional workshops on education for equitable quality. The 10th Joint Review Mission for SSA which met in July 2009 also made important recommendations. A summary of the critical issues in respect of these initiatives is attached at **Annexures-1, 2 and 3** respectively. Each of these has a bearing on the formulation of the AWP&B for 2010-11.

3. As per existing practice, the Department of School Education & Literacy and Technical Support Group (TSG) for SSA will be holding a series of workshops on the AWP&B as per list provided in **Annexure 4**. I would request you to ensure that you and your team participate in these workshops, since this would help you to formulate the AWP&B 2010-11 more effectively. For the year 2010-11, we would be focusing on the following programmatic interventions.

(I) Universal Access: Universal access is not merely an issue of providing physical access, but also ensuring social access to school. While significant progress has been made under SSA in providing physical access, it would be necessary for you to ensure that interventions for bridging social distances are included in the plan. Your AWP&B should necessarily cover the following:

- i) School and social mapping exercises with community involvement to ensure that all children who cannot access school for social, cultural and economic reasons are enabled to do so. As you are aware, the RTE Act provides for age appropriate admission, and therefore school and social mapping should facilitate the identification of older children, who have never accessed or have dropped out of school for placing them in an age appropriate class. Strategies for their inclusion in the age appropriate class would include special training through residential and non-residential bridge courses and remedial teaching so that they are supported to cope in mainstream schools.
- ii) Steps taken to review State norms for opening new schools at primary level. Many States have a norm that include with distance & population criterion for opening new schools. At times, it may deprive children in small and sparsely populated habitations from access to school. These State norms, to make them advantageous

for children in such habitations, may need to be reviewed, and an estimation of new primary schools incorporated in the AWP&B. While doing so, you would need to factor in the up gradation of EGS centers to primary schools, wherever such up gradation is warranted, and close down surplus EGS centres.

- iii) Provisions for class V in existing primary schools, where the primary cycle ends at class IV.
- iv) Saturation of upper primary access to all eligible habitations within 3 kms, with priority to (a) special focus districts, Category A, with adverse primary: upper primary school ratio, and (b) villages with 40% SC, ST or minority populations. This should be done by upgrading existing primary schools, which are conveniently located, to have upper primary infrastructure and teachers. It follows, therefore, that the building for the new upper primary classes/sections should be located within the premises of an existing primary school that is being upgraded for providing access to upper primary.
- v) Provision for class VIII in existing upper primary schools in the States where the elementary cycle ends at class VII.

(II) Bridging Gender and Social Category Gaps: There has been significant progress in narrowing gender and social category gaps in enrolment and retention.

- (i) Girls Education: The KGBV and NPEGEL components of SSA are functioning well, particularly in States where Mahila Samakhya has contributed to their functioning. In the case of NPEGEL, however, there is need for greater focus on effective community mobilization, support to disadvantaged girls, particularly out-of-school older girls (who should be mainstreamed into age appropriate class), and special vocational training with clear targets and outcomes. As per revised NPEGEL guidelines, planning should be for the whole block, and targets and outcomes should be clearly quantified. In the case of KGBV, operationalization and optimum utilization of KGBV capacity should be a key factor in planning and estimating cost.
- (ii) Children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections: Discrimination against marginalized groups (girls, SC, ST, Muslim minorities, children with special needs) should be dealt with systemically and in all aspects, for example classroom practices, teacher behaviour, peer relations, rather than only through schemes such as KGBV and NPEGEL. The AWP&B should ensure that systems are in place for providing education for equality and removal of disparity in the curriculum, syllabi, teaching learning material, training modules, etc. There should be focus on eliminating discriminatory practices in classrooms and schools against children belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups and weaker sections. In the AWP&B 2010-11, we would like to see a more cohesive and comprehensive approach to bridging gender and social category gaps through a more inclusive utilization of outlays provided under community mobilization, innovation fund, remedial teaching etc.
- (iii) Urban deprived children: The 10th JRM has recommended that greater effort is needed to identify urban deprived children and implement specialized strategies to

enroll and retain them in school. Clear emphasis should be laid on identification of urban deprived children of various categories such as street children, rag pickers children without adult protection, etc. Kindly also ensure that separate plans are prepared for the 35 cities with million plus population, which will be appraised separately. I would also like to draw your attention to the recommendation of the 10th JRM for special strategies and interventions in the four Metros.

- (iv) **Inclusive Education:** In the case of Children with Special Needs (CWSN), the key priority areas are (a) strengthening identification system of CWSN, (b) ensuring full coverage of CWSN, (c) strengthening the resource support team for regular and effective academic support to the CWSN and (d) ensuring barrier free access, particularly the availability of ramps and barrier free toilets. To ensure genuine inclusiveness in formal schools it is necessary that the teachers have a good grounding on issues relating to care and educational needs of CWSN. Several training modules have been prepared for this purpose, including the training module for 90 days training. Adequate provisions should be made in the AWP&B to train an optimum number of regular teachers in collaboration with RCI, so that a pool of resource persons is available within the system for effectively addressing the education and in-class inclusion of CWSN.

(III) Universal Retention: There has been consistent decline in dropout rates both at primary and elementary level, though the decline in dropout rates at elementary level has been somewhat slow. In this context it would be important for States to assess their own progress against the three year strategy designed by them in 2008-09 for improving retention. The following critical aspects will also help in developing and understanding strategies to promote and increase retention:

- i) Teacher availability is a critical factor in ensuring universal retention. States should ensure elimination of single teacher schools, provide for PTR of 40:1, and ensure availability of subject teachers at upper primary level by recruiting teachers against vacant positions.
- ii) Teacher availability should be targeted through the dual strategy of teacher redeployment to remove inter-block and urban rural imbalances in teacher postings, as also recruitment of teachers against existing State vacancies, as well as additional teachers sanctioned under SSA. The AWP&B must elaborate mechanisms for transparent, objective systems of teacher redeployment. It should also include a schedule for recruitment of teachers against the State and the SSA funded vacancies.
- iii) The AWP&B should make reference to the findings of studies on student attendance, and indicate strategies for improving their attendance, for example, through decentralized academic calendars/ short term hostels, etc., which factor in agricultural and migration patterns, as also geographical and climatic conditions prevalent in the area to enable children to attend school more regularly.
- iv) The low transition rate from primary to upper primary is a cause of serious concern. The AWP&B must show evidence of the State's approach and efforts to smoothen the transition of children from primary and upper primary level. For example, it should be the responsibility of every Head Teacher to ensure that all

children completing the primary level in a school that terminates at primary level are enrolled in one or the other upper primary school in the area. You may also consider instituting a system of community supported enrollment drives for the upper primary stage on the lines developed for enrolment at primary level.

- v) We are also concerned about the high drop out rates, particularly among SC, ST children. Kindly ensure that your AWP&B specifies pockets of low retention/high drop out, low transition and low attendance, and makes specific proposals for improvement in attendance, retention and transition, ensuring full community participation.

(IV) Quality Interventions: Interventions for quality improvement should be in consonance with NCF-2005. Quality improvement is largely contingent on curriculum, syllabus, textbooks, teaching learning material, teacher training and assessment systems being in conformity with each other.

- i) At the instance of NCERT, many SCERTs have initiated processes of curriculum renewal. But under SSA many States have been implementing Learning Enhancement Programmes (LEP) without considering whether the textbooks, workbooks other supplementary teaching learning material, as also training modules and assessment systems are in harmony with each other. This contradicts the basic principles of NCF 2005, and tends to increase the learning load on children. The AWP&B should indicate the progress achieved in the SCERT initiated curriculum renewal process, and the steps proposed to be taken to ensure that (a) syllabus, (b) textbooks and workbooks, (c) other TL material, (d) teacher training modules, (e) assessment procedures are based on a shared system of beliefs and assumptions about children, teachers and teaching learning material, and conform with the NCF -2005 principles.
- ii) SSA provisions for LEP and remedial teaching are generally used as add-on material, and also tend to increase the learning load on children. Children requiring remedial teaching come from vulnerable backgrounds, and are expected to transact learning from additional LEP/remedial learning material along with the regular textbooks. You may need to review the effect of the add-on LEP/material learning material together with the regular textbooks on children – whether it facilitates comprehension or merely adds to the burden of incomprehension. Indeed, if the material developed under LEP and remedial teaching is found to be better than the regular textbooks, please take steps to ensure that this material is adopted/adapted as the prescribed material for teaching learning transaction, rather than used as an add-on. Your AWP&B should indicate how SSA provisioning under LEP and remedial teaching would seamlessly integrate with normal classroom processes during school hours without adding to the additional learning load on children.
- iii) The teacher is most critical for improved quality of transaction in the classrooms. It is therefore important to pay attention to teacher training and development.
 - a. Untrained teachers: Many States have resorted to appointment of professionally ‘untrained’ teachers in order to meet the requirements of new enrollments in schools. There is, therefore, need to develop strategies

to train all ‘untrained’ teachers within the next two years. The AWP&B should indicate how the ‘untrained’ teachers will acquire equivalent professional qualifications in a time bound manner. Wherever necessary, the AWP&B must reflect convergence with the Centrally Sponsored Teacher Education Scheme, which provides support for DIETs, CTEs and IASEs. You may also consider the possibility of organising Study Centres at appropriate locations, and identifying teacher mentors for undertaking training of ‘untrained’ teachers in distance mode. The course content of such training programmes for untrained teacher would, of course, require to be approved by the NCTE.

- b. In-service teacher training: Learning is greatly influenced by the social environment/ context from which children and teachers come. Given this, there is need to provide for a major shift in in-service training programmes to the social, cultural and economic context of the learners, while focusing on subject/content enrichment of teachers. We are concerned training continues to be dominated by lecture systems. You will agree that concepts like activity based teaching, joyful learning, cooperative and collaborative learning which require experiential and participatory training cannot be taught through lecture method. We would like to see a shift in the training designs to more participatory and inclusive methods.
- c. BRC/CRC: Another important aspect will be to plan for shift in academic supervision by BRC/CRC. The BRC/CRC study has revealed that academic support provided by these institutions is limited, and BRC/CRC faculty members are reduced to administrative functionaries. The AWP&B should articulate approaches for rejuvenating BRC/CRCs, and developing an effective linkage with DIETs and SCERTs. You may wish to review the recruitment/ placement systems, including the qualifications and experience criteria laid down for BRC/CRC faculty, modify their roles and functions, and take up programmes for their capacity development. The AWPB should reflect (a) their training, (b) the teacher training they will conduct, (c) the school visits they will make, and (d) systems for monitoring that the manner in which BRCs/CRCs functions is indeed in consonance with NCF – 2005.
- d. Education Administrators: The RTE Act provides for children’s right to free and compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education. It would be critical, therefore, to consider aspects which prevent children from weaker sections and disadvantaged groups, as also girls, from **completing** elementary education. Secondly, the Act provides for the child’s right to education that is free from fear, stress and anxiety. There are several provisions in the Act, including for example, provisions prohibiting corporal punishment, detention and expulsion which need to be fore-fronted in SSA interventions to ensure that we move towards a system that provides a warm, welcoming and encouraging approach for children to learn. SSA provides for training of educational administrators at all levels and it would be necessary to undertake re-orientation and training of educational administrators to the “child rights.” In this context, we would

like to see that a separate and clear proposal in the training design for educational administrators is provided in AWP&B.

(V) Readiness for RTE: Overall in your AWP&B we would like to see a clear reflection of the changes arising out of RTE. The Act provides for children's right to free and compulsory admission, attendance and **completion** of elementary education. It would be critical, therefore, to consider aspects that prevent children from weaker sections and disadvantaged groups, as also girls, from completing elementary education. Secondly, the Act provides for the child's right to education that is free from fear, stress and anxiety. There are several provisions in the Act, including for example, provisions prohibiting corporal punishment, detention and expulsion which need to be fore-fronted in SSA interventions to ensure that we move towards a system that provides a warm, welcoming and encouraging approach for children to learn. The most important aspect, however, is to ensure that the teaching learning process is free from stress and anxiety (Sec. 29), and SSA would need to ensure curricular reform in consonance with NCF- 2005. In the context of curricular reform, there are several testing and school grading systems in SSA, which need to be reviewed for an understanding of the extent to which these may demotivate children and lead to drop out. With reference to teachers, the Act lays down the academic responsibilities of teachers, and teacher accountability systems under SSA would need to ensure that children are learning and that their right to learning in an environment that is free from stress and anxiety is not violated. Also the Act provides that pupil teacher ratios (PTR) be maintained in each school, and teacher recruitment, transfer and deployment systems in the States would need reform, and educational administrators would need to be trained/ re-oriented. As regards community involvement, the Act provides for establishment of School Management Committees (SMC). It would be important to consider the process of formation of the SMCs, and their interface with gram panchayats under the existing State legislations for Panchayat Raj. All such provisioning will however, be as per existing SSA norms.

(VI) Civil Works: Child friendly elements should be incorporated into the building designs and in the design of indoor and outdoor spaces of the school. The 10th JRM had drawn attention to the quality of design (rooms, open spaces) from the perspective of pedagogy and child friendliness. It had suggested that design briefs should capture seating arrangements, storage and display arrangements, learning elements, climatic comfort, provision for expansion. Such design briefs should be prepared in consultation with stakeholders, namely children, teachers and community members. We hope that you have taken adequate steps in this direction.

- (i) All new primary and upper primary schools proposed shall be composite buildings with facilities for safe and adequate drinking water and sanitation (separate toilets for boys and girls), MDM kitchen, electrification, barrier free access, boundary wall (where essential required for safety of the children) or green fencing. The design should provide for incorporation of hazard resistance feature, such as earthquake, cyclone, fire, high flood level, snow load, etc wherever required/applicable.
- (ii) In 2010-11, priority will be given to completion of primary school buildings already sanctioned under SSA. States with a backlog of civil works for new school buildings (e.g. Bihar, J&K, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Orissa) should first complete their backlog before seeking provision for other civil works. In addition, focus

will continue to be placed on upper primary school buildings. In case of up-gradation of primary to upper primary schools all classrooms required should be proposed as a one-time requirement, rather than spread over 3-4 years, so that the upgraded school is ready in all respects within a period of one year.

- (iii) Only after the need for primary and upper primary schools is saturated would districts be eligible for additional classrooms, which should be provided on priority to schools with the worst student-classroom ratios. We are displaying on SSA Web Site (www.ssa.nic.in) the list of Government Schools with adverse Student Classroom Ratio (SCR) and adverse Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) as per DISE 2008-09 submitted by you. You are requested to prioritize your requirements for additional classrooms and teachers, in the AWP&B, accordingly.
- (iv) The civil works plan should indicate the modalities of convergence with the Drinking Water Mission and Total Sanitation Campaign for drinking water, adequate girls' toilets and common toilets in all existing school. Provisions for drinking water, girls' toilets and common toilets in urban schools, as well as boundary walls, electrification and furniture for upper primary schools under SSA would be considered after saturation of school buildings and additional classrooms is achieved.
- (v) The unit cost for all the components should be worked out, based on State/district/regional schedule of rates, duly notified by the State Government.

(VII) Special Focus Districts: There should be focused attention on districts with disadvantaged social groups and deficit infrastructure. Special Focus Districts (SFDs) identified for the purpose of AWP&B for 2010-11 are given in **Annexure-5** which include the following categories:-

- i) SFD-A Category (138 districts) – Districts with PS:UPS ratio > 3:1. The plan of these districts should address the requirement of upper primary schools. The outlay for civil construction on these districts could go up to a maximum 50% of the total outlay of the district in order to saturate requirement of upper primary schools only.
- ii) SFD-B Category (38 districts) – Districts with a gap in additional classrooms > 3000. The plan of these districts should address the requirement of additional classrooms. The outlay for civil construction in these districts could go up to a maximum 50% of the total outlay of the district in order to saturate requirements of classrooms only.
- iii) SFD-C Category – These are districts which have more than 20,000 out of school children, districts with low Retention Rate (less than 60%), and districts with a gender gap of more than 10% at primary and more than 20% at upper primary level. The district plan should provide for interventions to address these shortcomings. NPEGEL funds should be utilized in gender gap districts in EBBs to the maximum. AIE and innovative fund inputs should be targeted to cover all districts with more than 20,000 out of school children.

- iv) SFD-D Category (109 ST, 61 SC, 141 minority, 34 Naxalite affected and 94 Border Area districts) – These are districts with a large population of disadvantaged social groups, Naxal affected districts and border districts. The district plans should provide for interventions to focus on the social aspects.

(VIII) The Results Framework (Annexure-6) corresponding to the four SSA goals must be appended with each district plan and a consolidated one for the State/ UT as a whole. This would help the appraisal team to clearly assess targets/ goals for the State/ district. Baselines, progress recorded in 2009-10 and expected outcomes for 2010-11 must also be clearly indicated. To facilitate this, every District and State Plan should have clear Results Framework, furnishing progress against targets of 2009-10, target values proposed for 2010-11 as well as long term targets till the end of the plan period, viz. 2011-12.

(IX) Commitments: It should be ensured that all the commitments/conditions listed at the time of PAB approval for 2009-10 have been complied with. The appraisal teams would specifically check achievement against these commitments. The AWP&B 2010-11 should be prepared so as to enable the States to give inter-alia the following commitments:

- i) States will bring in objective and transparent systems for rationalization of teacher deployment in the light of RTE Act. States need to indicate progress made and clear strategies for achieving this commitment in the coming year
- ii) Detailed strategy for clearing the backlog of untrained teachers as per the recommendations of the RTE Act.
- iii) Progress in putting in place systems for tracking teachers' attendance and performance indicators for teachers (e.g. ADEPTS).
- iv) Improving teacher accountability through performance indicators (e.g. ADEPTS) and VEC / SDM supervision by devolving of specific powers to them.
- v) Wherever elementary cycle is not 5+3 years, State government to take policy decision to synchronize elementary cycle as per NPE (1992), which means five years of primary (I-V) and three years of upper primary (VI-VIII).
- vi) States will move towards unified or single system of educational statistics at the elementary level i.e., for DISE & SES. DISE data 2009-10 will be submitted latest by 15th of January 2011 after independent check for data validation.
- vii) Ending parallel post of District Coordinator for SSA implementation at district level in States where such arrangements are still in place.
- viii) Constitution of and holding of regular meetings of District Level Monitoring Committee, for SSA & MDM as specified in the SSA Framework for implementation in para No. 4.13.

4. I wish to draw your attention specifically to the tendency of underestimating spillovers in AWP&B estimates with the hope of garnering more funds for fresh works. This leads to unfortunate situations later, suggesting not only improper planning but also

a grave financial impropriety. From this year, AWP&B approved by PAB for 2010-11, will be revised by end May 2010, after the States report their actual spillovers and unspent balances separately to the GoI/PAB after, closure of 2009-10 accounts by 15th May, 2010 latest. Furthermore, on receipt of annual audited accounts, the variation between the spillover funds declared and audited unspent balances will be deducted from further releases of Central share by GOI.

5. At the National level, we would be starting the Appraisal process of AWP&B 10-11, for districts and States from 1st week of February 2010. We hope that the process of plan formulation at district level, scrutiny at the State level/EC approval and submission to the MHRD can be done speedily. A tentative schedule for submission of State plans, appraisal and meetings of the Project Approval Board in GoI is given at **Annexure-7**. A format for the use of appraisal of the AWP&B of your State is at **Annexure-8**.

6. I request you to kindly ensure that AWP&B for 2010-11 for SSA including KGBV & NPEGEL components is received in our TSG office with a copy to the concerned Director/Deputy Secretary in charge of your State/UT, well in time, so as to receive early approval of PAB.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Anita Kaul)

State Project Directors (By name)
All States / UTs

Copy to:

1. Education Secretaries (by name) of all States/UTs
2. Sr. PPS to Secretary(SE&L).
3. PS to JS (EE-II)/JS (EE-I)/FA(HRD).
4. All Divisional Heads in EE-I & EE-II Bureau.
5. Dr. S.C. Gujaria. Sr. Consultant, TSG for necessary action.
6. Shri Asadullah, Sr. Consultants, Tarun Gupta, Consultant, Planning Unit. TSG,
7. Project Manager, TSG with a request to circulate copies to all consultants.

(Anita Kaul)
Joint Secretary (EE-II)