quite poor when compared with the high tuition-fee-charging private universities and tuition fee-waiver for meritorious students, student loan system may be tried. Well-performing public and private universities equipped with good faculties should be given State, private philanthropic and foreign funding for undertaking research and publication. Research outputs are public good and therefore need public and social funding/support. Similarly, the State should withdraw recurrent financial support from the degree-awarding colleges (affiliated under the National University) and other tertiary level educational institutions. Only the regulatory, oversight and accreditation related aspects will be the responsibility of the State-agencies, such as NU and Madrasha Board.

A good number of private universities, covering about a quarter of the total campus-based university enrolment, are an important development in the country. The recent report (August 2005) by the UGC on the private universities shows how the oversight and external evaluation can further consolidate the gains achieved in this subsector. The State with the cooperation of the well-known private university organisers should try to develop a well-functioning accreditation and quality assurance system for these universities.

The non-formal primary education (NFPE) by NGOs such as BRAC, Proshika and CMES has earned reputation throughout the world for their innovativeness, cost-effectiveness and equity aspects. It is now opportune for the State to gradually bring them together under some common denominator in terms of course contents, equivalency and teacher's qualifications (financial compensations). These programmes should not be dependent on foreign funding for an uncertain period; the State as a part of EFA should take up responsibility for their financial sustainability on the basis of programme performance.

Endnotes

POLICY-MAKING IN EDUCATION SECTOR OF BANGLADESH: ROLE OF STATE, DONORS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

2.1 POLICY-MAKING IN EDUCATION SECTOR: GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND SPECIFIC BANGLADESH CONTEXT

An attempt is made here to describe the salient features of policy-making in the education sector of Bangladesh. The objective is to analyse situation in the 1990-2004 period i.e. for the last fifteen years, with some references to the previous two decades of the 1970s and 1980s. The theme calls for attention for two reasons. First, in any developing country, developmental (thus State sponsored) intervention in education sector (or similar social sectors such as health and social protection) carries a high value in terms of efficiency and equity considerations in the overall country's development plan/agenda. Second, education is important from the ideological (political) and sociological point of view; every major political/ideological (or even narrowly-minded political parties) school of thought likes to have an imprint (definite say) on the formation of a country's educational policy/plan. Bangladesh is no exception to the abovementioned two considerations.

Bangladesh is a developing country with a population of about 130 million. The country completed three decades of its independence from Pakistani rule in 1971. About 46 per cent of its population live below the poverty line (GDP per capita is around US\$400 in 2004), the adult literacy rate (by UNESCO's standard definition) is less than 50 per cent, net primary enrolment rate (of all eligible children age 6-10) is around 80 per cent, the net secondary education enrolment rate (of all eligible children age 11-17) is about 32 per cent and the net enrolment rate (of eligible age population of 18-22) at the tertiary level education is much lower at about 4 per cent. The rough indicators of performance of the sector, e.g. transition rates (completer's rates), pass rates in the public exams and competency-based achievement levels, leave much to be desired. There are structural, financial

¹See Government of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Constitution, Dhaka, 1972, (Article 17).

²See GoB, Planning Commission, Unlocking the Potential: National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction, 2004.

³See GoB, Ministry of Education, Report by National Education Commission 2003, March 2003, Dhaka.

and social constraints on the performance of the sector (See Alam et al. 2005).

Elsewhere in a paper on policy-making in the primary education subsector of Bangladesh, Unterhalter, Ross and Alam (2002) summarised three approaches to educational policy formation in a developing country. These are:

- (i) An analytic approach a rational form of problem-solving and organisational control based on specified information and the estimates which flow from the exercises (Mann 1975).
- (ii) A critical policy approach here educational policy-making is a multiplex function of political, economic and cultural contestations within the State and between the State and the civil society (Ball 1990, Taylor et al. 1997). Under changing socio-political scenarios the policy formation and decision-making may shift for better or worse, depending on socio-political powers of different groups in the society.
- (iii) A refined critical approach a consideration of shifting alliances of major social actors with regard to education policy formation is assumed in this approach (Gale 2001). The particular approach appreciates the significance of historical conditions and hegemonic settlements of some social actors in educational policy formation. Any educational reform or developmental intervention has to get support (or at least non-resistance) from these social actors (or stakeholders).

In the specific context of Bangladesh it will not be unfair to say that the educational policy-making in the country does not fully satisfy any of the abovementioned three approaches. However, it is more close to the third, that is, the refined critical approach. The ruling political power (whether it is a military dictator or a democratically elected government) in the country has alluded to the historical antecedents of Liberation War of 1971, the issues of social justice and the educational rights of citizens enshrined in Bangladesh constitution of 1972 (Bangladesh Government, 1972, Article 15). The ruling power has also been conscious of wishes of the donors/development partners (DPs). Prima facie, the multilateral DPs such as the World Bank and

Asian Development Bank (ADB) or the bilateral DPs such as DFID (Department for International Development) of UK, SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency) and NORAD (Norwegian Agency for International Development) are guided by the first approach of educational policy-making. Both bilateral and multilateral DPs assume techno-economic approach to educational reform and development in a developing country such as Bangladesh. At any point in time, for the development of education sector (especially primary and secondary subsectors), the ruling government in the country has to depend to some extent on foreign donors (both multilateral and bilateral DPs) for financial and technical resources, the ultimate formal policy is a mixture of two approaches, that is, analytic (techno-economic) and refined critical types. An attempt is made to illustrate this particular policy-making process concretely in section 2.2 of this chapter.

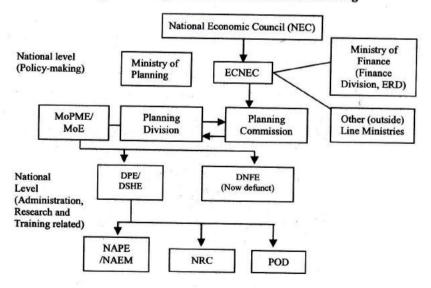
2.2 HOW POLICY MAKING TAKES PLACE

Formally, Bangladesh has a structured policy-making process in taking up development plans or programmes. Any educational project or programme identified within a medium plan (three to five year) horizon is placed before the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC), the highest decision-making body in the country (see Chart 2.1). As expected, ECNEC is a multisectoral entity, headed by the chief executive of the government. In the present politico-economic system (after the parliamentary democratic transition in 1991) the Prime Minister is the chairperson of ECNEC. Like any other line ministry of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), the Ministry of Education (MoE)¹ and the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME)² are responsible for drawing up educational projects/ programmes in their designated subject (or policy) areas.

The ministry concerned for example MoPME in the case of any primary education project³ designs the development intervention. The planning unit(s) under the Ministry [in the case of MoPME, these are planning cell in the ministry and planning division of the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) respectively] prepare the relevant plan documents, for example PCP (project concept paper) and PP (project proforma) for any development project in the subsector. When there is any involvement of foreign funding in

the project (for example, the case of IDA's financing of Primary Education Development Programme-I, 1997-2002), the development partner prepares a separate document clearly stating the development objectives, sources of financing, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), yearly phases of the project and other important details4 (in this particular case IDA). The donor's project document is known as PAD (Project Appraisal Document) in the case of IDA; similarly, in the case of ADB it is known as RFP (Report for the President). When development assistance from multilateral agencies, such as ADB and IDA or bilateral donors, such as DFID, the Netherlands, SIDA or NORAD, is involved, then the particular project/programme is significantly influenced by the foreign funding agency (agencies) in terms of its whole design. Different key elements of any educational intervention such as development objectives, priorities, sources of funding, phasing (inception and implementation related), mode of programme implementation (donors involvement in it through appointment of consultants), yearly and mid-term reviews are built into the design. The allegation is that such foreign-funded intervention becomes largely a donor-driven project programme.5

Chart 2.1
Bangladesh: Organisation of Educational Planning



Abbreviations:

DPE = Directorate of Primary Education

DSHE = Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education

ECNEC = Executive Committee of National Economic Council

GOB = Government of Bangladesh

MOE = Ministry of Education

MOPME = Ministry of Primary and Mass Education

NAEM = National Academy for Educational Management

NAPE = National Academy of Primary Education

NRC = National Research Committee on Primary Education

POD = Policy and Operations Division, DPE

The donors' role in the policy-making of educational project/ programme is highlighted in the preceding paragraph. Chart 2.1 shows how the donors come to influence/shape the educational policy-making in the country. It is not difficult to identify how the donors use their leverage in shaping the policies in the sector — there are simultaneous and multiple ways of doing operation in Bangladesh. The External Resources Division (ERD) under the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the line Ministry (MoPME/MoE as the case may be when it is primary or post-primary) and the Finance Division under the MoF are the key State agencies where the donors try to use their leverage. ERD and Finance Division generally look at the donor's financial assistance quite liberally, since it gives the Ministry of Finance more resources in drawing up development budgets for the country. The line ministry (in the case of MoPME or MoE) is usually relatively cautious in responding to any donor-driven development intervention. The natural reason for such caution is that the line ministry, supported by its field level administration system [for example, Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), DPEO and UZPO in the case of MoPME)], is the implementing agency. The broad project/ programme design and its implementation details have to suit the administrative capacity of the Ministry and the field level structures. Invariably the donor-driven development intervention comes up with some innovative administrative/management set-up, for example Project/

Programme Implementation Unit (PIU), alongside the existing administrative structure. The line ministry becomes a bit wary how far these innovations are adaptable and ultimately sustainable with regard to the whole system. The top State functionaries in the line ministry may ask the question to themselves: "Are the donors pushing some reforms in the project/programme too much which the country cannot sustain under the specific circumstances of time and space?"

Again, any "donor-driven" project/programme has to go through a rigorous process of consultations by an interministerial committee, where planning ministry (its GED, Programming Division, and IMED), the line ministry (MoPME/MoE), MoF (such as Finance Division and ERD) and other related agencies (for example, the Education Directorates) play an important role. These multisectoral consultations discuss details of any educational intervention, that is, design of a project/programme. The planning ministry plays the key role here—without some sort of a consensus on the project (programme) design the proposed investment cannot make much headway. After a whole series of multisectoral/interministerial consultations, the improved PCP goes to pre-ECNEC meeting, usually chaired by the Finance Minister. Then it is finally approved by the ECNEC, an interministerial entity, which is headed by the Prime Minister. The Finance Minister presides over the ECNEC meeting as the alternate chair and it is more often the case.

2.3 EDUCATION SECTORAL INTENTIONS OF THE STATE AS REFLECTED IN MAJOR POLICY DOCUMENTS, 1990-2006

After the democratic transition in Bangladesh in 1991, there has been three elected governments (leaving out the short-lived one-month lasting one in March 1996) running the country. Four important policy documents have been prepared by the State agencies such as the Planning Commission, and the Ministry of Education (or its appointed Education Committee/Commission), which have quite comprehensively spelt out the long and medium terms education sectoral objectives/intentions of the State. There are general objectives and specific subsectoral [for example, primary (Grades 1 to 5), secondary (Grades 6 to 12) and tertiary level] objectives mentioned in

these documents. The documents also mention the policy-directions for Vocational and Technical Education (VTE), Islamic Education (Madrasha stream), teacher training and English medium education stream. The successive governments from 1991 to this day (December 2004) have been alternated by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) or the Awami League (AL). A number of aspects with respect to the State intentions in the education sector can be gleaned from the documents, that is, Fourth Five-Year Plan (1990-95), Fifth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002), National Education Commission Report 2000, and National Education Policy 2003. The first document, that is, the Fourth Five-Year Plan was prepared by the autocratic government of Ershad, the middle two documents by the Awami League Government (1996-2001) and the latest document by the BNP-led four-party alliance government (2001-2006). The State intentions as reflected in the documents are:

- (i) There is a strong emphasis on achieving universal compulsory and free primary education (UPE) by the shortest possible time. There is an element of inspirational dimension in it, with its origin from the socialistic/emotional basis of the Liberation War of 1971. Towards the fag-end of the autocratic rule in February 1990, the Compulsory Primary Education (CPE) Act was legislated. All the successive political governments of BNP and AL have given due importance to the implementation of CPE Act and EFA goals.
- (ii) Relatively speaking, less priority has been to secondary education. Because more resources and attention (care/time) were allocated to the primary (basic) education subsector. Importance has been given to the improvement of course contents in science subjects, Mathematics and English. The State tries to regulate schools and higher secondary institutions by fiscal means (for example salary, subventions/MPOs,⁶ tuition fee-waivers and stipends to female students in rural areas) and supplying quality textbooks at subsidised/reasonable prices.
- (iii) In VTE, the State's role is not that important; only one per cent of the total secondary enrolment is comprised of government-owned VTE institutions. It is mainly the privately run institutions that train semi-skilled workers for the economy/external market. The State does not have a clear and effective policy in this promising subsector.
 - (iv) When the whole gamut of Islamic education is considered from

primary (Ebtedaiye) to Secondary (Dakhil) and First Degree and beyond (Fazil-Kamil), the State has a set of clearly spelt-out policy guidelines, course curriculum and administration. Both the major political parties, AL and BNP, consider that the mainstream education and the Islamic stream should have a core curriculum of subjects at the primary and secondary education levels. At the higher education level, each pupil/learner can go for diversification and specialisation of disciplines/subjects.

- (v) In the name of uniformity, more coordinated and planned educational interventions, the State has centralised decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in the sector. It is quite contrasting to the original intentions of the participatory nature of educational planning, implementation and monitoring⁷ (as represented in the First Five-Year Plan, 1973-78). Most of the State documents on education carry the ingredients of centralised (aggregative and consistent modelling-type) approach and also decentralised decision-making type rhetoric's.
- (vi) In the sphere of higher education (First degree and beyond), the public universities, especially the general ones, are known for the political activism. A good number of vocal teachers and students (not more than five per cent of the total in each category) are involved in the political activities in the campus. Major political parties have not been able to bring back professionalism and academic discipline in the public universities to the pre-1971 level. Of course, there are financial, physical and other related factors involved in the sub-optimal functioning of public universities. The State documents prepared by different political governments do not fully agree on the solutions/their intentions.
- (vii) The role of NGOs, especially in delivering basic education (i.e. NFPE- Non-formal Primary Education), has been accepted by the State. NGOs' role in advancing adult literacy or adolescents' education is not so clearly acknowledged.
- (viii) There are significant differences between BNP government prepared documents vis-à-vis AL government ones. For example, the AL prepared education policy documents highlight the importance of secular ideology, Liberation War-inspired values on the one hand, the BNP government initiated documents attach importance to religion-based

enlightenment, techno-economic approach to educational investment (mainly) on the other.

2.4 EDUCATION SECTORAL POLICY-MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION: WAYS FORWARD

At this point it is important to sum up on policy-making process with regard to macro and micro-economic planning. Further, there are some aspects related to educational project/programme implementation. This has been done here with the assumption that successful implementation of a development intervention generates highly positive reinforcing effect(s). A successfully implemented education project/programme carries with it the important element of sustainable development. The salient features of educational policy formulation, implementation related aspects and ways forward under the given socioeconomic context are listed in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Bangladesh Education Sector: Present Policy-making and Way Forward

Analytical Approach/ Context	Education Policy Areas	Implementation Related	Way Forward
1. Mainly a refined critical policy approach, shifting alliances of major social actors; the techno-economic (influence) prescriptions of foreign funders.	(I) General- State has a positive and direct role to play as the financier of sector, designer of course curriculum, and administer of the system.	Centralised policy and administration, top-down system.	In all policy formulation, alongside the State, involvement of District and upazila level entities (e.g. district and upazila level Education
2. Historical - (Aspirational)- Socio-political context of Liberation War 1971.			offices); Regular coordination of MOE and MOPME for developing complementaritis

Analytical Approach/ Context	Education Policy Areas	Implementation Related	Way Forward
	(ii) Primary-formal-Ensure free, uniform and compulsory education to all by the CPE Act (1990); State's responsibility.	DPE is the administrative agency with staff from Dhaka down to upazila.	Coordination of DPE, DSHE, Madrasha Board, BOU/DTE activities by regular (monthly) review meeting of policy implementation; adjustment of policies every year through a well-planned consultative process.
	(iii) Primary- non-formal, Islamic (Ebtedaiye) stream, English medium State does not have a firm commitment to support NFPE, has allowed large NGOs (for example BRAC, Proshika, and CMES) to run their innovative programmes funded by bilateral donors- Ebtedaiye madrashas receive State-subventions and course-contents are regulated by State-run Madrasha Education Board. No control and State financial support to English medium schools.	NFPE is not well coordinated at the national level; Ebtedaiye is administered by Madrasha Board, flexibly coordinated; English-medium stream follows some sort of "laissez faire."	A national statutory body (bureau or council) for NFE (from ECCD, NFPE, adolescent to adult education) to be organised; to be manned by professional staff (well compensated) – taking up medium and long-term NFE plans; devolving powers to district and UZ bodies.
	(iv) Secondary (grades 6 to 12) formal education State indirectly influences the subsector through designing course curriculum, giving State-subventions to recognised educational	DSHE regulates the subsector with office from Dhaka down to district level, no upazila level office; difficulties in	

Analytical Approach/ Context	Education Policy Areas	Implementation Related	Way Forward
	institutions and organising public exams.	academic and administrative supervision due to lack of UZ-staff.	
	(v) Secondary-TVET, Islamic (Dakhil-Alim), Distance mode The three important education types are regulated by the State, the course-contents decided by the relevant Education Boards, public exams by the State agencies and the recognised agencies receive State financial support for salaries and development.	Bangladesh Technical Education Directorate (DTE) administers TVET subsector with its head office in Dhaka; Madrasha Education Board runs Dakhil-Alim; Bangladesh Open University (BOU) administers distance mode secondary education stream through its regional resource centers and collaborating TTCs.	Medium and/or long-term indicative plans for TVET, Islamic and distance mode (mainly BOU, but including private universities) needed; more effective and autonomous power to DTE, Madrasha Board and BOU.
	(vi) Tertiary (First degree and beyond), campus-based and distance mode State mandated autonomous bodies regulate campus based degree-awarding colleges and residential universities (both general and technical); Distance mode university works under State-given statute; Private universities enlarging their share of enrolment under a parliamentary act of 1992.	Bangladesh National University (BNU) affiliates all the degree-awarding State recognised colleges; residential universities are autonomous with parliamentary statutes; BOU has a large enrolment of B.Ed. students administered through its	Strengthened (professional equipped and better compensated) UGC for oversight and administration of public and private universities; modify the existing university acts to give powers to UGC for policymaking.

Analytical Approach/ Context	Education Policy Areas	Implementation Related	Way Forward
		regional resource centers.	
ness annieles appen mens shi had 1004 vinueles accompanieles	(vii) Non-formal - Adolescent and adult Not fully defined roles and responsibilities of different providers, for example NGOs, CBOs: MoPME used to administer NFE projects through now- defunct DNFE.	No national wide comprehensive system of planning, administration and management.	

Abbreviations:

BOU = Bangladesh Open University

BRAC = Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (an NGO)

CBO = Community Based Organisation

CMES = Center for Mass Education in Science

CPE Act = Compulsory Primary Education Act of 1990 passed by the

Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad, February 20, 1990

DNFE = Directorate of Non-formal Education

DPE = Directorate of Primary Education

DSHE = Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education

DTE = Directorate of Technical Education

NFE = Non-formal Education

NFPE = Non-formal Primary Education

Proshika = Proshikkhan Shikkha-o-Kaj (an NGO)

TTC = Teachers' Training College

TVET = Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UGC = University Grants Commission

UZ = Upazila

If one goes down the list of issues catalogued in Table 2.1, a number of points come out clearly in the educational policy-making arena of Bangladesh:

- (a) The central role of State in both primary and secondary education subsectors is well recognised. The major elements which are missing now: (i) effective and meaningful participation of the beneficiaries (e.g. the parents and community leaders) in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the educational institutions through SMCs [School Management Committees or Governing Bodies (GBs)] or PTAs (Parent Teacher Associations), Upazila Level or District-based (potential) Education Committees of citizens; and (ii) lack of policy coordination between MoPME and MoE and non-realisation/non-utilisation of complimentary at the administrative levels by DPE, DSHE, DTE, Madrasha Board and BOU.
- (b) The potentials of devolved socio-political structure in both policy-making and its implementation are not being realised and harnessed. By trial and error, some definite steps in this direction should be undertaken. Political leaders across the party lines should be adequately briefed by the planners and technocrats on this process of devolution; they should know that the devolution of educational management/administration is a low-risk initiative/enterprise.
- (c) Any political government (whether the present or the past ones) has not been able to make a clear decision with regard to a national policy-making body for comprehensive NFE. Without burdening the exchequer, it is possible to organise a national NFE council/body, especially when the country can so easily generalise and built on the innovative, sustained and world-acclaimed NGO-based Non-formal Primary Education (NFPE) (of BRAC, DAM, Proshika and CMES). In the sphere of micro credit, PKSF (Palli Karma-Shahayak Foundation) has been organised by the State to coordinate and facilitate the activities of the NGOs. The country has a successful forerunner of umbrella-organisation in PKSF for microfinancing NGOs. It is a matter of developing a similar professional-cumfacilitating entity for educational NGOs, encompassing all types of NFE.

AND EQUITY

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Endnotes

- ¹MoE is entrusted with post-primary education (from grade 6 onward, up to First degree and above) in Bangladesh.
- ²MoPME is responsible for formal primary (grades 1 to 5), non-formal primary and early childhood, adolescent and adult education in the country.
- ³Mainly refers to "project" here. Both the concepts of "project" and "programme" are utilised in the development planning of Bangladesh.
- ⁴See IDA, Bangladesh Primary Education Development Programme-I, 1997-2002, Washington, D.C., 1997.
- ⁵A case in point here is Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP)-II, 2003-2009. This is a comprehensive primary education sub-sectoral (formal) development intervention in the country; it is being led by ADB and supported by 11 donors such as IDA, DFID, and the Netherlands. PEDP II involves a total investment of US\$1.8 billion. Of which about US\$634 million (roughly) is financed by the donors. The whole process of policy-making and design spanned for about two years, 2001-2003. The multilateral agencies such as ADB and IDA led the policy and programme design significantly. For more details about the donors' involvement in the educational policy-making, see ADB, Report of the President, PEDP-II, 2003-2009, Manila, October 2003.
- ⁶MPOs mean monthly payment orders.
- ⁷GoB, Planning Commission, Bangladesh First-Five Year Plan, 1973-78, Dhaka, 1973.

MAJOR ISSUES OF UPE, STATE'S ROLE AND RECENT

DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION (UPE) IN

BANGLADESH: ASPECTS OF EFFICIENCY

This chapter deals with primary education subsector of Bangladesh, its performance and school or institutional level correlates. The mainstream primary schools, both fully state-owned (known as Government Primary schools or GPSs) and non-state (Registered Non-government Primary Schools or RNGPSs) types and Ebtedaiye Madrashas (Islamic educational schools), are covered in this analysis. The Non-formal Primary Education (NFPE) centres and schools and English medium Kindergarten's remain outside the purview of this chapter.

Bangladesh as a State has undertaken a number of important initiatives to implement Universal Primary Education (UPE). As one of the fundamental principles, the constitution of the Republic clearly states the responsibility of the state to ensure free and compulsory education to its citizens upto a certain level. On February 20, 1990, the *Jatiya Sangsad* (National Parliament) enacted the Compulsory Primary Education (CPE) Act. It was a precursory move, inspired by the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. The State under CPE enjoins on all the parents of Bangladesh, with eligible children of 6-10 years, to enroll their children in the primary schools or equivalent educational institutions. The State takes on itself the responsibility of making educational provisions for enrolling and austaining the primary school age children.

In November 2003 Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME), Government of Bangladesh (GoB), launched a highly ambitious development programme for the subsector known as Second Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP-II), 2003-09. It is a subsectoral programme for mainstream schools, that is, GPS and RNGPS types. The indicative cost-estimate for PEDP-II is US\$1815 million; roughly 67 per cent of the planned investment is financed by the government (GOB) and the remaining 33 per