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Dear Colleagues

### **Department for International Development Education Strategy 2010 consultation**

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the draft DFID Education Strategy.

We agree that the three priorities of the Strategy – increasing access to education and gender equality; improving the quality of education; and strengthening the links between school, skills and employment – are a solid base from which to define DFID's role in using education as a tool for development. We recognise that the Strategy is set in the context of DFID's wider plan to address poverty in the recent White Paper 'Eliminating World Poverty: Building our Common Future', and would like to highlight two relevant issues as the Strategy is developed:

Firstly, while we understand that the Strategy's focus is around access and the need for primary- and secondary-level general education in the least developed parts of the world, we would emphasise the key role tertiary education plays in international development and would encourage future DFID investment in this area (Question 6.2). As you know, the Trust has a well-established and growing programme of research capacity strengthening activities supporting individual researchers, institutions, and infrastructure within developing countries. Our activities in this area were recently extended with both the launch of the African Institutions Initiative<sup>1</sup>, which will support more than 50 institutions from around 18 countries in Africa; and our partnership with the Indian Department of Biotechnology (DBT) to fund biomedical research fellowships in India under the Wellcome Trust/DBT India Alliance<sup>2</sup>.

We believe that such investment is vital to ensuring that countries are equipped to address a wide range of development challenges, and have the capacity to support and conduct research vital to enhancing people's health, lives and livelihoods. Commitment to tertiary education, and the necessary institutions and infrastructure, should also help developing countries to reverse the 'brain drain' effect. By recognising the value of tertiary education in the Strategy, it would also clarify where responsibility for tertiary education for the developing world sits within government.

Secondly, the Trust views the provision of science education in schools as a vital tool for reinforcing basic skills, nurturing excitement in science and technology, and enabling future generations to find solutions to the most pressing questions and issues, both locally and worldwide. As part of our strategy, we have developed a range of initiatives and resources

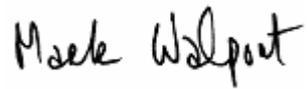
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<sup>1</sup> African Institutions Initiative: <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/Funding/Biomedical-science/International-funding/Global-health-research/WTX055734.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Wellcome Trust/DBT India Alliance: <http://www.wellcomedbt.org/index.htm>

to support science education for a range of age groups, including school-aged children<sup>3</sup>. We would emphasise the value of including science education for development as your plans are developed beyond this initial overarching strategy, and would be very happy to share our ideas in this area with you in the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Walport". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Sir Mark Walport  
Director

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<sup>3</sup> Education resources: <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/Education-resources/Teaching-and-education/index.htm>