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Report on Future Strategy of Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP)

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1 Project Summary

The need for assistance to the urban poor of Bangladesh continues to be strong and, as a result, the Goal and Purpose of the UCEP Programme remain entirely valid. The total working child population between 5 and 17 years old is estimated at 7.9m (8-Year Project Proposal, April 2010) of which UCEP, the only programme of its kind, can currently accommodate 37,200. The UK has supported UCEP for many years, and during April 2008-December 2010 provided it with a grant of £14.9m.

During 2011 the UK will provide a further £6.55m to UCEP for the delivery of its programmes. This represents by far the largest donor contribution for the current year. Other donors include the Embassy of the Netherlands £2.065m, Danida £0.27m and Save the Children Sweden Denmark £0.085m. The total budget for UCEP for 2011 is £9.15m, of which £8.97m is the current donor contribution, which equals 98%. The budget for 2011 was originally planned to be Tk 1699m but was revised down to Tk 1064m (£9.18m)[1] due to donor contributions being less than expected. This represents a shortfall of approximately £4.5m, which had some impact on the programmes, there being a cutback on teaching materials and a delay in the establishment of the proposed Business Development & Liaison Unit.

A particular feature of the UK's contribution is that UCEP is allowed to use it to purchase land and construct buildings; this is unusual and other donors have not agreed to that arrangement.

2 Strategy

In light of the continuing need for the services which UCEP provides, and in line with the *2011-2030 Strategy Plan* and the *8-Year Project Proposal (2011-2018)* prepared in 2010, UCEP is now planning a major expansion of its provision at the same time as striving for greater self-sustainability and increased regionalisation of its management structure. More specifically, over 8 years, UCEP plans to:

- increase the number of students from the current 37,200 to 76,000;
- increase the number of graduates into employment from 10,000 to 42,900;
- increase the number of IGVE schools from 52 to 84;
- increase the number of technical schools from 10 to 17;
- increase the numbers it reaches through its advocacy programme from 520,000 to 2.76m;

[1] Figures taken from presentation by UCEP's Executive Director to UCEP donor consortium meeting, 26.6.2011. N.B. these do not tally with current conversion rates.

- increase the number of growth centres (i.e. cities in which UCEP is active) from 8 to 15;
- decentralise its management structure;
- increase its budget from its current level of £9.15m to £19.21m in 2018 (not allowing for inflation);
- decrease the donor contribution from 98% to 50%.

2.1 Expansion of student numbers

As UCEP currently caters for less than 1% of working children, the wish to expand what is perceived as a successful programme is understandable. UCEP has experience of relatively rapid expansion in the past, having increased enrolments between 2002 and 2010 from 22,200 to 37,200. Prior to increasing provision in a particular district or city, UCEP undertakes labour market analyses to ensure that there is a demand for its graduates and that it will be able to meet its commitment of taking children from Grade 1 right through to employment. To meet the demand for more teachers, which expansion of student numbers would require, UCEP always plans a mix of experienced UCEP teachers transferred from other schools with new teachers, recruited locally whenever possible. There is a well-organised system in place for recruiting a pool of teachers and then drawing on it when particular vacancies arise. One of the casualties of expansion so far appears to be a difficulty in maintaining a gender balance of staff and technical school students and meeting the modest quota of 2% of socially and/or physically challenged students and ethnic minorities. Taking the example of Gazipur Technical School, opened now for 2 years, the male: female staff ratio is 24:1 and the male: female student ratio is 60:40. There are no 'challenged' or ethnic minority students and the building is not designed to accommodate students with mobility problems.

In summary, the demand exists for UCEP services, it has the organisational ability and HR systems in place to cope with recruitment of staff for increased student numbers but greater accountability is required to ensure gender and social equality. In addition, to undertake this expansion it is important not just to be able to maintain current levels of quality provision, but to improve quality in line with the recommendations made in the UCEP Annual Review 2011.

2.1.1 Action required in relation to the expansion of student numbers

2.1.1: evidence of improved classroom practice as a result of UCEP providing a minimum of 8 days in-service training per annum for all staff, along with plans for how it will maintain that level of in-service training as staff numbers increase;

2.1.2: evidence that UCEP takes seriously its responsibilities as an equal opportunities employer and has taken steps to turn its Gender Policy into reality;

2.1.3: the stated quota of challenged and ethnic minority students is applied, following implementation of recommendations in the UCEP Annual Review 2011 that these categories be clearly defined and the quota increased.

2.2 Expansion of number of schools

In order to reach the larger numbers of students, as described above, UCEP requires more schools in the major urban areas. UCEP students cannot afford to pay fares to travel to school and therefore schools either need to exist close to their homes and places of employment or UCEP has to provide transport. In addition to using DFID funds for the purchase of land and construction of schools, UCEP has been successful in attracting donations of land from local authorities and private philanthropists. As a result, UCEP has a very significant portfolio of assets, some in areas where real estate is very expensive. In 2010 these assets were valued at US$5.1m but this is likely to be an underestimate due to the way assets are valued for accounting purposes, and also due to the fact that inflation is very high in Bangladesh and that is reflected in land prices. The land has been used to erect school buildings, particularly technical schools. Whilst UCEP is prepared to rent buildings for IGVE schools, technical schools require a particular infrastructure for workshops etc. and so UCEP prefers to own its technical schools. Where IGVE schools are being built, they are being designed to be transformed into technical schools should the demand for IGVE schools decline in the future.

UCEP has experience of successfully managing numerous construction projects. Between 2002 and 2010 it built 22 IGVE schools and 7 technical schools. During one year the Directorate of Corporate Affairs had 10 construction projects on-going, all of which he declared were completed on schedule. The strategies which UCEP plans to adopt to manage the proposed forthcoming expansion include:

a. using one model of school design for all new-build technical schools;

b. in addition to new-build, expanding infrastructure in 21 existing schools and new schools subsequent to them becoming operational (e.g. beginning with 2 or 3 floors of accommodation and building an extra 2 floors once the school is established).

c. launching one tender for all of the construction work, rather than launching an individual tender for each school, making the process simpler to manage.

The first of these strategies has a particular flaw, which needs to be addressed urgently: the design being rolled out to all sites has no provision for access by students with mobility difficulties, either in the form of ramps or elevators.

The second strategy expands considerably the number of construction projects which will be on-going and needing to be managed at any one time, as it is additional to the 39 new schools already planned. During the 8-year plan, 60 construction projects are therefore expected to be implemented.

The third strategy presupposes that there is land and finance available for all of the 32 new IGVE schools and 7 new technical schools which are foreseen in the 8-year plan as well as for the expansion of 21 existing schools. The tender documents may be able to be written in such a way that the contract can be modified during its term, should the necessary land and finances not be forthcoming. The legalities of this need to be explored in advance with UCEP's legal advisers. The tender will be managed by the Procurement Sub-Committee of the Executive Board.

In summary, UCEP has experience and systems in place to support a major expansion of its physical assets over an 8-year period, provided that donations of land and donations of finance for construction are secured, preferably in advance. However, it will not have managed a tender of the size and geographic spread which is currently foreseen and with complexities related to any uncertainties surrounding pre-existence of land and funds.

2.2.1 Action required in relation to the expansion of number of schools

2.2.1: Urgent re-design of the technical school model, to allow disabled access;

2.2.2: Detailed inventory of UCEP's current land assets and buildings showing how these relate to the expansion plan;

2.2.3: Rationale for new-build versus expansion of existing sites;

2.2.4: Reconsideration of whether DFID funds should be used for land purchase and construction in light of figures generated by 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 above, or whether it should be retained for UCEP's core activities.

2.3 Increase in the number of growth centres

In order to be able to reach out to poor children beyond the main cities, UCEP plans to begin operating in 7 new 'growth centres' during the 8-year phase. This will include areas where demand for workers is lower than in the main cities of Dhaka and Chittagong and therefore will, to a certain extent, be at odds with one of UCEP's declared criteria when considering whether to open a new school: that there should be local labour market demand for its graduates. Indeed, the 8-year plan warns: "UCEP will face a real challenge when the informal sector will be unavoidable for arranging jobs for a large number of graduates passing out from UCEP technical schools particularly in smaller/remote districts". UCEP's solution, which it is already implementing in some cases, is to match its graduates with jobs in other areas, principally the peri-urban outskirts of Dhaka. Given the very high numbers of working children in UCEP's existing growth centres, it seems possible that it could meet its expansion targets without setting up in areas where formal sector jobs may not be able to be found for its graduates. This could also simplify its plans for increasing its capital assets.

The World Bank Tracer Study 2006 points out that although UCEP has only 6% of the technical schools in Bangladesh, it has 11% of the staff and 23% of the students. In addition, its employment rate of graduates is 95% compared to government's 9%.

One of the stated drivers behind the wish of UCEP's Board and management for the expansion programme is that without it UCEP cannot attract funding from the government and private enterprise. This is made explicit in Appendix 1, which is an e-mail from the Executive Director of UCEP to the writers of this report, in response to the question of why UCEP considers expansion to be such a critical element for reaching self-sustainability. However, this perceived need to impact on government creates a chicken and egg situation. If UCEP needs to expand significantly in order to attract government funds then what basis is there for the projected donations from government in the early years of the 8-year plan? In the first year of the plan, donations from government (including loan projects) are expected to have increased from zero in 2011 to US$750,000. This projection doubles to US$1.5m two years later and so on until it is US$6m by Year 8. However, in the early years expansion will be limited and so will not be able to have the impact on Government which the Executive Director describes in his e-mail as so critical to attracting funds and which is supported by Board members. No evidence was found to support the feasibility of these projections of Government funding.

In summary, horizontal growth of UCEP is likely to lead to graduates either being placed in jobs in the informal sector or being placed in jobs away from their local area and, therefore, away from their families. Government funding is required to allow this growth to happen but UCEP believes that it has to grow first, in order to attract government funding. To expand and to attract government funding simultaneously appear impossible unless a different approach is taken to working with Government.

2.3.1 Action required in relation to the increase in the number of growth centres

2.3.1: Labour market analyses from each existing and prospective growth centre, to show both type and volume of demand for skilled and semi-skilled workers.

2.3.2: Comparative analysis of the cost-benefit of expanding existing growth centres with the cost-benefit of developing new growth centres.

2.3.3: Evidence of specific negotiations with Government which (i) secure a written commitment of government funding for years 1-2; and (ii) secure a government intention to provide funding for years 3-8.

2.4 Decentralisation of management structure

There are a number of advantages to be gained by decentralising the management structure. Some of these are to do with human resources, such as creating a career structure and empowering regional managers; others are to do with getting closer to local benefactors, philanthropists, industrialists and employers. Cost-savings are also generally considered to be a benefit of decentralisation, given that operational and salary costs are often lower outside of the capital city. This may be so for UCEP but at present no analysis appears to be available to support that assumption.

UCEP does already have a limited regional structure in place with regional and district co-ordinators appointed with modest budgetary and human resource management responsibilities. However, the line management and reporting of these two types of post is currently somewhat confused. Assuming their responsibilities will increase when regionalisation is fully implemented, management training for regional staff will be critical, as will a clear division of responsibility between the regions and UCEP Head Office. A revised organogram is already prepared to show the structure which is envisaged.

In summary, at present there is no data available to support the assumption that decentralisation will lead to financial economies. Although a proposed structure has been prepared, staff have not been trained to operate with more autonomy and responsibility.

2.4.1 Action required in relation to the decentralisation of the management structure

2.4.1: Cost-benefit analysis to compare the decentralised model against a centralised model.

2.4.2: Plan of the division of responsibilities between head office and the regions, clearly showing where responsibility and accountability rest for the quality of programmes and financial management, the lines of communication and facilities for monitoring and evaluation.

2.4.3: Training needs analysis for existing and newly-recruited regional staff accompanied by an implementation plan, with costing.

2.5 Double the size of the current budget, while decreasing donor dependency

As noted above, UCEP's budget for 2011 is £9.15m of which 98% (£8.97m) is provided by donors. The plan is that by 2018 the budget will be £19.21m of which 50% (£9.6m) will be provided by donors. While it is true that the donor contribution may decrease as a proportion of the budget, it would be wrong to think that the actual amounts required from donors will decrease. Indeed, on the above figures the expectation is that donor contributions will grow to over £15m by Year 4 and then gradually decrease by Year 8 to <u>£0.63m above present levels</u>. This is in the context of a far bigger programme with more than double the number of young people benefitting but whether that can be described as a reduction in donor dependency is debatable. The plan states that the remainder of the budget will be found from a variety of sources.

Failure to establish the Business Development Liaison Unit was one of the casualties of the shortfall in funding for 2011 and yet within 2 years of its establishment it is expected to have raised US$5.5m from income-generating activities and US$3.5m from Government, industry, CSR etc. This rises to US$26.7m and US$53.6m respectively by 2018. These ambitious targets exist in a context where recruitment of staff for the BDLU has not even begun.

Given that this report is being written less than 6 months from the proposed start of Year 1 of the 8-year plan, it is important to establish the strength of UCEP's position in attracting the funds envisaged and therefore the feasibility of the expansion.

2.5.1 Donor contributions

Amount raised for 2011	£8.97m
Amount required for Year 1 of Plan (being 85% of total budget)	£12.5m
Amount raised so far for 2012 • Netherlands Embassy £5.35 • SCSD £61,000	£5.96m
Increase in funding required between 2011 and 2012	£3.53m

There is therefore £6.5m still to be raised for the coming year and the hope of UCEP must be that that will come largely, if not entirely, from DFID. Discussions with a variety of donors in Dhaka revealed that, although they admire the work which UCEP is doing, neither AusAID nor Danida will be able to provide funding in the foreseeable future and the Swiss Development Corporation has decided to terminate the small donation it has been making. The Netherlands contribution will continue at the same scale until mid-2015 but the First Secretary (Education) felt that it was unlikely to continue beyond that due to changes in the political environment in the Netherlands. The expectations of £12.5m from donors in 2012, if that is taken as Year 1, is achievable if DFID continues its current level of contribution but to rise to a peak of £15m in Year 4 (2015) looks extremely optimistic.

2.5.2 Domestic contributions

Amount raised for 2011	£176,000
Amount required for Year 1 of Plan	£2.2m
Amount raised so far for 2012 • UCEP Welfare Trust £609,750 • SKT £56,097	£665,847
Increase in funding required between 2011 and 2012	£2.024m

Negotiations are still being held with Save the Children UK for a contract worth £365,850 annually for 3 years. Assuming that the Welfare Trust figures are realistic, the shortfall for the Year 1 budget is between £1.168m and £1.534m with less than 5 months to go. Domestic contributions are expected to increase to £9.6m in 2018, to be made up from a combination of government funds, private sector funds and philanthropic donors. The feasibility of these needs further examination:

2.5.3 Government funding

Amount raised for 2011	£0
Amount required for Year 1 of Plan	£456,520
Amount raised so far for 2012	£0
Increase in funding required between 2011 and 2012	£456,520

The 8-year plan states that in Year 1 £456,520 will be contributed by government or through loan programmes such as the ADB. During 2011 there has been no contribution from Government. The 8-year plan assumed that the Government's National Education Policy 2009 would provide financial support and equipment. However, there are no signs of this happening and the interaction between UCEP and BTEB is not at all close or regular. There are indeed loan programmes running, funded by ADB and the World Bank and an EC grant-funded project (implemented by ILO). So far, UCEP has found no way to become involved in these and, given that they are principally to develop the capacity of government technical schools, it is not clear that UCEP would be eligible. Furthermore, both the EC and the ADB projects are experiencing difficulty in working with government; in the latter case only 5% of funds have been disbursed over 3 years. The prospects of attracting almost half a million pounds within the next 12 months seem unlikely and until UCEP finds a way to begin to collaborate effectively with Government for example through piloting PPP, then regardless of UCEP's size it is very doubtful that the Government contribution of £3.652m foreseen for Year 8 will become a reality.

2.5.4 Private Sector funding

Amount raised for 2011	£0
Amount required for Year 1 of Plan	£150,000
Amount raised so far for 2012	£0
Increase in funding required between 2011 and 2012	£150,000

The 8-year plan anticipates a modest contribution of £150,000 from the private sector in Year 1, increasing to £2.13m by Year 8. It is difficult to estimate what the contribution has been in recent years, as private sector contributions appear to have come in the form of land. It is important to understand what this is valued at, as 15% of UCEP's future contribution of 50% is expected to be 'in-kind' which will be land, buildings, equipment etc. The 8-year plan suggests that income from land and buildings will increase by a modest US$690,000 during the 8 years, rising from US$2.1m (£1.3m) in Year 1 to US$2.79m (£1.7m) in Year 8. Optimising the income-generating potential of these assets which are received as donations is one potential source of significant income but is beyond the remit of this report to investigate. It is also important to understand the relationship between this projected income from the private sector and the status of the 'in-kind' contribution by UCEP and whether that 15% in kind is new assets each year or a continuing use of largely the same assets. The modest amount envisaged from the private sector, at a time of economic growth, is disappointing given that one benefit of the Association and the Executive Board should be to use their members' connections and networks to gain financial support for UCEP from the corporate sector. Good examples of this are available in, for example, the work which SCSD is doing with Nordic inward investors.

2.5.5 UCEP Alumni and Community of Friends

These two initiatives are still to be implemented and the income from them is shown as zero for Year 1. By Year 2 the combined income is shown as US$125,000 and this increases to US$225,000 by Year 8. While some informal discussions have been held with UCEP graduates it is not evident that these projections have any empirical basis and need to be explored in detail before income can be assumed and before large amounts of effort go into trying to make them a reality. The cost of building up and managing these networks is not available. For example, it is projected that there will be 60,000 alumni members by 2014 and 150,000 by 2018. Similarly, considerable resource will be required to expand the number of entrepreneur groups from 760 in 2012 to 1,515 in 2018, with 37,875 members, particularly when none exist at present.

In summary, using 2011 as a baseline and assuming 2012 is Year 1 of the 8-year plan, the figures given do not represent any lessening of the dependency on donors. Indeed, to carry out the 8-year plan as it is written requires a substantial increase in the financial commitment of donors. UCEP seems ill-prepared for achieving the increase expected in Government funding and private sector funding from a zero base without any obvious signs of fruitful discussion with these stakeholders. UCEP is possibly a rich charity now in terms of land ownership and is applauded for having influential members in its Association and on its Board. However, these physical and human assets do not seem to be fulfilling their potential in terms of generating income for UCEP.

2.5.6 Action required in relation to doubling the size of the budget while decreasing donor dependency

2.5.1: Financial audit to be undertaken to better understand UCEP's current financial position.

2.5.2: Delay the expansion programme by at least one more year, possibly two, until there is firmer evidence of UCEP's ability to generate income from alternative sources. Agree clear performance indicators, to be externally assessed.

2.5.3: Support UCEP management to put in place an action plan for income-generation.

2.5.4: Evidence from other organisations in Bangladesh that the scale of fund-raising anticipated over 8 years is feasible.

3 Appraisal

The three issues of expansion, regionalisation and self-sustainability are intertwined. Linked to those is a fourth issue, which is the conclusion of the UCEP Annual Review 2011 which, while acknowledging the good work which UCEP does, highlights a number of issues concerned with UCEP's governance, management and classroom practice which would benefit from significant improvement.

2011 was to be a transition year from UCEP's steady state to an ambitious and speedy expansion phase, the assumption being that UCEP would use that time to prepare the income streams on which the expansion depends. There is no evidence that this has happened and the conclusion must be that UCEP is simply not ready to implement the 8-year plan. The aspirations which the plan embodies are themselves entirely worthwhile, assuming that concerns expressed above about horizontal expansion and quality management are addressed. However, the plan alone is not sufficient to make this happen. A great deal more is required in terms of feasibility planning, business planning and networking with potential partners, particularly government but also the private sector. So far, the attempts to decrease donor dependency appear to have been almost entirely focussed on diversification of donors, rather than seeking alternatives to donors.

This leaves DFID with a number of options to consider:

3.1 Options

(i) withdraw funding – on the grounds that UCEP has shown no commitment to seriously engaging in other forms of funding. This would undoubtedly jeopardise the existing programme and potentially undo many of the good results which DFID has helped to achieve over a number of years. Such an abrupt halt would deny the moral commitment which DFID now has towards helping UCEP to survive and flourish.

(ii) gradually reduce funding over the next 8 years – thereby forcing UCEP to work harder at generating funds from other sources. It could be suggested that so long as donor funding is available, UCEP's motivation to find alternative sources is low. Withdraw consent for UCEP to use DFID funds to purchase land and construct buildings, in order to protect UCEP's core activities during years when funding will be a challenge.

(iii) commit to several years funding at current rates – this would cover the shortfall in anticipated donor funds for Year 1 and would give security of continuity for subsequent years. It may also encourage other donors to step forward. However, it would encourage UCEP to launch its expansion programme without the other funding sources in place. It would create a risk that funds would be diverted to expansion at the expense of improving, or even maintaining existing levels of, quality. This would be particularly so if DFID were to allow UCEP to continue to use DFID funds for land purchase and construction, the implication of which is that DFID is entirely in support of the expansion programme and feels that UCEP has a viable plan in place.

(iv) extend the transition year by another one or two years with similar levels of funding – this would also cover the shortfall in anticipated donor funds for 2012 and would allow UCEP time to act on advice, much of which is contained in the 8-year plan, to prepare a realistic, detailed business plan, gain specific commitment from government and the private sector and build up the UCEP alumni and community of friends. The business plan should include many of the actions proposed in sections 2.1 – 2.5. It would also allow time for existing income-generating facilities such as the Cheyne Tower to develop to their full potential. This time could also be fruitfully used to develop an asset management strategy to ensure that the high-value assets which UCEP owns are being exploited to their full income-generating potential.

(v) encourage UCEP to re-design the 8-year plan in distinct phases so that expansion is contingent upon evidence that funds can be or have been raised – this assumes that DFID is happy with supporting the growth of UCEP so that its services can be accessed by a larger number of working children from the urban slums. At present the plan is for expansion and greater self-sustainability to progress side-by-side and very quickly. However, as we have seen, the fund-raising required is well beyond what UCEP has achieved in the past and rather than leading to a decreased contribution by donors, actually requires an increase in donor funding. An alternative would be to implement each expansion phase only when pre-agreed levels of funds are either in place in a UCEP reserve fund or legally pledged.

A re-design could begin with UCEP showing that it can decrease donor contribution to 50% at present activity levels and then build up an expansion from that more solid foundation, less vulnerable to the changing priorities of donor governments. Such a strategy would require the detailed business plan which is currently missing. It would also require UCEP to raise a further £4.557m to make £4.575m, which is quite a significant challenge and is unlikely to be able to be achieved in a single year. However it is a conservative challenge in comparison to embarking on the first year of the 8-year plan. UCEP may argue that it is not realistic to aim for 50% self-sustainability when it is too small to attract government funds but that may signify the need for a different type of approach and attitude to government and a more robust approach to the private sector.

(vi) re-design the 8-year plan in distinct phases so that expansion is contingent upon both evidence of funds (as in (v) above) and evidence of quality improvement as outlined in the UCEP Annual Review 2011 – as with the previous option this would involve agreeing performance indicators but would include quality ones as well as financial ones. In this way, fears that expansion might have a negative impact on quality could be allayed. Only when there was evidence of key performance indicators being met, through an annual financial audit and an annual review, could the next phase of the expansion be launched.

3.1.1 Preferred option

The preferred option is a combination of (ii) and (vi) i.e. increasing self-sustainability at present activity levels, gradually reducing DFID's contribution over a period of several years, doing so in parallel with a re-designed 8-year plan which, at least initially, has more modest but realistic goals, and restricting the use of DFID funds to UCEP's core activities. This option assumes that DFID wishes to either terminate funding eventually or at least to reduce it substantially. It is suggested that one element of this option would be that a specific proportion of DFID's contribution to UCEP would be funds to support the establishment and running of the Business Development Liaison Unit including providing expertise on fund-raising, public relations etc. A further refinement of this approach would be for DFID to offer a matching challenge fund, providing £x of DFID money per £y of UCEP funds raised from other sources. This would address the current situation of aid dependency and offer incentives linked to the financial and quality indicators. The formula could be re-negotiated annually thereby creating an exit strategy for DFID.

3.2 Conclusion

UCEP continues to carry out good work on behalf of working children from the urban slums. Given the small proportion of working children which it reaches it has the laudable ambition to reach more children whose lives could be improved by having access to UCEP's services. The grounds on which UCEP was established and the way in which it has developed make it extremely susceptible to changes in the overseas aid policies of foreign governments. For both of these reasons, it is important that UCEP finds ways to raise higher levels of funding from non-donor sources.

However, as this report shows, UCEP is not yet sufficiently well-prepared to embark on an ambitious expansion programme and first needs to strengthen its funding position. Given that it has been unable to raise the funds it required for this transition year, it is inconceivable that it could raise the amounts required for 2012, if that were now to be designated as Year 1 of the Plan. It is simply not sufficiently well prepared or positioned. DFID can assist with this through continuing to provide funding targeted at UCEP's programme delivery, not at land purchase, but do so at a gradually decreasing level, so that core activities are safeguarded and a small proportion of its funds are used to develop UCEP's capacity to be self-sustaining. It can also assist UCEP, in collaboration with other donors, by putting more pressure on it to develop a detailed business planning strategy and management information system which generates up-to-date, relevant and transparent analyses on which financial and policy decisions can be made. Too much of the current planning appears to be based on wishful thinking rather than empirical evidence.

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