

World Bank supports road and education sectors in Sri Lanka

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The World Bank has approved a US\$160 mn assistance package from the International Development Association to Sri Lanka. Of this, US\$100 mn credit will finance development of the national road network and a grant of US\$60 mn will support the education system.

The Road Sector Assistance Project, which is coordinated with the Asian Development Bank and Japan Bank for International Cooperation, will help lower transportation cost by ensuring an efficient national road system that serves the needs of all Sri Lankans. Sri Lanka has among the highest density of rural roads in the developing world, and the project will support innovative pilot schemes for rural road maintenance.

The road network is a vital component for the movement of people and goods and as such, plays an important role in integrating the country, facilitating economic growth, and ultimately reducing poverty,” says Isabel Chatterton, Team Leader for the Road Sector Assistance Project, World Bank. “Years of poor maintenance have resulted in low travel speeds and poor service levels, hindering the spread of economic activities and development outside the Colombo Metropolitan Area. This project aims to support the government’s commitment to reverse that situation:’

The Education Sector Operation is the first Sector Wide Programmatic (SWAP) in Sri Lanka. It aims to promote equitable access to basic education; increase the levels of learning and hone practical skills required in the workforce; enhance efficiency and equity of resource allocation and distribution; and strengthen the quality of the education system.

The project supports an education sector expenditure framework that starts from individual school plans and introduces schools-based management. The resources provided through the grant are explicitly linked to performance.

“A high performing education system will improve human capital accumulation, with beneficial effects on growth, human development and poverty reduction;’ says

Harsha Aturupane, Senior Education Economist, World Bank Colombo office.