

2021 Global Education Meeting

Paris Declaration: A Global Call for Investing in the Futures of Education

Preamble

1. We, Heads of State and Government, ministers, and delegates; leaders of multilateral organizations, civil society, youth and teacher representatives, foundations and the private sector, met on 10 November 2021, at the Global Education Meeting (2021 GEM). We welcome the strong commitment of all actors demonstrated here in Paris, France, a global capital of education.

2. We emphasize the urgency to tackle the educational crises and inequalities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which are threatening the hard-gained progress toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and pushing marginalized and vulnerable groups and learners further behind, especially those living in poverty, in remote and rural areas, women and girls, those impacted by crises and conflicts, and persons with disabilities.

3. While the pandemic has weighed on the world's economies, we are concerned about the financial impact that the pandemic continues to have on education financing, particularly in low- and lower-middle-income countries, where less than 1% of COVID-19 stimulus packages was allocated to education.

4. We recognize that equity, quality and efficiency are not competing goals in education. They reinforce each other when investment decisions in education policies are based on evidence and consider synergies and adequate trade-offs.

5. We reiterate the importance of multilateral cooperation and multi-stakeholder engagement in advocating education as a key response to recovery from the COVID-19, building resilient, inclusive, innovative and gender-transformative education systems and societies. We welcome and support the ongoing reform of the Global Education Cooperation Mechanism and the new SDG4-Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee, officially inaugurated today.

6. We appreciate the report of the International Commission on the Futures of Education, which calls on governments, national stakeholders and citizens around the world to forge a new social contract for education, governed by the following two foundational principles: ensuring the right to quality education throughout life and strengthening education as a public and common good.

Keeping our promises: invest in education

7. Education is an investment that requires sustainable funding. We recognize that domestic resources – particularly through tax revenues – are essential and remain a primary source of funding for education. We build on the preceding calls for action to prioritize, protect and increase domestic finance for education, including the Kenyatta Declaration of Heads of State and Government of developing country partners of the Global Partnership for Education.

8. We urge all governments to fulfil without delay the commitments they made at the World Education Forum in Incheon in 2015 and the Global Education Meetings in 2018 and 2020:

- allocate at least 4-6% of GDP and/or at least 15-20% of total public expenditure to education;
- devote an adequate share of national stimulus packages to education, particularly towards targeted support for marginalized learners' school (re-)enrolment, learning recovery and socio-emotional well-being, as well as skills development for employment;

- increase the volume, predictability, and effectiveness of international aid to education by (a) meeting the benchmark of 0.7% of donor gross national income (GNI) for official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries; (b) increasing the share of ODA to education as a percentage of total ODA; and (c) ensuring that international aid to education is aligned with national education plans and consistent with aid effectiveness principles.
9. We urge all governments to develop strategies to increase resources for education and use these resources effectively to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. To this end,
- i. Raise more revenues to increase education budgets, in particular via measures that strengthen the design and the equity of the tax system, as well as through innovative financing measures and public-private cooperation.
 - ii. Invest in key policy priorities for recovery and accelerated progress towards SDG 4, such as inclusive and equitable quality care and education from the earliest age, teachers' training and professional development, youth employability skills and digital transformation of the education sector.

The way forward

10. We will maintain the dialogue and renewed cooperation on education financing and monitoring progress of education outcomes launched today and call on UNESCO, its Member States and all partners to collaborate in research, policy analysis, advocacy, knowledge sharing and capacity development through the SDG4-Education 2030 High Level Steering Committee and its tools, including the Global Education Observatory.

11. We mandate the High-Level Steering Committee to: i) decide in consultation with its constituencies on strategic and thematic priorities for the global education community up to 2025 at its annual meeting in 2022, ii) decide on priority actions to fill data gaps for effective monitoring of SDG 4 and iii) decide on recommended actions for increased and more efficient and equitable education financing to address the priorities and catalytic actions, and to follow on the 2021 GEM Paris Declaration commitments.

12. We call on leaders of all Governments and Partners to express support for this Paris Declaration and commit ourselves to invest in education for the future of humanity and the planet.