



TO: H.E. Ms. Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani
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the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Fergal Mythen
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CC: H.E. Mr. Csaba Kőrösi
President of the 77th session of the United Nations
General Assembly

Ms. Amina Mohammed
Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations

Mr. Leonardo Garnier
Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General for
the Transforming Education Summit

Ms. Stefania Giannini
Assistant Director-General for Education at
UNESCO

New York, May 19th, 2023

Dear Co-facilitators,

Convinced of education's unique contribution to human rights, sustainable development and peace, the Group of Friends for Education and Lifelong Learning would like to reconfirm our engagement with the process leading up to the SDG Summit and its Political Declaration.

Following the Transforming Education Summit (TES), convened by the Secretary-General last year in an effort to address the education crisis, we remain committed to advancing a global advocacy on education as a key public good that can accelerate progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals. As such, we have played a proactive role in the preparatory processes of the TES. Consequently, we continue strengthening the synergies with the SDG4 High-Level Steering Committee – an important body for global education cooperation – on its effective follow-up to the TES.

The significant momentum generated by the Transforming Education Summit – with 138 national commitments made to uphold the right to education – shows that there is room, and a great need, to ensure appropriate global recognition for the role of education as a human right, a public good and a key driver for all SDGs, especially in intergovernmental agreed documents. It is our belief that more effective and increased investment in education now would trigger positive outcomes in addressing the multiple crises

that the world faces today. Hence, while appreciative of the advancements made on the SDG Summit Political Declaration under your capable leadership, our Group wishes to draw attention to some key issues that we believe should be included in the Declaration for the advancement of progress towards achieving universal access to quality education.

1. Education is a global public good that enables and advances human rights, peace and sustainable development goals. Quality education is a vital foundation for every aspect of a country's progress, enhancing productivity and employment, driving economic prosperity and competitiveness, raising women and men out of poverty, reducing inequalities and helping people adapt to the rapidly changing world. Education also holds the key to gender equality and can empower people to become active and responsible citizens who contribute to social equity and justice, peace, climate resilience and sustainability in their communities and societies.
2. The Declaration should acknowledge the commitments made by the UN Member States at the Transforming Education Summit. It should also emphasize the significance of fully leveraging the SDG4 High-Level Steering Committee, mandated by the Secretary General to lead the follow-up of the Summit, for enhancing the global education architecture and ensuring fulfillment of SDG4.
3. The Declaration should highlight the importance of ensuring inclusive, safe, healthy and stimulating learning environments that enable all learners to achieve their full potential and well-being, prioritizing the most vulnerable, including those affected by humanitarian emergencies. It should also call on all Member States to provide, and to support other Member States in providing, quality education for all to ensure that individuals are equipped, from early childhood to adulthood and throughout the lifecourse, with the knowledge, skills and values necessary to become active agents of change; this requires foundational learning skills, as well as continuous reskilling and upskilling of young people, adults and older persons for rapidly changing labour markets.
4. Teachers are at the core of the education systems and have to be enabled as agents of change. This important role needs as adequate training and empowered and address the global teacher shortage making the teaching profession attractive and respected by the society.
5. The Group would like to stress the importance of harnessing the digital technologies to provide quality education as a public good and transform teaching and learning by ensuring safe, open, high-quality digital content, as well as teachers' and learners' digital literacy and capacity to leverage digital tools, and universal educational connectivity for schools and learners of all levels, including by closing the digital divide within and between countries.
6. Transforming education is the best investment a country can make for its future and that it requires bold, whole-of-government, whole-of-society and international action; without it, progress would be impeded. Therefore, governments should be encouraged to increase resources for education. However, governments must first take steps to ensure more equitable allocation and more efficient use of education investments to ensure that education transforms societies now and in the future, leaving no one behind. The Declaration should also emphasize the need to complement domestic funding with sufficient aid and financing of which the receiving side should take due ownership.

7. Finally, the Group would like to appreciate the key messages of the SDG4 High-Level Steering Committee that serves as the global education coordination body in the framework of the 2030 Agenda and the follow up to TES. These messages resonate with the Group's conviction that education is the best investment in people for our sustainable, peaceful and resilient societies and thus have been taken into account in this letter.

Looking towards the future, we are determined to take an active role in the preparation processes of the forthcoming SDG Summit, and we will continue to work closely with UNESCO, the lead agency for SDG4, and other partners, with the ultimate aim of accelerating progress on SDG4 and securing a better future for generations to come.

Thank you once again for your genuine engagement with us and particularly, for spearheading such an inclusive and open process on the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit.

Yours sincerely,



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*On behalf of the Group of Friends for Education and Lifelong Learning****

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