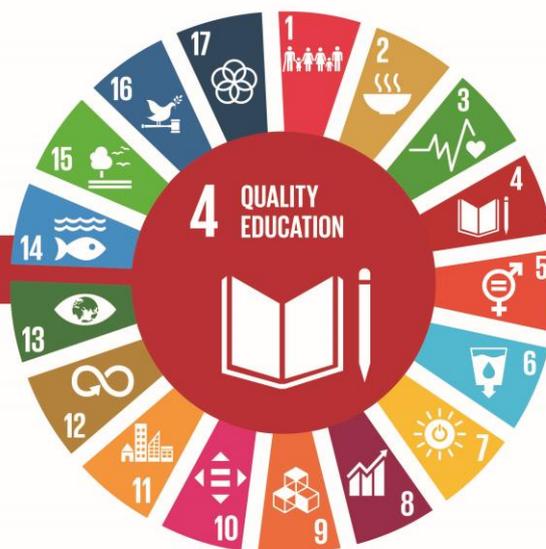




United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Globale Education Meeting 2018



Welcome by UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, Stefania Giannini

*Opening ceremony, High-Level Technical Meeting, Brussels, 3 December 2018*

Son Altesse Princesse Laurentien,

Excellences, Mesdames et messieurs,

C'est un grand plaisir de vous accueillir pour cette première réunion mondiale depuis l'adoption en septembre 2015 de l'Agenda 2030 : « Transformer notre monde : le Programme de développement durable à l'horizon 2030 ».

Nous sommes ici pour rappeler l'ambition sans précédent de cet Agenda, sa portée universelle et son caractère intégré.

Nous sommes TOUS convaincus que l'éducation est en son centre – comme droit humain fondamental, comme force de transformation pour atteindre une société inclusive, juste et durable.

Je souhaite exprimer mes chaleureux remerciements aux autorités du Royaume de Belgique pour leur accueil généreux – la tenue de cette réunion à Bruxelles reflète votre engagement en faveur de la coopération mondiale sur l'éducation.

Nous sommes aussi très honorés de la présence de Son Altesse Princesse Laurentien, envoyée spéciale de l'UNESCO. Vous connaissez son engagement actif, en particulier en Europe, pour mobiliser la volonté politique autour de l'alphabétisation et des compétences, et attirer l'attention sur l'ampleur des inégalités. Altesse, en d'autres termes, votre combat est le nôtre.

Brussels, 3 December 2018

Ladies and gentlemen

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda has compelled governments, civil society and the international community to find new ways of acting together to deliver on its promise.

The education community has been at the forefront of these efforts.

Soon after the Agenda was adopted, UNESCO convened the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee – a group bringing together all key players to ensure coordinated support and pave strategic directions, which I now have the honour to co-chair with Norway.

Over the past three years, we have kept a steady momentum, reporting on progress, analyzing challenges and encouraging collaborative strategies.

Leading up to today's global meeting, we have organized over the past year regional conferences in Amman, Bangkok, Buenos Aires, Cochabamba, Nairobi and Strasbourg and multiple national ones across the world involving all key players - governments, civil society, multi-lateral agencies, private sector, academia and youth - to review progress, to share experiences and solutions.

These meetings have demonstrated the value of partnership and a commitment to collective universal action.

Now, here, over the next days, it is time to recall the big challenges that remain, and what we really need to tackle them more effectively. First, a strong political will, second a collective action, third a huge increase of resources.

This is the only way to keep the promises we have made.

If we look at data, we see that despite some progress, **we are globally not on track to achieve SDG4 targets by 2030.**

There are still:

- 750 million youth and adults who cannot read and write,
- 262 million children, and youth who do not attend school.
- 617 million or 58% of children and adolescents are not able to read and do basic mathematics, many of whom are in school.

Half of pre-school age children are not enrolled in early childhood education

Only half of all adolescents and youth complete secondary school.

The urgency of stepped up commitment and strategies to address these gaps will not only run through discussions here, but form the basis for our input to the UN High Level Political Forum next July, and the United Nations General Assembly in September.

We must leverage this opportunity to shine the spotlight on education and its linkages to all the other development goals, guided by the Forum's theme: "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality".

In particular, in light of forum's agenda, education's relation to Goals 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 13 (Climate action) and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) should be emphasized, paying special attention to the issue of migration and forced displacement.

Dear colleagues,

Greater wealth and reduction in global poverty has also seen rising levels of vulnerability, growing inequalities and exclusion. Therefore, on this International Day of Persons with Disabilities, it is more than symbolic that a core theme of Global Education Meeting, is on **policies to make education more equitable and inclusive "leaving no-one behind"**.

It's crystal clear that behind our claim: no one left behind, there is not simply a great ambition, not simply a great challenge but also a tremendous opportunity.

We need to address the dramatic issue of growing mobility of people, with over 257 million international migrants crossing borders in 2017, and internal migration growing to 865 million people.

Drawing on the wealth of analysis and recommendations in the 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report, which I recently launched in Kenya and Italy, this meeting will allow for deeper exchange on how to ensure inclusive education for migrants and the forcibly displaced – this carries all round benefits – for them and for the enrichment of host countries. With the majority of the forcibly displaced under 18, many carrying the scars of harrowing life stories, we face an ethical, political and societal challenge – one closely entwined with decent work and social justice.

Finally, our discussions will analyse the environment in which education takes place – one marked by rapid technological innovation and global concerns that challenges education to transform so that students at all levels are empowered to be active, responsible global citizens, with the values and mindsets to build more sustainable and just societies.

To unlock progress, concerted and joined up action is more than ever needed at national level, right down to communities.

From the global perspective, I see three major challenges: coordinating collective action among a multiplicity of actors; mobilizing adequate financing to meet the scale and scope of the SDG agenda; and addressing gaps related to three primary enabling conditions—human capacity, effective institutions and last not but not least, political will.

This is a demanding agenda, but the only way to act effectively and wisely, in solidarity.

Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to our intense and fruitful discussions over the next three days.

The **Global Education Meeting** is convened by UNESCO in its mandated role as lead agency and coordinator of the Education 2030 Agenda. The Meeting reviews progress towards the global education targets and commitments in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It brings the global community together to take stock of progress and identify strategic priority areas requiring political guidance and intervention for the effective achievement of the global Education 2030 Agenda.

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