

12 YEARS TO BREAK BARRIERS AND LEAVE NO GIRL BEHIND

Today, more girls are in school globally than ever before; but 132 million are not, particularly those in emergencies and in conflict-affected and fragile states. Millions more drop out before they complete their education, and progress for the most marginalized girls is far too slow. These girls struggle to learn the basics, and are under-represented in secondary education, where they would gain the skills, knowledge and opportunities for a productive and fulfilling life.

Far too many girls continue to face barriers to their education, across the lifecycle from early years, through adolescence and into adulthood, including poverty; sexual and gender-based violence; child, early and forced marriage; early and unwanted pregnancy; and restrictive social norms and expectations. Other barriers rest within the school, related to deep-rooted gender discrimination, unequal power relations, and inadequate facilities. By some estimates, one in ten girls in sub-Saharan Africa miss school during menstruation. Gender-based violence in, around and on the way to school knows no geographical, cultural, social, economic or ethnic boundaries. Inclusive, equitable education, in safe and secure environments, which reaches the most vulnerable, including children with disabilities, remains fundamental to achieving the empowerment and economic equality of girls and women, especially in developing contexts and countries struggling with conflict.

Today we meet to take stock, to reaffirm and issue new policy and financial commitments, and to agree on next steps for joint advocacy and action to achieve results for *all* girls.

We acknowledge that much progress has been made in 2018 to make concrete commitments to advancing girls' enjoyment of their human right to education, and a contribution to social development, economic growth, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The G7 Summit in Canada and the Commonwealth Summit in the UK agreed on commitments with a particular focus on supporting adolescent and highly marginalised girls while they confront enduring barriers to their achievement of positive learning outcomes; while the Global Partnership for Education conference in Senegal saw developing countries commit themselves to invest a further \$110 billion in education, coupled with \$2.3 billion of ODA pledges by donors. Education Cannot Wait, in barely one year, invested close to \$100 million in emergency response plans and multi-year resilience programmes in which 50 percent of the beneficiaries are girls and the majority of teachers are female. With 2030 in sight, we must continue the momentum for shared responsibility, global solidarity, and accountability to ensure no girl is left behind.

We together call on girls themselves, their families and communities, governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector to join us in our commitment to undertake individual and collective action to dismantle barriers to girls' education, and to:

- Increase girls' access to schools and learning pathways, with a focus on the most marginalized, including those in contexts of emergency, conflict and fragility.
- Provide opportunity for 12 years of free, safe and quality education that promotes gender equality, builds literacy and numeracy skills, and skills for life and the jobs of the future.

To close existing gaps, we resolve to:

- **Promote gender-responsive education systems**, including plans and policies, budgeting, teaching and learning approaches, curriculum and learning materials;
- **Improve coordination between humanitarian assistance and development cooperation**, ensuring commitment to gender equality and prioritizing improved access to quality education for girls and women in the early stages of humanitarian response and peacebuilding efforts;
- **Enact and enforce legislation**, providing opportunity for 12 years of free basic education, and dismantling barriers to education through wider reform, such as on child, early and forced marriage;
- **Invest in teachers**, creating incentives for male and female teachers to provide quality learning opportunities, and expanding professional development in gender-responsive teaching practice;
- **Focus on the hardest to reach girls**, including girls in situations of conflict, crisis and fragility, rural girls, and girls with disabilities;
- **Champion schools as safe spaces for learning**, free of gender bias, violence and discrimination;
- **Engage communities, parents, boys and men, and girls themselves** to challenge the patriarchal beliefs, practices, institutions and structures that drive gender inequality;
- **Monitor progress, and ensure the collection of sex-and age-disaggregated data** on a regular basis and its use to redress gender disparities in education and their causes across the lifecycle;
- **Implement integrated and multi-sectoral approaches** which empower adolescents to avoid sexual risks and prevent early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections;
- **Prepare girls for jobs of the future**, building digital skills and closing gender gaps in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education.
- **Strengthen international, regional, national, and South-South cooperation** to champion girls' education and make gender equality in and through education a reality.

We commit to galvanizing political will to deliver on the SDG 4 commitments to girls' education and use upcoming events such as the Global Education 2030 Meeting organized by UNESCO in December 2018 and the SDG High Level Political Forum in July 2019 to take stock of progress in the count down to 2030.

25 September 2018