

August 17, 2022

Dear Special Advisor Garnier,

The Global Advisory Committee of the UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) wishes to express our concern about the lack of reference to gender equality in the Transforming Education Summit (TES) concept note and Leader's Day agenda. Since TES consultations began, we have called for an explicit, clear focus on gender equality. We were pleased to see Gender Transformative Education taken up as one of the sub-thematic themes under Action Track 1 but felt that as one of many important issues being covered in the track, there was a risk it would get overshadowed and not given the prominence it deserves. It seems that this has now become the case.

We are seeing a roll back on women's and girl's rights around the world. In fact, earlier this year, the Secretary General [noted](#) that achieving gender equality is the "greatest sustainable development challenge of our age". Growing conservative movements are rallying against progress made on gender equality. In this climate, for a Secretary General's office's concept note on the biggest education event since the COVID-19 pandemic to not address gendered vulnerabilities, is alarming. Even if the events on 16 and 17 September address gender equality (and we are all working hard to support them to do so), the Leaders Day on 19 September is framed to be and indeed will be the most critical moment of the summit. The thematic sessions selected for Leader's Day send a clear message to governments and all stakeholders that these are the global priorities to focus on and invest in. The omission of gender equality is therefore of grave concern.

Is this decision to not feature gender equality on the Leaders Day a representation of the priorities emerging from national and regional consultations? We know it is not aligned with the mandates and ambitions of the UN, Member States and the stated ambitions of SDG 4. We urge you, the Deputy Secretary General and the TES Advisory Committee, to address this misstep and ensure that an updated version of the TES concept note is issued that prioritizes gender equality and inclusion as central to transforming education. We request that intersectional gender equality (noting that gender intersects with other forms of exclusion, such as disability, race, religion) be a thematic session on Leader's Day to enable governments to share their commitments to transformative education that empowers girls and women and progresses gender equality. [The Freetown Manifesto for Gender-Transformative Leadership in Education](#), which was developed and championed by fourteen African Ministries of Education is an example of country-led work that can be profiled in this regard. We stand ready to support with technical inputs, ideas, suggestions for participants and key messages and willingness to review document drafts. We will work hard to support you in addressing this critical gap.

We thank you for your support on this matter and look forward to hearing what action will be taken to address these concerns.

In solidarity,  
The Global Advisory Committee of the UN Girls' Education Initiative

*Note: UNGEI's Global Advisory Committee is a group of 40 organizations from around the world dedicated to gender equality in education and girls' education. A mix of donor countries, multilateral, bilateral organizations and international, regional and national civil society organizations, the members of the UNGEI Global Advisory Committee form a powerful partnership that comes together to achieve gender equality in and through education, including girls' education.*

