

FREETOWN MANIFESTO FOR GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

We, Ministers of Education, working to achieve quality education for every child, reaffirm our firm belief in the equality of all humanity and the catalytic role of girls' and women's empowerment in equitable and equal human development. By signing this Manifesto, developed in Freetown, Sierra Leone on 18-20 May, 2022 and in line with the United Nation's Secretary General's vision to transform education to achieve all SDGs, we resolve collectively to focus our leadership on empowering girls through education while seeking to achieve gender equality in and through education.

This means that we will continue our work on access to quality education for the most marginalized children while accelerating our support for education systems and actors to become gender equal. Towards this end, we commit to transforming our systems, pedagogies, institutions and indeed our own mindsets so that we can end harmful gender norms and stereotypes and help each child achieve the freedom they need to dream and grow without barriers.

We thus commit to the following:

1. In Education Sector Plans, include and increase clearly delineated budgets, strategies and commitments to gender equality in and through education with separate commitments to addressing harmful gender norms in pedagogy, gender capacity building for education sector staff and other selected priorities.
2. Participatory, citizen-inclusive data gathering from households on out of school children with strong support of gender and child rights experts so that we pay special attention to how intersectional gendered norms and expectations (for example, disability, minority status) have led to their being out of school.
3. Provide all reopened schools in conflict settings and emergencies with voluntary teachers and other learning alternatives and provide safe temporary learning spaces for all girls affected by crisis.
4. Multi-sectoral efforts with relevant National Ministries and Global Agencies working for employment, economic development and women's empowerment to build effective links between education and formal workforce employment, with a focus on girls and young women.

We make these commitments because we believe that it is only through education that we can transform our nations and our world. In making these commitments, we want to note that we can only achieve them in partnership with line Ministries, religious and cultural leaders, the private sector and the civil society organizations that serve the most vulnerable children on the ground as well as young activists who speak up for their needs and the needs of their communities and schools. We promise to prioritize these commitments in education processes and budgets, recognizing that what the most marginalized children need is not more promises but action on the ground that will transform their lives.