Education Cannot Wait:

Protecting Children and Youth's Right to a Quality Education in Humanitarian Emergencies and Crises

Date and time: Thursday 26th June 2014, 10.50 – 12.00 pm
Venue: Auditorium, The Egg, Brussels (Global Partnership for Education Pledging Conference)

Conflict, disasters and attacks on education worldwide endanger children's futures and a nation's progress

Nigeria. Central African Republic. Syria. Lebanon. Jordan. Iraq. South Sudan. Democratic Republic of Congo. Pakistan. Niger. Philippines. Somalia. Afghanistan. Mali. Sudan. Yemen…

The state of the right to education for children and youth affected by crisis around the world requires urgent attention.

No single country affected by conflict has achieved any of the MDGs. Crises endanger a country's social and economic progress; they destroy key investments made in education systems in the poorest countries, and cost millions in reconstruction and recovery. Yet, with the average length of internal conflicts calculated as 7 years, the under-reported casualties of these crises are the educational opportunities, hopes and ambitions of generations of children and youth.

Millions of children around the world are affected by conflict, natural disasters, complex humanitarian emergencies, internal strife and fragility. More than half of the world's out of school children live in countries scarred by war and violence, and are deprived of their right to education. Moreover, 100 million children and young people are affected by natural disasters and hazards on an annual basis. The International Labour Organization estimates that tens of thousands of girls and boys find themselves fighting adult wars in at least 17 countries in different regions around the world. Many of these children have not been given an opportunity to go to school or have been taken away from schools.

Children are crossing borders or are becoming permanently displaced without a guarantee that they can go to school when they finally arrive to a safer destination. Over one third of the world's refugee children are still missing out on primary education, and three out of four do not have access to secondary education. More than one third of countries hosting refugees do not recognise their right to education.

In 70 countries around the world, students and teachers have been intentionally killed, maimed, raped and abducted, while their schools and universities have been burned, shelled and destroyed or used for military purposes, making them targets for attack. Attacks on education endanger lives, cause wide destruction and instil fear in students and teachers to go to school.

Education interventions accompany children throughout a country's recovery process, when development strategies begin to be implemented and are also implemented as part of preparedness to reduce the impact of any future crises. Securing a continuum of education services is crucial to maintaining important progress made by school-going children and youth, teachers and education systems.

Despite these challenges and the benefits of ensuring education continues regardless of the context, education remains one of the most under-funded sectors in humanitarian responses. Humanitarian funding for education has declined since 2010, constituting just 1.9% of humanitarian appeals in 2013 and leaving a funding gap of $229 million. Less than 1%of development assistance is spent on disaster prevention, preparedness and risk reduction.

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A global commitment to stop the effects of crises on children's futures and secure a continuum for education

In 2010, the international community came together in an unprecedented effort to focus the UN system on the right to education in emergency situations. The resulting General Assembly Resolution on the Right to Education in Emergency Situations, co-sponsored by the governments of Qatar and Norway, among other key states, has become a guiding document.

In 2012, key global leaders representing countries affected by crisis, donor agencies and humanitarian agencies validated the **Education Cannot Wait Call to Action**, which outlined key actions to take to Plan, Prioritise and Protect education in crisis-affected contexts. In addition, UN member states signed up to protect and fulfil the right to education for all children affected by conflict and emergencies through the UN Secretary General's Global Education First Initiative.

Global leaders committed to:

1. **Plan** to prevent and minimise interruptions to education through integrating emergency preparedness and response into national education sector plans and budgets.
2. **Prioritise** children's education during emergencies and allocate adequate levels of humanitarian aid to education response;
3. **Protect** education from attack and end the military use and occupation of schools and universities by armed forces and armed groups during conflict

In 2013, global leaders gathered at the UN in New York to add their support and express their commitments to take the Education Cannot Wait agenda forward. At the request of the Hon. Gordon Brown, UN Special Envoy for Education, all those in attendance were requested to report back on progress made six months after the UN General Assembly.

500 days to go

In 2014, with nearly 500 days to go until the 2015 deadline to meet MDG2, the international community will gather together in Brussels in the context of the Global Partnership for Education's second Replenishment to make strong financing and policy commitments so that **all** children can receive a quality education. To achieve this goal, global leaders must also commit to stronger actions so that children and youth affected by crises continue to receive a quality education and to ensure the continuation of education services in the midst of a crisis and throughout a country's transition.

The collective efforts and commitments made in Brussels by new and existing Education Cannot Wait supporters will define the support of the international community towards ensuring that every girl and boy affected by crisis and humanitarian emergencies can enjoy their right to education, and that she or he will not have to wait any longer.

Expected outcomes

- Announcements of new country, donor and multilateral commitments in support of the Education Cannot Wait agenda
- Indications of donor increases in humanitarian aid contributions to education and/or greater prioritisation of education in humanitarian aid policies (as part of a delegation's pledges)
- Announcement by States of support for the Lucens Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict

A suggested list of Education Cannot Wait 2014 commitments will be shared with all speakers and invitees in preparation for this event.

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Key speakers and invitees

Moderator: Henry Bonsu, Broadcaster, United Kingdom

Members of the Panel

HE Ezenwo Nyesom Wike, Federal Minister of Education, Nigeria
HE John Gai Yoh, Minister of Education, Republic of South Sudan
HE Børge Brende, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway
Carol Bellamy, former Global Partnership for Education Board Chair
Irina Bokova, Director General, UNESCO
Jan Egeland, Secretary General, Norwegian Refugee Council
Kristalina Georgieva, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response

In addition, representatives from donor countries, humanitarian agencies, civil society and the private sector have been invited to issue remarks from the floor.

Invitees

Heads of delegations from fragile and conflict-affected states, members of the Global Partnership for Education; heads of delegations of existing and new supportive donor countries; heads of UN agencies, heads of NGOs and youth representatives.

Format of the event

This interactive parallel session will be led by a moderator, who will lead the session with short statements by key representatives (who will in turn introduce the three segments of the Education Cannot Wait agenda: Plan, Prioritise and Protect).

Each segment will be followed by a dynamic conversation based on questions led by the moderator. Representatives who have indicated an interest in announcing a commitment or pledge will be invited to speak by the moderator during or following the relevant segment.

All participants are invited to make strong commitments and take action to ensure children continue their education and that they are protected throughout a crisis.

Sponsors

This event is co-sponsored by members of the inter-agency Education Cannot Wait advocacy working group, including the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), UNESCO, UNESCO-IIEP, UNICEF, UNHCR, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the Global Education Cluster, the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), A World at School, Norwegian Refugee Council, Save the Children, and War Child.