Institut de la Francophonie pour l'Education et la Formation (IFEF)
Remarks by Alice Albright, CEO of the Global Partnership for Education
Dakar, Senegal. October 5, 2015

His excellency Mister President Macky Sall, Mister Education Minister, Minister Thiam, Ministers, Madam Secretary-General, representatives, I am honored to be standing before you today for the inauguration of the *Institut de la Francophonie pour l'Education et la Formation*. The *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* and the Global Partnership for Education have been forging an ever closer partnership. In Incheon, Madam Secretary-General and I made a commitment to greater political and technical cooperation between our organizations, and I am here today to show my support for an organization that I believe will contribute to realizing our common vision of inclusive and equitable quality education for all children.

Quality education

Quality is at the heart of the ambitious education agenda endorsed by world leaders in New York last week. The education goal calls not just for access to primary school for all children, but for inclusive and equitable quality education for all children and the promotion of life-long learning opportunities for all. It is an ambitious goal, and one that will require us to work together in synergy and complementarity. I am pleased to be here today to show my support for the establishment of another resource to help countries achieve their education goals. In its mission, the IFEF will establish a much needed framework in the post-2015 education architecture.

The education « crisis »

The education of the world's children, particularly in francophone countries, is in a precarious situation. Despite the progress made towards achieving universal primary education the education sector faces a learning crisis. An estimated 250 million of the children in school are not learning. Children may be in school, but getting them through the door is only the first step. Once they are there, we need to make sure that they are learning and that they stay to achieve a full cycle of education.

Francophone countries in sub-Saharan Africa face some of the greatest education challenges in the world. Across the region, education systems are confronted with teacher shortages. Furthermore, we cannot forget about the additional challenges that come along with the high poverty rates, and political instability and conflict that afflict the region.

Political instability undermines accomplishments. The institutional capacity of education systems has been weakened by civil war. Too many children are not in school or do not achieve primary education. Youth literacy rates remain below 50 percent. Average school fees are prohibitive for poor families. Many primary teachers are not adequately qualified.

Many GPE country partners are confronted with the challenges posed by displaced populations. Be they refugees or internally displaced people, they put a heavy strain on the education systems. Nevertheless, it is imperative to provide children affected by emergencies and protracted crises with an education so their childhood is not lost.

The Global Partnership is part of the solution

The Global Partnership for Education is committed to responding to the needs of our partner countries as they strive to address these challenges. We work to analyze, plan, implement and fund education sector plans with our 60 developing country partners, 18 of which are francophone countries.

What separates the Global Partnership from other organizations is the close link between sector coordination mechanisms, national sector planning and financial support. The Global Partnership is committed to the long-term strengthening of national education systems. It invests in national capacity and takes on the responsibility of advocacy at the global, national and local levels.

The GPE has invested $1.4 billion in education in francophone countries, 32% of our total investment in education in GPE developing country partners. Across the partnership we support countries in their efforts to strengthen their education systems to provide access to inclusive and equitable quality education for all children, rural and urban, girls and boys, irrespective of their ethnicity or religion. Every child deserves the same start in life. The opportunity to be in school, learn, achieve, and thrive.

Senegal has been a strong GPE partner, both on the global level on our Board and Committees and also at the country level. Mister President, I thank you for your direction, your commitment to education, and for hosting us here today. Mister Minister, I thank you for all that you do, not only for the children of Senegal but for all children in the world. The Global Partnership is accompanying Senegal to help improve teaching and learning.

I am also returning to the Democratic Republic of Congo mid-October, where the government is using the current grant to finance school rehabilitation and construction in the most deprived provinces, the distribution of 20 million textbooks around the country and support for better sector management.

The Global Partnership is also supporting the government of Benin's education sector plan, focusing on improving access and equity through school construction, school feeding programs and incentives for girls' education in deprived districts.

In the Central African Republic, the Global Partnership brought humanitarian and development partners together when the crisis erupted in 2013 to agree on the funding of an emergency education plan.

But we cannot do it alone: IFEF

The Global Partnership cannot do any of this alone. It is only as strong as its partners, many of whom I see sitting around the room today. We will only be capable of achieving SDG4 if we work together in synergy to accompany our partner countries in the pursuit of their education goals.

The technical expertise that the *Institut de la Francophonie pour l'Education et la Formation* will provide to the elaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of education sector plans in francophone countries, will only strengthen our ability to ensure the achievement of SDG4. It is a strong unifying tool that brings together expertise and puts it at the service of countries.

In the establishment of this organization, the OIF has risen to the challenge laid out on the 2030 education agenda. I look forward to working together to achieve our common goal of inclusive and equitable quality education for all children.

Funding

But collaboration alone will not be sufficient. The precarious situation of education is not the result of lack of collective ambition or will. It is the result of the lack of foreseeable and sustainable resources.

We need additional funding. We are talking about $1.18 per child/day. $1.18, of which only $0.14 to be provided by donors.

We face a pivotal moment for education. And we have a choice to make: invest in the education of all children so our societies may be richer, our economies stronger, and our children's future ensured.

With the establishment of the IFEF, OIF has chosen to make a commitment, to invest in and ensure quality education for the children of francophonie.