Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia

Phnom Penh, 26 July 2021

H.E. Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta
President of Republic of Kenya
Nairobi

Excellency,

I have received your letter of the 20th of May 2021, informing me about your laudable initiative with the Financing Global Partnership for Education 2021-2025.

I salute the effort and I have signed the Political Statement.

Hun Sen

HEADS OF STATE CALL TO ACTION ON EDUCATION FINANCE AHEAD OF THE GLOBAL EDUCATION SUMMIT: FINANCING GPE 2021-2025

Preamble:

1. **We, Heads of State and Government of the Partner Countries of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), ahead of the GLOBAL EDUCATION SUMMIT: FINANCING GPE 2021-2025 to be co-hosted by the Governments of Kenya and the United Kingdom in London on 28th and 29th July 2021,** join together to reaffirm our commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) – to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all – and accordingly acknowledge the pivotal role the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) continues to play in achieving this goal.

2. **We recognize** that education is a necessary foundation for achieving all development goals, in particular health, gender equality, poverty reduction, peace and security, shared prosperity, resilient economies and climate action.

3. **We note** with concern the disruptive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education and recognize that even before the pandemic closed schools across the world, over 250 million children were out of school, and more than half of those in school were not meeting minimum learning standards. We recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the annual financing gap for education in low and middle-income countries from the estimated US$148 billion to almost US$200 billion, placing the future of millions of learners at risk.

4. **We acknowledge** the economic strain that COVID-19 is putting on our national economies and budgets, and take cognizance that education will play a vital role in ensuring effective response to the pandemic and long term recovery from the multitude of disruptions caused by COVID-19. Without adequate targeted responses, approximately $10 trillion of lifetime earnings could be lost for this cohort of learners — due to missed learning opportunities resulting from school closures and subsequent drop-out by some learners.

5. **We recognize** that to maintain the gains and momentum generated towards ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education-for-all over the last two decades of concerted global efforts and catalytic GPE support, and in order to guarantee quality education that strengthens human capital and provides the skills and knowledge needed to seize the opportunities of the 21st century, we must address the holistic needs of all learners, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized.

Our call to action to development partners:

6. **We recognize** that the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is the world's only partnership and fund dedicated entirely to helping children in lower-income countries get quality education, and thereby call upon world leaders, development partners and all GPE beneficiary countries to stand in solidarity and support the current GPE replenishment campaign, spearheaded by the Governments of Kenya and the United Kingdom, to raise the targeted minimum of US$5 billion to fund the next five-year cycle (2021-2025) of the GPE.

7. **We acknowledge** the role that bilateral and multilateral development partners, as well as the private sector, play in developing and strengthening domestic education strategies in GPE beneficiary countries and urge them to endeavour to align all support with the respective national education plans.

8. **We welcome** the IMF Executive Board's more robust support for new allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) to address short-term and long-term global liquidity needs and call upon all GPE Development Partners to support these efforts - including the efforts to establish a meaningful reallocation of SDRs to benefit countries in need of liquidity in these exceptional times. In addition, we call for bolder and broader action on debt relief and treatment, beyond the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative. We are convinced that these steps will facilitate equitable global recovery from the pandemic, provide direct liquidity to vulnerable developing countries - without adding to the debt burden, and enable implementation of the urgent measures and interventions needed to fully restore education and learning.

Our commitment:

9. We recognize that domestic financing is and will remain the most significant and sustainable form of funding for education. Taking cognizance that countries with the most successful education systems have consistently allocated at least 20% of annual total public expenditure to education, **we hereby pledge:**

   - **That GPE partner countries that spent more than 20% of their annual public expenditure on education before the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to protect this level of investment by maintaining education budgets above this level.**

   - **That GPE partner countries that previously spent below 20% of their annual total public expenditure on education will endeavour to progressively increase their domestic education expenditure towards the 20% global benchmark over the next five years (2021-2025).**

10. **We commit** to ensuring equity in access to quality education, including making available resources reach the most marginalized children, especially girls. We commit to prioritizing gender equity, with a specific commitment to improving girls' education and increasing investments for the inclusion of children with disabilities or other historically excluded groups.

11. **We commit** to placing greater emphasis on improving learning outcomes in our education systems, and employing new techniques and methodologies that have been proven to yield better results for our students. We recognize the role of technology in improving learning outcomes and commit to leveraging technology-supported learning to improve equity in access to education and to close the prevailing global digital divide.

12. **We commit** to continue investing in strengthening the capacities of our teachers, recognizing the instrumental role that they play in determining learning outcomes. We take this opportunity to express our gratitude and to wholesomely applaud our teachers for their incredible commitment and resilience in sustaining teaching and learning during the pandemic.

13. We also use this opportunity to applaud and commend all students for continuing to embrace the promise of education and learning in this modern age and for their remarkable resilience, adaptability and dedication during the challenging period of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

14. **We pledge** to ensure efficient use of available resources for education by improving accountability and transparency in the education sector, addressing systemic inefficiencies, including high repetition and drop-out rates, and eliminating gaps in the optimal management and distribution of teachers. We take note that savings accrued from the ensuing increased efficiency, coupled with additional global financing for education, will be instrumental towards strengthening the organizational capacity of our learning institutions and, in so doing, improving on service delivery.

The way forward:

15. We invite the GPE secretariat, together with all GPE development partners and stakeholders in education, to join us in monitoring the implementation of these pledges and commitments over the next five years (2021-2025). We intend to continue utilizing the platform offered by GPE to enhance best-practice exchange, mutual learning, partnership and collaboration among all GPE developing country partners.

16. With the aim of securing a stable and prosperous future for our children, **we adopt this Call to Action** and *raise our hands* in solidarity to fully fund education and strengthen education systems across our respective countries.