Half of the 57 million children of primary-school age who do not go to school in the world—a total of 28.5 million children—live in conflict-affected countries. Thus, despite the substantial progress made during the last decade in terms of expanding access to education, a substantial number of children still do not have access to school or do not complete primary education in these countries. The bulk of these vulnerable children live in the most difficult environments, reminding us that any major effort to achieve universal primary education should tackle the issue of out-of-school children in countries affected by conflict, natural disasters, complex humanitarian emergencies, internal strife and fragility. The challenge is not only to facilitate the entry of these children, girls and boys, into enabling school environments, but also to ensure that they are able to learn.

**Understanding education as a continuum**

Support for education needs must be guaranteed from the very first phase of an emergency in order for education services to adapt to early recovery interventions that will lead into transitional planning phases. All the components along the continuum need to be adequately addressed to ensure education responds to needs before, during and post crisis. In fact this should not be seen as a linear process, but more a complex set of challenges, that countries may be faced with at various times in their development. Evidence shows that underfunding of education systems has significant impact in the short, medium and long term.

**The pivotal role of education in ending conflict, in building resilience and building peace**

Access to quality education should be available to all children, girls and boys, even in the most difficult circumstances. During conflict, education can offer critical knowledge and skills that provide protection. In the longer term, education can help develop values and attitudes that prevent conflict and build peace. Education has the potential to build the capacities of children, parents, teachers, and community members to prevent, reduce, and cope with conflict and to promote equality and peace. Inequitable provision of services or biased curriculum and teaching methods can reinforce existing exclusion and stereotypes. Thus, education needs to be delivered effectively, equitably and in a conflict sensitive manner to ensure that it is a driver of peace rather than of war. By building enabling, resilient, peaceful education systems and learning environments children will have a chance to thrive instead of just survive.

**The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States**

“Business as usual” will not deliver major improvements in providing quality education in fragile states. The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States was signed by more than 40 countries and organizations at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan in December 2011. The New Deal represents a commitment to peacebuilding and state building goals; an agreement to support country-led and country-owned transitions out of fragility; and a commitment to building mutual trust and strong partnerships. Whilst discussions at Busan reaffirmed the commitments made in Paris and Accra, they also marked a greater recognition of the political nature of aid to fragile contexts. The Aid Effectiveness debate had traditionally been the reserve of donors. However, increasing awareness that effective aid depends on a commitment from all development actors has led to a broadening of membership over the years. The Global Partnership adheres also to the principles in the “International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State building – New Deal”. The Global Partnership adheres also to the OECD’s Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations, which provide a set of guidelines for actors involved in development co-operation, peacebuilding, state building and security in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.
The Global Partnership’s engagement in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts

Although every country context is different, where fragility or conflict exists, the Global Partnership’s aim is to promote a sustainable, inclusive education system that is simple and feasible. To this end, the Global Partnership seeks to encourage system improvements that are crisis and conflict sensitive, such as paying teacher salaries, making core materials available, and providing a safe place for teachers to teach and students to learn. Over the past years the Global Partnership has increased its engagement in fragile and conflict affected contexts.

GPE serves as a bridge for countries in emergency situations towards a more stable path, providing support for transitional education sector plans and programs. The Global Partnership’s operational framework aims to provide continuous support for developing country partners affected by conflict, supports the humanitarian community establishes emergency education plans that align with a nation’s education plan; and assists developing country partners to get back on track over the longer run. With this model, the Global Partnership supports partners’ efforts to ensure children continue to go to school, especially during crisis.

GPE provides flexible, adaptable and predictable funding in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. When the recent crisis erupted in the Central African Republic, the Global Partnership brought both humanitarian and development partners together to agree to a comprehensive emergency education plan. The Global Partnership allocated US$3.7 million in accelerated funding to restore education for nearly 120,000 children in the most conflict-affected areas of the country, with UNICEF managing the funds. Representing almost 16 percent of funding needed for humanitarian education, it was the earliest source of funding available. In Somalia, where the Global Partnership’s support led to the development of the education sector strategy plans, partners are helping the country move from emergency activities to building systems and institutional capacity for the implementation of three sub-national education sector plans. The Global Partnership has also supported a Large ‘Back to School Campaign’, aiming to enroll one million children into primary school. These efforts are enabling state building after years of instability.

Turning Policy into Action

The session during the GPE Replenishment Conference on Education in Fragile Contexts “Turning Policy into Action” will focus on this ‘GPE-model’ in fragile contexts and will be based on country examples such as those of Somalia and the Central African Republic. What are the challenges to support education in fragile contexts? How to build resilience, strengthen systems and overcome capacity issues? What is this GPE process, what are GPE partners doing in this regard, how has the funding contributed to a more coordinated, harmonized, and focused effort to assure continuum support to the education sector? What progress has been made regarding the development of an interim education sector strategy plan, system reforms and institutional strengthening and how does this contribute to ensure the Government is again in the driving seat? Lastly, how is coordination approved and how is complementariness with various partners enhanced?

The speakers on this panel will provide an overview of how their countries and organizations turn their policies on education in fragile contexts into action. They will make recommendations for what is needed at both country and global levels to further improve responses to education needs in fragile and conflict-affected contexts: an effort in order to assure continuity and support to education systems

Expected outcomes:

- A better understanding of the importance of supporting education in fragile and conflict-affected situations, including investing in education & cost benefits of education.
- Understanding the importance of bridging the gap between humanitarian and development responses in the education sector.
- Sharing evidence of good practices.
- Joint commitment to maintaining education continuity in early recovery situations and bridging humanitarian and development responses in the education sector: supporting resilience.
- Suggestions for further improvement of addressing education in fragile and conflict-affected situations including Education for Peacebuilding
Key speakers and invitees

**Moderator:**
- Henry Bonsu, MC of Pledging Conference

**Introduction notes:**
- Carol Bellamy, former Global Partnership for Education Board Chair

**Members of the Panel:**
- HE Gisele Bedan, Minister of National Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research, Central African Republic
- HE Issa Mohamed Ahmed (Gurase), Federal Minister of Education, Somalia
- H.E. Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman Federal Minister of Education of Pakistan (TBC)

**Respondents**
- Klaus Rudischhauser, Deputy Director General, European Commission for Development Cooperation [TBC]
- Tove Wang, CEO Save the Children Norway

**Youth Respondent:**
- Salathiel Ntakirutimana, Burundi, Youth Globe

**Targeted interventions**
- Natasha de Marcken Director, Office of Education, Bureau of Economic Growth, Education and Environment, USAID
- Suzanne Grant Lewis, Director a.i. UNESCO-IIEP
- Mary Joy Pigozzi, Managing Director, Educate a Child
- Jordan Naidoo, Senior Advisor, Education, UNICEF
- Greta Bossemmaier, Senior Associate Deputy Minister, Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada.
- Louise Aubin, Deputy Director Protection, UNHCR [TBC]

**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**
The session will begin with a short presentation to link the ECW side event and the high-level lunch on fragile states to the current session: assuring a continuum in education, focusing on rebuilding a resilient system.

After the introduction various Ministers of Education from fragile and conflict-affected countries will be interview to explain how they are rebuilding their education system, the importance of focusing on education for resilience and peacebuilding, consequences if education systems do not improve in a context of volatility, some of their successes and challenges.

This perspective from the country level will be followed by a panel of development partners, led by the external moderator, and will be asked to make some short statements related to:
- How to assure fragility is addressed in education sector analysis and planning
- Assuring education’s role in peacebuilding and resilience
- System and capacity strengthening

The statements will be followed by a dynamic conversation based on short interventions from respondents (identified) and questions to the audience, led by the moderator.

Participants are invited to make final commitments and recommendations.