



Transforming Education Knowledge Hub

[Summit closing press release](#)

Over 130 countries heed call to reboot education systems, offering new hope to world's children for a better future

UN Secretary-General issues call to action and vision for way forward at UN Summit

New York, 19 September – With COVID-19 exposing the fault-lines of education systems globally, more than 130 countries committed today to rebooting their education systems and accelerating action to end the learning crisis, at the UN Transforming Education Summit.

The Summit deals with a crisis in education that has seen some **147 million students missing over half of their in-person instruction**, since 2020. In 2021, **244 million children and young people were out of school**. The **pandemic has harmed the learning of more than 90 % of the world's children** – the largest disruption in history – with **half of all countries cutting their education budgets**, further deepening the crisis.

It is now estimated that **64.3 % of 10-year-olds are unable to read and understand a simple story**. This means that, in a few years, 1 out of 3 persons will be unable to understand this very text, while **840 million young people will leave school in their teens with no qualifications for the**

workplace of the future. Yet less than half of countries have strategies to help children catch up. If that fails to happen, these **students stand to lose \$10 trillion in earnings over their working lives.**

“Instead of being the great enabler, education is fast becoming the great divider,” [stated the UN Secretary-General António Guterres](#). “The rich have access to the best resources, schools and universities, leading to the best jobs while the poor – especially girls – face huge obstacles to getting the qualifications that could change their lives.”

130 countries commit to prioritize education

[The commitments came after 115 national consultations](#) that brought together leaders, teachers, students, civil society and other partners to gather collective recommendations on the most urgent asks.

Nearly half of the countries prioritized measures to address **learning loss**, while a third of countries committed to supporting the **psycho-social well-being** of both students and teachers. Two in three countries also referenced measures to offset the direct and indirect costs of education for **economically vulnerable communities**, and 75% of countries underlined the importance of gender-sensitive education policies in their commitments.

These statements underscored the role of education in achieving all the Sustainable Development Goals and linkages with the climate crises, conflict and poverty. Measures addressed COVID-19 recovery and getting back on track on the SDGs, while emphasizing the need for innovations in education to prepare the learners of today for a rapidly changing world.

Key initiatives established, including biggest-ever investment in education

The Secretary-General and Gordon Brown, the UN Special Envoy for Global Education, together announced the International Financing Facility for Education (IFFEd), the first-of-its-kind finance facility developed in partnership with the Governments of Sweden, the UK, the Netherlands as well as the Asian and African Development Bank. The IFFEd will provide an initial \$2 billion in additional affordable funding for education programs to be disbursed starting in

2023 and could unlock an extra \$10 billion of additional financing for education and skills by 2030.

UNESCO and UNICEF launched Gateways to Public Digital Learning, a global multi-partner initiative to create and strengthen inclusive digital learning platforms and content.

A Commitment to Action on Education in Crisis Situations was also revealed, as a commitment by member states and partners to transform education systems to better prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from crises.

Calls to action were also announced on addressing the learning crisis by boosting foundational learning, advancing gender equality through and in education, and a Greening Education Partnership developed in response to the Secretary-General's call that the climate crisis is 'a battle for our lives'.

Youth Declaration urges global leaders to act now

On the opening day of the 3-day Summit, youth advocates shared a [Youth Declaration](#) with the Secretary-General, laying out their collective recommendations to policymakers on the transformation they want to see, along with their commitments for action on education.

The Youth Declaration is a culmination of a months-long process of consultations, reflecting contributions from almost half a million young people. The Declaration states that "in order to redeem and remake the state of the world, we must first transform the state of education." The Declaration demands that decision-makers include youth in education-related policy design and implementation, as partners and not just beneficiaries. It also demands investment in youth leadership and in gender-transformative education.

Speaking at the launch, the Secretary-General underscored that if there was one seed to prevent climate change, violent conflict or poverty, it was education.

During the Summit, the Secretary-General was also handed an open call to leaders to expand the right to free education for all children. The call was facilitated by Avaaz and endorsed by UN Messenger of Peace and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Malala Yousafzai, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and climate

activist Vanessa Nakate, and human rights champions.

Secretary-General sets out education vision, paving way to Summit of the Future

The [Secretary-General's Vision Statement](#) released at the Summit lays out a path for education in the 21st century. It serves as an input to negotiations in preparation of the Summit of the Future which will be held at the UN General Assembly in 2024.

The statement insists on continued global mobilization after the success of the Summit, and on Member States and partners keeping the flame of transformation burning. “We must push forward together, with a focus on tangible actions where it matters most: on the ground, in the classroom, and in the experience of teachers and learners alike.”

The SDG 4 High-Level Steering Committee will be responsible for the [follow-up process](#) to further shape the future of education and meet 2030 SDG Education targets. The Committee will continue to monitor progress, promote and facilitate knowledge and practice exchange, engage youth, and champion cross-sector and multilateral cooperation.

Key Transforming Education Summit links:

- Website: <https://www.un.org/en/transforming-education-summit>
- Programme: <https://www.un.org/en/transforming-education-summit/programme>
- Follow live: [UN WebTV](#)
- Press kit: [Trello](#)

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