



TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

NATIONAL REPORT ON THE COMMITMENTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

DRAFT (v.3)

JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN, 12 August 2022

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1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the Guidance provided for the National Consultations in preparation for the UN Secretary General's upcoming Transforming Education Summit (TES) at the UN Headquarters in New York in September, 2022, the Ministry of General Education and Instruction teamed up with the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in South Sudan, UNESCO and UNICEF and staged the launch of the National Consultations Event at Crown Hotel in Juba, South Sudan, on 16th June, 2022. In addition, the Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, UNICEF, UNESCO and the government of Western Bahr el Ghazal State convened the second national consultation conference in Wau on Tuesday 26th July, 2022. Last but not least, the Ministry held the consultation meeting of the National Education Forum (also known as the Local Education Group) in Juba on Friday 5th August 2022.

The two consultation conferences and the consultation meeting of the National Education Forum discussed the challenges facing the Republic of South Sudan at length. These challenges include shortage of qualified teachers; the substantial number of unqualified teachers in the education system; gender inequality in the workforce; lack of sufficient numbers of schools; lack of school facilities; lack of enough textbooks; lack of learning resources for children and adolescents with disabilities; low national literacy rate of 34.5 per cent; lack of TVET learning opportunities; the recurrent floods, communal conflicts, and other emergencies; and inadequate domestic funding for both General Education and Higher Education.

The conference also reviewed, amended and endorsed the proposed national commitments, which provide an ambitious road map for transformation of education in the Republic of South Sudan. These transformative actions are intended to translate the South Sudan Vision 2040 into a palpable reality on the ground. Strategic Goal (1) of the Vision 2040 aims "To build an educated and informed nation" by 2040 and the national commitments are seen to be a vehicle for achieving this strategic goal and SDG 4 by 2030.

The stakeholders were appreciative of the initiative of the UN Secretary General and the support provided by UNESCO and UNICEF to the Ministry of General Education and Instruction and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology throughout the national consultation process. In addition, they recognised the urgent need to transform the education system of the Republic of South Sudan. All the crises happening in the world, including the global learning crisis, the COVID-19 Pandemic, wars and environmental disasters, are compelling reasons for all countries to commit ourselves to transformation of education, and achievement of SDG 4 for the benefit of Humanity and Planet Earth and South Sudan must do its part.

2. INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE, SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS

2.1. KEY CHALLENGES

The key challenges confronting the Republic of South Sudan are -

1. Although the Constitution, 2011, the General Education Act, 2012, and the Cabinet are for free General Education in public schools, there are still many public schools charging fees. One of the students, who spoke at the consultation conference raised the issue of fees: “Most of our parents are illiterate. How can they pay the school fees for their children? Children are denied access to examinations for non-payment.” The issue of fees is also limiting access to Higher Education for students from poor families in a country where the majority of the families is poor (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010).
2. In 2021, over 2.3 Million learners attended schools all over the Republic of South Sudan (MoGEI, 2021). However, over 2.8 Million children and youth are estimated to be out of school (UNESCO, 2018). So, the country is off track to provide quality education and lifelong opportunities for all its citizens.
3. Over 1 Million of the learners in schools in 2021, that is 47%, were female (MoGEI, 2021). The country has made a huge progress but has not achieved gender equality in compulsory education yet, leave alone tertiary education.
4. The vast majority of the learners, over 1.9 Million, were attending 4,226 primary schools and only about 150,000 were attending 501 secondary schools (MoGEI, 2021). So, there is internal inefficiency in the education system characterised by poor retention, progression and transition records. Therefore, the Republic of South Sudan needs to transform its education system to increase transition from primary school to secondary school and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).
5. According to the latest census, 1,397 schools were not operational in 2021 largely due to the conflict, lack of teachers, lack of learners, and natural disasters.
6. In terms of school safety, only 624 primary schools and 205 secondary schools in the country in 2021 were fenced (MoGEI, 2021). More than 5,000 schools are yet to be fenced. This is a mammoth challenge, especially given that about two-thirds of the schools in the country are open-air or semi-permanent schools.
7. Only over 300 schools have Healthcare Units (MoGEI, 2021). The Government is yet to construct Healthcare Units in the vast majority of the schools in the country.
8. Recent data suggests that the vast majority of schools do not have all the other necessary facilities, too. For example, 2,644 schools, that is 42% of the schools in the country, do not have toilets (MoGEI, 2021). In addition, the representatives of students who participated in

the voices sessions at the National Consultation conference highlighted the issue of lack of facilities, especially lack of toilets, libraries, playgrounds, laboratories, light and access to the Internet for university students.

9. In 2021, only 1,467 schools were supported by school feeding programmes. 4,820 schools in the country are still in need of school feeding support (MoGEI, 2021). This is a crucial intervention, especially given that recent experience of the school feeding programme has significantly improved attendance, retention, attainment, progression and transition in the target schools in the Republic of South Sudan.
10. Last but not least, only 11 primary schools in the whole country had equipment for pupils with disabilities (MoGEI, 2021). In addition, there are no new textbooks and Teacher Guides in Braille or Sign Language. So, the Republic of South Sudan is off track to achieve inclusion and mainstreaming of people with disabilities in its education system in accordance with Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, 2006.

These challenges need the urgent attention of the Government.

2.2. NATIONAL COMMITMENTS

The Republic of South Sudan will -

1. Promote the right to education in accordance with the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, General Education Act, 2012, the Higher Education Act, 2012, and ensure strict compliance with these laws to increase access to education.
2. Implement the policy reforms contained in the National General Education Policy, 2017-2027 related to access to Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, Secondary Education, Non-formal Education, including Alternative Education System (pp 30-37).
3. Promote gender equality in education, among others, through implementation of the reforms contained in the National General Education Policy, 2017-2027, the National Girls Education Strategy, 2018-2022 and National Girls Education Implementation Plan, 2018-2022, sustaining the Girls Education South Sudan (GESS) Programme and increasing access to and participation of girls and women in education (pp 38-40).
4. Promote Inclusive Education, among others, through implementation of the reforms contained in the National General Education Policy, 2017-2027, to increase and widen access to and participation of children and youth with disabilities in education in accordance with the Constitution, the General Education Act, 2012, and the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, 2006.

5. Provide equitable access to quality education and lifelong opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers in the Republic of South Sudan in accordance with the domestic law and the Djibouti Declaration, 2018.
6. Promote Peace Education, Global Citizenship and Human Rights Education.
7. Provide the necessary facilities in schools and improve the school learning environment.
8. Promote the right to health in schools throughout the country to ensure that all learners are safe and healthy.
9. Implement the National Home-Grown School Feeding Strategy, 2019, and substantially increase the numbers of learners benefiting from the School Feeding Programme.
10. Include the estimated 2.8 Million out-of-school children (UNESCO, 2018), pastoralist communities, who constitute 82% of the population of South Sudan, girls and women, children with disabilities, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees and asylum seekers in the education system (MOGEI, 2017).
11. Implement the COVID-19 Recovery Plan to prevent new cases and mitigate the impacts and effects of COVID-19 on education (both General Education and Higher Education).
12. Enable the provision of equitable access to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to all South Sudanese.
13. Provide leadership and demonstrate political will at the three levels of the Government, as a matter of urgency, “to implement high-impact, evidence-based and cost-effective interventions needed to deliver transformative education at scale with a priority on reaching the most marginalised” (UN, 2022).

We believe that these measures will “ensure that all learners have unhindered access to and participation in education, that they are safe and healthy, free from violence and discrimination, and are supported with comprehensive care services within school settings” (UN, 2022).

3. LEARNING AND SKILLS FOR LIFE, WORK AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

3.1. KEY CHALLENGES

The key challenges confronting the Republic of South Sudan are -

1. The literacy rate of the Republic of South Sudan is estimated to be 34.5% in 2020 (UNESCO, 2020). So, the majority of the population, that is 65.5%, is illiterate and needs access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities to learn and become literate (MoGEI, 2017).
2. There are 52 National Languages spoken in the Republic of South Sudan. Only, 28 of these National Languages are written and the rest are spoken languages that are at the risk of extinction.
3. English is the official language of the country. However, only the educated class can use English. The vast majority of the citizens is also illiterate in English.
4. The Republic of South Sudan has prioritised additional three foreign languages - Arabic, French, and Kiswahili- for social, economic and political integration purposes (MoGEI, 2013). The country is still far from achieving literacy in Arabic, French and Kiswahili, that is in spite of the fact that Arabic is spoken as a lingua Franca in almost all the 10 States.
5. Only 1,897 learners attended TVET programmes in 27 TVET institutions in the Republic of South Sudan in 2021 (MoGEI, 2022). Female learners were about a quarter of the learners, that is 26%. Given the fact that youth constitute the vast majority of the population of South Sudan and the demand for TVET is high, the country is not meeting the huge demand for skills for employment and entrepreneurship.
6. Although Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), including Environment Education, is included in the new National Curriculum (MoGEI, 2013) and the new Textbooks and Teacher Guides, implementation of the new Curriculum has started only recently and more transformative actions must be taken to promote ESD, among others, through School Environment Clubs (MoGEI, 2017). This is vitally important especially in light of the regular floods affecting Jonglei State and other States in the country in recent years.

7. Currently, over 6000 schools are using the recently distributed 4 Million textbooks and Teacher Guides; the learner-textbook ratio is 3:1. The country needs to print more textbooks to ensure that each learner has her/his own textbook to curb the spread of COVID-19 in the country. In addition, the Republic of South Sudan needs to digitalise its textbooks and Teacher Guides to ensure wide availability of textbooks and ease of access to them on a national platform.
8. The issue of class size was also raised by a representative of students: “Our classes are full; they have more than 100 children in a classroom. How are you expecting us to learn?” This is a nation-wide challenge and is due to shortage of schools and Teachers.

These challenges need the urgent attention of the Government.

3.2. NATIONAL COMMITMENTS

The Republic of South Sudan will -

1. Oversee implementation of the new competence-based South Sudan Curriculum Framework, 2013; print and increase the availability of the new textbooks and Teacher Guides; ensure their equitable distribution to all schools; and provide in-service training for all Teachers to teach to the new Curriculum (MoGEI, 2017).
2. Implement the National School Inspection Framework, 2012, to ensure that all schools, except international schools, are inspected regularly in accordance with Section 14 of the General Education Act, 2012; and ensure roads are constructed or rehabilitated to facilitate the visits to the schools.
3. Implement the National Examinations Policy, 2022-2030, the South Sudan Examinations Council Act, 2011, the National Examinations Bill, 2022, the National Examinations Regulations, 2022, and the National Learning Assessment Policy, 2022-2030 in order to improve public examinations and learning assessments, especially school-based learning assessments, to provide effective instruments for accurate measurement of learning outcomes and accountability.
4. Implement the National Youth and Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning Policy, 2021-2030, and the National Youth and Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning Strategy, 2021-2025, to promote literacy in English, French, Kiswahili, Arabic and the 52 National Languages as well as lifelong learning for all.
5. Implement the National TVET Policy, 2022-2030, to equip youth and adults with the necessary skills for employment and entrepreneurship.
6. Promote Education for Sustainable Development to empower our children and youth for the future of Humanity and Planet Earth, including through implementation of the policy

reforms related to the School Environment Clubs, ensure that more learners participate actively in these Clubs and promote environmental awareness, protection and sustainability in their schools, families and neighbourhoods throughout the country and play an active role in tackling Climate Change (MoGEI, 2017).

7. Improve the quality and security of the national examinations and provide training for Teachers to improve the quality of school-based learning assessments.
8. Promote parental and community involvement in education.
9. Implement the Higher Education Policy Framework, 2021-2025, to achieve the following strategic objectives -

“The following are the objectives to be achieved:

- Structurally transform all HEIs in the country into effective and efficient instruments for achieving quality higher education;
- Promote quality education in all HEIs through revised and refined curricula;
- Strive to improve and expand infrastructure befitting the status of world-class universities in South Sudan;
- Produce highly skilled human capital capable of promoting development in the country;
- Implement policies and decisions of the NCHE and relevant authorities in South Sudan;
- Promote research, science and technology, innovation and skills transfer;
- Accredite, authenticate and evaluate programs for private and foreign HEIs;
- Ensure quality assurance, comparability and recognition of higher education qualifications and facilitate credit transfer between recognised HEIs;”

We believe these measures will enable our education system to provide quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all learners to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for life, work and sustainable development.

4. TEACHERS, TEACHING AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION

4.1. KEY CHALLENGES

The key challenges confronting the Republic of South Sudan are -

1. In 2021, the Republic of South Sudan had 60,711 Teachers serving 2.3 Million learners in 6,287 schools (MoGEI, 2022). This figure indicate that there is a shortage of Teachers in the country and the Government needs to plug the gaps.
2. The vast majority of the Teachers (82%) was male and only 18% was female at the time when 53% of the learners was male and 47% of the learners was female (MoGEI, 2022). So, the workforce is predominantly male and many more female Teachers need to be recruited to achieve gender equality in the workforce and ensure that the girls in the education system (47%) are served, too.
3. Only 743 Teachers out of 46,782 primary Teachers in the country in 2021 and only 1,892 out of 6,644 Secondary Teachers have a University Degree (MoGEI, 2022). The majority of teachers have either a Diploma, Certificate or none (26,979 out of over 60,000) (MoGEI, 2022). The low qualifications of the majority of the Teachers demonstrate the need for in-service training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Teachers as well as restructuring and redeployment of the workforce to ensure Teacher professionalism and effectiveness as well as improve the quality of learning outcomes for all.
4. The majority of Teachers in primary schools (71%) and in secondary schools (74%) were not appointed by the Government in 2021 (MoGEI, 2022). There are too many volunteers and a clear need for the Government to increase its share of the workforce and ensure that the status of the long-term Volunteers is determined.
5. A significant minority of schools in the country did not have school Governing Bodies (17% of primary schools and 23% of secondary schools)(MoGEI, 2022). The Government must urgently close this gap in school governance.

These challenges need the urgent attention of the Government.

4.2. NATIONAL COMMITMENTS

The Republic of South Sudan will -

1. Screen the workforce to ensure all Teachers meet the minimum standards for recruitment of Teachers in accordance with the General Education Act, 2012, Section 21, ensure that the are registered and licensed in accordance with the Act, 2012.

2. Recruit additional 60,000 qualified teachers to meet the shortage of Teachers throughout the country (MOGEI, 2017).
3. Implement the provisions of the National General Education Policy, 2017-2027, related to affirmative action and increase the percentage of female teachers in the workforce from 17% to 50 % by 2030 and in so doing, exceed the minimum threshold of 35% representation of women in all government institutions.
4. Implement the provisions of the General Education Act, 2012, and the resolutions of the General Education Annual Review (GEAR) Conference, 2020 (MoGEI, 2020), related to pay and additional allowances for teachers to increase teacher pay, improve teacher morale and motivation, and improve the conditions of service for teachers to ensure the teaching profession is attractive and can attract the best.
5. Implement the National General Education Policy, 2017-2027, the National Teacher Education Policy, 2022-2030, and the National Teacher Education Strategy, 2022-2027, and provide pre-service (initial teacher training) and in-service training or continuous professional development (CPD) for Teachers throughout the country to increase the number of qualified teachers in schools, increase teacher professionalism and improve the quality of teaching and learning, and enhance the quality of learning outcomes for all learners.
6. Train School Inspectors and Supervisors to effectively inspect and supervise schools, provide feedback and promote the culture of innovation, continuous school improvement and excellence.
7. Implement the policy reforms related to management, school leadership and governance, ensure that all Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers and School Governors are trained and qualified to lead and govern our schools, are able to provide quality leadership, support teachers and increase teacher professionalism as well as promote the culture of innovation, continuous school improvement and excellence in all schools (MOGEI, 2017).
8. Establish and resource more County Training Centres and other teacher training institutions in the country and use them for the purpose of teacher training.
9. Amend the General Education Act, 2012, to raise the minimum qualification for recruitment of Teachers in the Republic of South Sudan to a Bachelor's Degree in Education or a Bachelor's Degree in any other discipline and a teaching qualification from a recognised institution.
10. Ensure that Teachers in ECD, Primary and Secondary schools throughout the country are university graduates as from 2025.
11. Encourage Teachers to play a more active role in educational research, participate in debates related to transformation of education in the country.

12. Provide scholarships and twining opportunities for Higher Education staff, Technicians and Administrators and create opportunities for study visits for HE teaching staff.
13. Encourage twining arrangements between Higher Education Institutions in South Sudan with their counterparts in the region and the world at large.
14. Review the salary structure for staff of HEIs and continue to improve their pay and conditions to improve retention.
15. Promote research to support achievement of the SDGs and other development objectives in the country.

We believe these transformative actions will enable our teachers, School Inspectors, Headteachers and School Governors to play their roles more effectively to substantially improve the quality education throughout the Republic of South Sudan.

5. DIGITAL LEARNING AND TRANSFORMATION

5.1. KEY CHALLENGES

The key challenges confronting the Republic of South Sudan are -

1. The Republic of South Sudan is still off track to achieve digital learning and transformation. In 2021, only 32 primary schools and 44 secondary schools had computer labs. The Government needs to supply schools with devices to promote digital learning and transformation.
2. Only 11 primary schools had access to the Internet. The Government needs to implement urgent transformative actions to address the issue of lack of connectivity and ensure universal access to the Internet in all schools.
3. Only 185 primary schools had electricity in 2021. The Government needs to implement urgent measures to provide electricity in all schools.
4. Although the new textbooks and Teacher Guides are available in digital format, almost all schools were depending on paper textbooks and Teacher Guides designed, printed and supplied to schools by the Ministry of General Education and Instruction and there was no access in the vast majority of schools to digital content in 2021.
5. Teachers and learners also lack digital skills and cannot engage in digital learning without training. So, the Government needs to implement a nation-wide teacher training programme to address the digital skills gap.

These challenges need the urgent attention of the Government.

5.2. NATIONAL COMMITMENTS

The Republic of South Sudan will -

1. Implement the policy reforms related to the use of ICT in Education (MOGEI, 2017, P49) to ensure that teachers and learners bridge the digital divide.
2. Provide training for Teachers to use ICT to improve the quality of teaching, to promote learning and improve learning outcomes for all learners.
3. Make arrangements for the procurement of devices for Teachers and learners in all public schools to overcome the challenge of acquiring devices and promote digital transformation.

4. Promote digital learning and transformation in Higher Education Institutions and schools, including by digitalising the new textbooks and Teacher Guides, encouraging Teachers and Learners to use open source digital learning resources and digital libraries and by building and maintaining free, public digital content and platforms to accelerate learning.
5. Create a conducive environment to promote digital connectivity and access to the Internet in all schools and HEIs by 2030.
6. Ensure digital learning initiatives benefit the most disadvantaged and hardest to reach groups of learners, including learners with disabilities or Special Educational Needs.
7. Encourage Teachers to use ICT to build a strong foundation for promoting lifelong learning as well as preparing children, youth and adults for a rapidly changing world and digitalis education lab our markets.
8. Develop policies and programmes for the provision of quality distance and online learning in higher education, with the use of technology, including the internet, online courses and other available modalities that meet the accepted quality standards to improve access.

We believe that digital learning and transformation is a prerequisite for us to achieve SDG 4 and the rest of the SDGs, the strategic goal (2) of the South Sudan Vision 2040 and to promote innovation, productivity and prosperity in our country.

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6. FINANCING EDUCATION

6.1. KEY CHALLENGES

The key challenges confronting the Republic of South Sudan are -

1. Domestic financing for General Education and Higher Education has been below the statutory minimums of at least 10% and at least 5% respectively since the Independence of the Republic of South Sudan in 2011. The annual investment in education is far less than the proposed 25% in the Paris Declaration, 2021 and well below the recent annual allocations to education made by Malawi and Botswana, which are 20% and 30% respectively. For this reason, many voices at the consultation conference in Juba called upon the Government to invest more resources in Education.
2. In 2019, 2046 primary schools and 191 secondary schools received Capitation Grants. Still many public schools are collecting funds from the Parents and Guardians and education provided by public schools is not free as provided for in the Constitution, 2011, and the General Education Act, 2012.
3. In 2019, 2,254 primary schools and 162 secondary schools received Teacher Incentives. However, these incentives are very low, ranging from 6,000 SSP to ECD Teachers to 8,000 SSP for Secondary Teachers. Almost 30,000 Primary Teachers were paid incentives equivalent to US Dollars 40 per month by the EU for 18 months from 2018 but the current funding is limited to Teachers working in hard-to-reach schools only. So, the issue of low salaries for Teachers remains outstanding and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
4. In 2022, 1,971 primary schools and 159 secondary schools received Cash Transfers for Girls paid with funds from the UKAID. This is the second phase of Girls Education South Sudan (GESS) Programme, which started in 2019 and will continue for five years or so. The first phase of GESS was implemented from 2013 to 2018 and it was a huge success story.
5. 2,563 primary schools and 238 secondary schools received salaries from the Government. The salaries of Teachers, however, have been affected by depreciation of the South Sudanese Pound and its poor performance against the US Dollar in the domestic currency exchange market. Therefore, the Government needs to substantially increase the salaries of Teachers to make the teaching profession attractive and lure those teachers who deserted back into the profession.
6. In 2021-2022, the annual budget allocations for General Education and Higher Education were increased to 14.5%. However, these annual budgetary allocations are not enough to fund the national priorities. The Republic of South Sudan needs to invest much more finances in Education to be able to achieve SDG 4.

6.2. NATIONAL COMMITMENTS

The Republic of South Sudan will -

1. Increase annual domestic budget allocation from at least 10%, provided for in the General Education Act, 2012, Section 15(b) to at least 20% in accordance with the Paris Declaration, 2021, and the Heads of State and Government Call on Education Finance, 2021, and Our Common Agenda: The Report of the Secretary General, 2021.
2. Increase annual domestic budget allocation from 5%, provided for in the Higher Education Act, 2012, to at least 10% in accordance with the Paris Declaration, 2021, and the Heads of State and Government Call on Education Finance, 2021, and Our Common Agenda: The Report of the Secretary General, 2021.
3. Improve budget execution and discipline to ensure that the annual allocation and spending for Education is in accordance with the Approved Annual Budget and the Appropriate Act.
4. Promote equity, efficiency and accountability for education finances in accordance with the Public Financial Management and Accountability Act, 2011, and the Public Procurement Act, 2020.
5. Mobilise more finances to support transformation of education in the country, including from donors and through tax reforms.
6. Solicit funding to develop and manage Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (MoHEST, 2021).
7. Promote private sector role in the higher education, international research, and bilateral donors' investment in higher education in South Sudan (MoHEST, 2021).
8. Establish the Student Support Fund and ensure its smooth operation to provide financial support to students as well as HEIs.
9. Strive to improve and expand infrastructure befitting the status of world-class universities in South Sudan; and
10. Collect, collate and disseminate education financing data for policy-making, annual reporting and public accountability.

We know our current economic situation will not allow us to increase the overall annual budget envelope but we will ensure that education is prioritised and at least 30% of the budget is allocated to and spent on Education annually from 2023 to 2030.

7. CONCLUSION

The Republic of South Sudan is facing huge and multiple challenges and must implement very ambitious national commitments to promote education transformation throughout the country. The national commitments outlined in the report are the bare minimums for reforming the education system to provide quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all and achieving SDG 4.

The country has committed itself to the 2030 Agenda for development at the UN General Assembly in September 2015. However, it has not been able to achieve the desired progress and is off track to achieve SDG 4 and the rest of the SDGs. So, a business as usual approach cannot be adopted in this situation. Instead, the Republic of South Sudan needs to demonstrate ambition, urgency and political will and leadership to achieve the desired acceleration and education transformation.

The political, security and economic crises make the mission of the Republic of South Sudan extremely difficult. However, the country is determined to achieve SDG 4 and the rest of the SDGs but it can only manage if it is given the support it needs by the donor community. With increased domestic investment in Education and donor support, the Republic of South Sudan can make the dreams of its children and youth come true. So, investing in Education means investing in our children and youth, who are the future of the Republic of South Sudan. It is imperative for South Sudan and its friends to invest in the future.

8. ANNEXES

8.1. OPENING REMARKS OF HON. AWUT DENG ACUIL, MINISTER OF GENERAL EDUCATION AND INSTRUCTION, REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL CONSULTATION CONFERENCE ON TRANSFORMING EDUCATION IN SOUTH SUDAN AT CROWN HOTEL, JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN, 16TH JUNE 2022

Your Excellency, the UN Resident Coordinator,
Your Excellencies,
All the other protocols are respected and observed,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the launch of the National Consultation and thank you for your attendance. Today, we are providing you with a good opportunity to discuss our National Commitments for Transforming Education in the Republic of South Sudan. So, I want to encourage you to participate actively in the discussions. We are going to convene more consultation meetings to give the stakeholders more opportunities to contribute to and shape our National Commitments.

The Republic of South Sudan is required, like every other Member State of the UN, to announce its commitments in the five thematic action tracks: (1) Inclusive, Equitable, Safe and Healthy Schools; (2) Learning and Skills for Life, Work and Sustainable Development; (3) Teachers, Teaching and the Teaching Profession; (4) Digital Learning and Transformation; and (5) Financing Education.

The Republic of South Sudan has made significant progress but is still facing huge challenges. We must do what it takes to overcome these challenges and achieve SDG 4. The right to education is enshrined in the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011. Yet, free education is not free and many children are denied their right to education. We will not allow those who violate the Constitution and the General Education Act, 2012, to go unpunished. We must encourage and allow all children, youth and adults to go to school and start learning, including the estimated 2.4 Million out-of-school children (UNESCO, 2018), our pastoralist communities, who constitute the vast majority of our population, girls and women, children with disabilities, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees and asylum seekers. All must be given opportunities to become successful lifelong learners. We must overcome the COVID-19 factor and other challenges hindering their participation and help them go to school and realise their potentials.

Again, we need to do our part to address the Global Learning Crisis and enable our citizens to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary for work, life and sustainable development. We have developed a new National Curriculum, printed and distributed over 2 Million textbooks and Teacher Guides, and Trained more than 30,000 Teachers to deliver the new Curriculum. We have developed the National Inspection Framework and trained more than 8,000 School Inspectors to inspect our schools and have completed the pilot. We have trained School Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers to improve the quality of school management and leadership.

Although we have made progress in literacy over the years, we still have a national literacy rate of only 34.5% and we need to do more to promote literacy in English, French, Kiswahili, Arabic and the 52 National Languages as well as lifelong learning for all. Our youth need opportunities for Technical Education and Training (TVET) and they are not getting enough. We must implement transformative actions to equip youth and adults with the necessary skills for work.

We have been administering school-based learning assessment in our schools and we have been conducting national examinations for Primary 8 and Senior 4 successfully for many years since 2013 and 2016 respectively. However, our Teachers and National Examinations Council need more capacity building to achieve excellence. So, we need to take transformative actions to improve public examinations and school-based learning assessments to provide effective instruments for accurate measurement of learning outcomes and accountability.

Given the effects and impacts of Climate Change, we need to urgently promote Education for Sustainable Development to empower our children and youth for the future of Humanity and Planet Earth, including through the School Environment Clubs, to enable our citizens to play an active role in tackling Climate Change.

We have also made progress in addressing the serious issue of shortage of Teachers in the Republic of South Sudan. In 2021, we had over 60,000 Teachers in our schools. However, we need to recruit at 60,000 more Teachers, especially female Teachers to increase the percentage of women in the workforce. By 2030, we must increase the percentage of female teachers in the workforce to 50 %. We also need to improve pay and conditions for our Teachers based on the resolutions of the General Education Annual Review (GEAR) Conference, 2020. Improve pay and conditions will improve teacher morale and motivation and make the teaching profession attractive. We also need to create more opportunities pre-service and in- service training for Teachers throughout the country to increase the number of qualified teachers in schools, to increase teacher professionalism and to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and learning outcomes for all learners.

The Republic of South Sudan must promote digital learning and transformation, too. The Government need to overcome the challenges of devices, digital content, teacher training, connectivity, and electricity and ensure that teachers and learners bridge the digital divide. We must encourage and support our Teachers to use ICT to build a strong foundation for promoting lifelong learning as well as preparing our children, youth and adults for a rapidly changing world and highly digitalised labour markets.

Of course, financing education is critical to our success. We need more money, Honour Minister of Finance and Planning. Our challenges are many and our transformation agenda is going to be very ambitious. So, we an annual domestic budget allocation of at least 20% from 2022 to 2030 and beyond. We cannot achieve the Strategic Goal (1) of the South Sudan Vision 2040 and build an educated and informed nation without investing more in General Education. We need more that 20% of the annual budget to transform education in our country and achieve SDG 4. Let us invest more in our children and youth, let us invest more in the future

of our country such that it becomes a knowledge-based, tiger economy like Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and United Arab Emirates.

Thank you.

8.2. TALKING POINTS OF H.E. SARA BEYSOLOW NYANTI, RESIDENT COORDINATOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, SOUTH SUDAN AT THE LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL CONSULTATION CONFERENCE IN PREPARATION FOR THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL'S TRANSFORMING EDUCATION SUMMIT (TES), NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 2022, CROWN HOTEL, JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN, 16 JUNE 2022

Honorable Madam Awut Deng Achuil, Minister of General Education and Instruction

Honorable Ministers from different Ministries

Honorable Undersecretaries and senior government officials representing different Ministries

University Professors and Teachers

The Heads and Representatives of Diplomatic Missions

Dear Students

The Development Partners

The UN Country Team colleagues

The members of the Media

Ladies, Gentlemen and Children, all protocol observed.

- I appreciate all the efforts made by the Government of South Sudan to improve access to and quality of education during the recent years despite the number of challenges including the COVID 19 pandemic.
- I congratulate the education ministries and teachers for continuing education through radio and other means working tirelessly during closure of schools. Also, the number of girls accessing education is significantly increasing over the time.
- The presentation made by the National Education Expert has clearly reflected that South Sudan's performance towards the SDG 4 remains very deficient, as it shows major challenges and deteriorating trends.
- The situation of achieving other inter-linked SDGs including of poverty, hunger, economic growth, gender equality, and peace also remains critical.
- The presentation on the state of education is very clear, we have a lot of work to do on transforming the education system. It is important we get it right because education is a key foundation of State building, and it is important we need to get it right.

My main message today

- Education is a fundamental right for every child regardless of who or where they are. We must make it our mission to ensure that every South Sudanese child has access to quality education.
- A lack of quality education means young adults are not acquiring requisite skills and have few opportunities to earn a livelihood. South Sudan has a very young population, and the

lack of skills and opportunities leads to disenfranchisement among our young people. This creates a risk for building a lasting peace and for sustainable development.

- This means South Sudan continues to be at risk of not achieving the SDGs. We have eight years to the 2030 target and if we must reverse the current trajectory for education target, we must take some bold steps.
- I acknowledge the current increase in budget allocation to education from about 5% in 2019-2020 to 8.4% in 2022, but still, it is not adequate. We must allocate more resources for education as the country is having more than 70% young population below the age of 29 years, and that is the international benchmarks too. We must ensure that the allocated annual budget is received by the education ministries and spent prudently to address prioritised needs.
- We must urgently address the issue of teachers. Teachers are the backbone of the education system. We must recruit, train, and pay teachers.
- We must deploy teachers to hard-to reach areas and must make the teaching profession attractive for young people, especially young women.
- We must invest in infrastructure in education and create a conducive learning environment for our children, especially girls. Many schools are not functioning leaving many children with no access to education. This will help us reduce the 2.8 million children who are out of school.
- We must build on the newly adopted competency-based curriculum and strengthen the capacity of the system to deliver quality education to ensure children acquire foundation early in school and have the necessary 21st century job skills to earn a dignified livelihood.
- We must invest in getting girls into schools and keeping them in schools. We must create multiple pathways for learning that work for children out of schools, especially girls. We must address violence in and around schools and make schools safe.
- We must focus on strengthening access to higher education including TVET, and STEM for girls and last but not least, we must develop strategies to address the perennial impact of emergencies on education.
- The coronavirus pandemic has taught us that we need to build resilient education systems that can guarantee continuity of learning even during crisis. Digitalization of education could be one of the options, however it needs to be contextualized as the country is far behind in use of internet and technology.

Conclusion

- The upcoming Transforming Education Summit provides us an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment and take action to put South Sudan on the right path to achieve quality education for all children.

- Our world is experiencing a global learning crisis that, in a highly unequal dynamic, is depriving hundreds of millions of children and young people of their right to quality education, leaving many of the education-related targets of the SDGs well off track.
- Finally, this national consultation event is a kick start of organizing in-depth series of thematic consultations among key stakeholders as well as rightsholders to review the actions, analyze the gaps including financing gaps that need special attention and identify innovative actions to boost the education agenda.
- I believe that this workshop will give a framework of national commitments to accelerate progress on education to meet 2030 agenda and importantly for the people of South Sudan.
- On behalf of the UN country team, I hope that the national consultations will result into national commitments that fully reflect the education needs of the country that can ultimately contribute to building peace, harmony, and prosperity of South Sudan.

Thank you.

8.3. REMARKS OF HON. AWUT DENG ACUIL, MINISTER OF GENERAL EDUCATION AND INSTRUCTION, AT THE NATIONAL CONSULTATION CONFERENCE ON TRANSFORMING EDUCATION, UNIVERSAL GAB HOTEL, WESTERN BAHR EL GHAZAL, WAU, TUESDAY 26TH JULY 2022

Hon. Governor, Western Bahr el Ghazal,
Hon. Deputy Governor, Western Bahr el Ghazal,
Hon. Ministers of Education of Greater Bahr el Ghazal
Hon. Undersecretary, Ministry of General Education and Instruction
Ms Hamida Lesseko, Representative, UNICEF-South Sudan
Ms Grace Wongani, Chief of Education, UNICEF
Dr Tap Raj Pant, Chief of Education, UNESCO-South Sudan,
Academics from our Universities
Directors General and senior government
Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very good morning to you all.

I welcome all of you to this important launch of the national consultation of transforming education. I thank you, especially UN colleagues and colleagues from the States for your attendance. The UN Secretary General has invited South Sudan, like any other Member State of the UN, to consult its stakeholders on its commitments to transforming education.

We had our first national consultation in Juba on 26 June 2022. The Juba consultation, graced by Ms Sara Nyanti, the Resident Coordinator of UNMISS, was well attended. Representatives of students, teachers, academics, partners and universities were present. The consultation in Juba was able to inform government's commitments to education which I presented at the pre-summit transforming education summit recently held in UNESCO, Paris, France.

The purpose of today's consultation is to provide you in Greater Bahr el Ghazal with an opportunity to discuss our national commitments for Transforming Education in South Sudan.

Therefore, I want to encourage you, especially the teachers and students, to participate actively in the discussions. Your inputs will be incorporated in the final commitment document that will be presented by the Vice President in the Transforming Education Summit in New York on the 19 September.

This consultation will focus on highlighting commitments in five thematic action tracks:

- (1) Inclusive, Equitable, Safe and Healthy Schools;
- (2) Learning and Skills for Life, Work and Sustainable Development;
- (3) Teachers, Teaching and the Teaching Profession;
- (4) Digital Learning and Transformation; and
- (5) Financing Education.

South Sudan has made significant progress in education, but is still facing huge challenges in education. We must do what it takes to overcome these challenges and achieve sustainable development goal (SDG) 4. The right to education is enshrined in our Transitional Constitution that children go to school free of charge. Yet, education is not free and many children are denied their right to education. We will not allow those who violate the Constitution and the General Education Act, 2012, to go unpunished. We must encourage and allow all children, youth and adults to go to school and start learning, including the estimated 2.8 million out-of-school children (UNESCO, 2018), our pastoralist communities, who constitute the vast majority of our population, girls and women, children with disabilities, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees and asylum seekers. All must be given opportunities to become successful lifelong learners. We must overcome the COVID-19 factor and other challenges hindering their participation and help them go to school and realise their potentials.

Again, we need to do our part to address the Global Learning Crisis and enable our citizens to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary for work, life and sustainable development. We have developed a new National Curriculum, printed and distributed over 2 million textbooks and Teacher Guides, and oriented more than 30,000 teachers on the new textbooks. We have developed the National Inspection Framework and piloted it in schools in Central Equatoria, Jonglei and Western Bahr el Ghazal. All these efforts, we trust, will lead to quality of education in South Sudan.

Although we have made progress in literacy over the years, we still have a national literacy rate of only 34.5% and we need to do more to promote literacy in English, French, Kiswahili, Arabic and all our national languages as well as lifelong learning for all. Our youth need opportunities for TVET and they are not getting enough. We must implement transformative actions to equip youth and adults with the necessary skills for work.

We have been administering school-based learning assessment in our schools and we have been conducting national examinations for Primary 8 and Senior 4 successfully for many years since 2013 and 2016 respectively. However, our Teachers and National Examinations Council need more capacity building to achieve excellence. So, we need to take transformative actions to improve public examinations and school-based learning assessments to provide effective instruments for accurate measurement of learning outcomes and accountability.

Given the effects and impacts of Climate Change, we need to urgently promote Education for Sustainable Development to empower our children and youth for the future of Humanity and Planet Earth, including through the School Environment Clubs, to enable our citizens to play an active role in tackling Climate Change.

We have also made progress in addressing the serious issue of shortage of Teachers in the Republic of South Sudan. In 2021, we had over 60,000 Teachers in our schools. However, we need to recruit at 60,000 more Teachers, especially female Teachers to increase the percentage of women in the workforce. By 2030, we must increase the percentage of female teachers in the workforce to 50 %. We also need to improve pay and conditions for our Teachers based on the resolutions of the General Education Annual Review (GEAR) Conference, 2020. Improve pay and conditions will improve teacher morale and motivation and make the teaching profession

attractive. We also need to create more opportunities pre-service and in- service training for Teachers throughout the country to increase the number of qualified teachers in schools, to increase teacher professionalism and to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and learning outcomes for all learners.

South Sudan must promote digital learning and transformation, too. The Government need to overcome the challenges of devices, digital content, teacher training, connectivity, and electricity and ensure that teachers and learners bridge the digital divide. We must encourage and support our Teachers to use ICT to build a strong foundation for promoting lifelong learning as well as preparing our children, youth and adults for a rapidly changing world and highly digitalised labour markets.

Of course, financing education is critical to our success. We need more money. In Juba consultation, the issue of finances of education came up. The Honourable Deputy Minister of Finance and Planning committed the government to support education. You have seen lately the Ministry of General Education and Instruction has improved state conditional transfers. So, we an annual domestic budget allocation of at least 20% from 2022 to 2030 and beyond. 88% of our budget is transferred to the states and the three administrative areas.

However, this is not enough. Thus, in the conference in Paris, partners and donors raised the issue of finances. This is because of our challenges are many and our transformation agenda is going to be very ambitious. We cannot achieve the Strategic Goal (1) of the South Sudan Vision 2040 and build an educated and informed nation without investing more in General Education. We need more that 20% of the annual budget to transform education in our country and achieve SDG 4. Let us invest more in our children and youth, let us invest more in the future of our country such that it becomes a knowledge-based, tiger economy like Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and United Arab Emirates. This will require contributions from the states and national business communities in education.

I wish you successful deliberations and consultation.

Thank you.

8.4. OPENING REMARKS OF HON. SARAH CLETO RIAL, GOVERNOR OF WESTERN BAHR EL-GHAZAL STATE, AT THE CONSULTATION CONFERENCE ON TRANSFORMING EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN, WAU, WESTERN BAHR EL GHAZAL STATE, 26th JULY 2022

PROTOCOLS AND GREETINGS

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Wau, Western Bhar el Ghazal State (WBGs) for the Transforming Education Summit. I am particularly excited that the Greater Bahr el Ghazal consultations are held in Wau. Welcome! I hope you get the enabling environment for you to deliberate on critical issues of education in our states and in our country at large.

Hon. Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today as we move with this national consultation, this is a good opportunity:

- To be open and have honest conversation about the situation we are going through. Talk about successes and build on them. Point out the challenges to address and suggest solutions.
- To look at how we are doing in the education sector.
- To identify areas where we need reforms.
- To agree with our partners on common goals and commit to working together.

Students face many challenges throughout their education journey. Overcrowded classrooms, lack of furniture, infrastructure, educational materials including textbooks. Students do not know how to use a computer or access learning materials on the internet. We need to enhance the education standards.

To transform education, teachers must be able to assess students effectively. We need to improve the learning and teaching environment for public schools particularly by availing basic school facilities and materials.

Teachers must be trained and encouraged to use new ways to teach - such as gamification, technology, learning beyond the classroom, using projects to build teamwork. Students are independent learners - let them be creative. Encourage critical thinking.

Modern teaching method is more activity-based and centers the learner's mind which involves them entirely into the process of learning. That will make learning more fun, and learners actively participate in the whole process to build their knowledge and sharpen their skills.

COVID 19 pandemic complicated things for us where everyone is expected to wash hands and maintain social distance. Hygiene and sanitation practices in the schools are important, therefore construction of toilets and water supply units are part of the transformation. Children are our future, and we must invest in education to transform the future of South Sudan. We must pay special focus on girls because they are often left behind, but we are aware that both boys and girls must have free, equitable, and quality education.

If we get education right, a lot of the challenges that we are facing will be addressed. Illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, gender inequality, violent communities - just to mention a few. But education is the key to success.

The role of families, parents and communities should also be incorporated in raising a whole child. Addressing the issues that negatively affect girls' education such as gender-based violence, teenage/unwanted pregnancies, early marriage. Families must support their children. Discipline them, but also let the child be a child. No child should be left behind. All children must go to school and every child must get some level of education.

WBGS, for instance, has a low retention rate of school aged children and we will be hearing from the different presentations from all the states. At lower classes enrolment is high however numbers dwindle when students reach the upper classes. Education quality is very low among the majority of the students.

As you discuss, these are some of the priorities that I'm sure you will address:

- Access to schools and education at all levels (pre-school, primary, secondary, university). In Wau County for instance classes are up to Grade 7. While there are many primary schools in the state, there are not many high schools which make it difficult for children to continue their education.
- Ensuring access to education from early childhood to adolescence, with a focus on the poorest, displaced, disadvantaged children, and children with disabilities.
- Prioritizing and strengthening foundational skills (e.g. basic literacy and numeracy) transferable skills (e.g. critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity) and at later stage digital education.
- The most marginalized girls and boys and those affected by long-lasting war and insecurity and humanitarian situation, are provided with inclusive and equitable quality education and learning opportunities.
- We also need to increase the school enrollment rate, enhancing the teaching-learning environment, improving the hygiene level, and reducing gender disparity in schools.
- And many more.

To my colleagues, Minister of Education in WBGS and all the ministers from the different states, let us prioritize our children.

Before concluding, I would like to express our profound gratitude to Hon. Awut Deng Acuil – Minister of General Education and Instruction, Hon. Deng Deng Yai – National Education Consultant, UNESCO and UNICEF staff who made this day possible. I commend you all for being thorough professionals and truly focused individuals. I wish you to continue to foster that team spirit.

To all the participants – educators (professors and teachers of different levels), students, civil society - I cannot express enough the depth of my gratitude for your support and your roles in this consultation. To the distinguished presenters and facilitators, I say thank you for making

this Summit a success. Thank you for coming all the way to Wau to making this gathering a reality.

Please, use this day and space to explore the numerous potentials for the sake of our children. Speak your minds and share your hopes and dreams for Greater Bahr el Ghazal and South Sudan. We look forward to the results of this consultation and we, as the government, will support it to promote transformation in our education systems.

With these few remarks, I would like to officially declare this Transforming Education Summit open for consultation.

Thank You

BY: H.E. SARAH CLETO RIAL, GOVERNOR
WESTERN BAHR EL GHAZAL STATE/WAU

8.5. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY HAMIDA RAMADHANI LESSEKO, UNICEF COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE ON BEHALF OF THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN SOUTH SUDAN AT THE NATIONAL CONSULTATION CONFERENCE, WAU, WESTERN BAHR EL-GHAZAL STATE, 26th JULY 2022

Honorable Madam Awut Deng Achuil, Minister of General Education and Instruction
Honorable Sarah Cleto Rial, Governor Western Bahr el Ghazal State
Honorable Zakaria Joseph Garang, Deputy Governor, Western Bahr el Ghazal State
Honorable State Ministers of Education of Greater Bahr el Ghazal
Heads and Representatives of UN Agencies in South Sudan
Professors at our Universities
Representatives of Development Partners, CSOs, Students, and Teachers
Senior Government Officials
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen
All Protocols observed

Honorable Minister, Honorable Governor, Distinguished Members, I bring you greetings from Juba. On behalf of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations Development System in South Sudan, Ms. Sara Beysolow Nyanti, I would like to share a few remarks on the current education situation in South Sudan.

- I want to start by congratulating the Minister and her Ministry for the successful launch of the Consultations on Transforming Education Summit in Juba on 16 June 2022.
- The discussions at the Juba consultation were both enriching and sobering on the state of our education situation, which remains dire.
- Our students particularly called for urgent action by all stakeholders to reform the sector to salvage the situation and ensure our children receive education that can prepare them to compete in the regional and global labor and job market.
- I also appreciate all the efforts made by the Government of South Sudan and stakeholders at both national and state level to improve access to and quality of education during the recent years despite the number of challenges including the COVID 19 pandemic.
- I particularly appreciate the efforts by all stakeholders through the leadership of the ministry to continue education through radio and other means during closure of schools.
- As acknowledged at the Juba consultation in June, the education situation in the country remains dire and South Sudan's performance towards the SDG 4 remains very deficient.

- For example, as of 2021, there are only 60,711 teachers (82.3% Male, 17.7% Female) in all levels of education (Alternative Education System, Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary) in the country ----- 46,782 primary teachers (19,944 have certificates; 1,402 have Diplomas; 743 have Degrees; and 24,693 have no formal qualification). 6,644 secondary teachers (1,682 have certificates, 784 have Diplomas, 1,892 have degrees and 2,286 have no formal qualification). 2,327,547 learners (53.1% Male, 46.9% Female) at all levels including TVET and University. Only 27 TVET institutions in the country (4 in Western Bhar el Ghazal particularly). Of the 6,287 schools in the country (only 57.8% have latrines while 42.1% do not have).
- As you can see from the above statistics, the state of education in the country is very clear, we have a lot of work to do on transforming the education system. It is important we get it right because education is a key foundation of State building, and critical to achieving other inter-linked SDGs including of poverty, hunger, economic growth, gender equality, and peace.

My main message today

- Education is a fundamental right for every child regardless of who or where they are. We must make it our mission to ensure that every South Sudanese child has access to quality education NOT only in Juba but all states including in Greater Bahr el Ghazal.
- A lack of quality education means our children and youth are not acquiring requisite skills and have few opportunities to earn a livelihood. South Sudan has a very young population, and the lack of skills and opportunities leads to disenfranchisement among our young people. This creates a risk for building lasting peace and for sustainable development.
- It also means South Sudan continues to be at risk of not achieving the SDGs. We have eight years to the 2030 target and if we must reverse the current trajectory for education target, we must take some bold steps.
- Our national and state plans should reflect these realities. We must allocate more resources for education delivery as the country is having more than 70% young population below the age of 29 years. We must ensure that the allocated annual budgets at both national and state levels is received by the education ministries and spent prudently to address the prioritized needs.
- We must urgently address the issue of teachers. Teachers are the backbone of the education system. We must recruit, train, and pay teachers.
- We must deploy teachers to hard-to reach areas and must make the teaching profession

attractive for young people, especially young women.

- We must invest in infrastructure in education and create a conducive learning environment for our children, especially girls. Many schools are not functioning or were destroyed during the conflict leaving many children with no access to education. Investing in education infrastructure and conducive learning environment will help us reach those children who are out of school.
- We must strengthen TVET and build on the newly adopted competency-based curriculum and strengthen the capacity of the system to deliver quality education to ensure children acquire foundation early in school and have the necessary 21st century job skills to compete in the globalized economy and earn a dignified livelihood.
- We must invest in getting girls into schools and keeping them in schools. We must create multiple pathways for learning that work for children out of schools, especially girls. We must address violence in and around schools and make schools safe and develop strategies to address the perennial impact of emergencies on education.
- The coronavirus pandemic has taught us that we need to build resilient education systems that can guarantee continuity of learning even during crisis. We saw the importance of Radios during Covid school closure. Digitalization of education could be one of the options, however, it needs to be contextualized as the country is far behind in use of internet and technology.

Conclusion

- The upcoming Global Transforming Education Summit in September provides us an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment and take action to put South Sudan on the right path to achieve quality education for all children.
- I hope this consultation will provide you the platform to interrogate the education situation in the country particularly at your states, analyze the gaps including financing gaps and identify/propose innovative actions to boost the education agenda to accelerate progress on SDG4 ---Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all in South Sudan.
- On behalf of the UN Country Team, I hope that the Wau consultations will contribute and inform the national commitments on Transforming Education in the country that can ultimately contribute to building peace, harmony, and prosperity of South Sudan.

Thank you.

8.6. CLOSING REMARKS OF THE UNICEF REPRESENTATIVE AT THE NATIONAL CONSULTATION CONFERENCE ON TRANSFORMING EDUCATION IN SOUTH SUDAN, WAU, 26TH JULY, 2022

Hon. Awut Deng Acuil, Minister MoGEI

Government Ministers, DGs, Directors

Representative of UN agencies, and INGOs/NGOs

Parents/Teachers

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen

Good morning,

As one of the youngest nations in the world, South Sudan symbolizes hope – for peace and a hope for its youth who will steer this country into its future.

However, the current trends in education in South Sudan show that our youth face a steep uphill battle.

Education experts and many speakers before me have explained the challenges that keep many children out of school and compromise the quality of learning of those in school.

Globally, there is recognition that children are not learning.

According to the World Bank, 53 % of 10-year-old children cannot read and understand a simple story. In Sub-Saharan Africa and low-income countries including South Sudan, it is much higher - at 87%.

The number of children not learning is a combination of children who are not in school and those in school who are not meeting the minimum proficiency in reading.

In South Sudan, there is a need to not only improve quality of learning for children in school - but to reenroll the 2.2 million children who are currently out of school.

In South Sudan there are some strategies we must implement if we want to achieve learning goals.

- We must start with early childhood education – which provides a strong foundation for learning. When children attend early childhood education, they are better prepared for school and to learn.
- Investment in early childhood education can reduce inequalities brought about by poverty, and unequal learning opportunities.
- We must focus on the marginalized. Children with disabilities, children from pastoral communities, and those that are internally displaced - and girls are often left behind.

We must expand learning opportunities and flexible learning pathways to get these children into school.

- We need to reverse the high rate of dropouts as very few children are staying in school and transitioning to the next level. This can be addressed by investing in infrastructure and learning spaces, involve communities in school management and support to children.
- We must strengthen quality of teaching - by developing policies to train, install and provide continuous professional development for teachers. We cannot rely on unqualified volunteer teachers!
- We must innovate education - by developing mobile schools and libraries, introduce online or education by radio - to reach all children wherever they may be.
- We must continue to build on the goodwill of key partnerships including the Global Partnership for Education, Education Cannot Wait, and the support of development partners to continue exploring innovative ideas that will deliver education for all children in South Sudan.

We recognize the government's commitment to education, and I commend recent efforts by the Ministry to transfer funds for teachers' salaries. This must be sustained until payment of teachers is up to date.

Our discussions today will allow us to reflect and identify key actions to put education in South Sudan on track towards the SDG goals.

As the Representative for UNICEF – I want to reaffirm our commitment to work together with the government and development partners to ensure that every child has the opportunity to go to school - and to achieve an education that prepares them for the future!

Thank you and god bless the children of South Sudan.

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