

NGO MG Input at HLPF Session on SDG4 'How has COVID-19 impacted education and what are the lessons learned?', 6 July 2022

Delivered by Elisabeth Shuman, Childhood Education International

Distinguished Chair, distinguished Delegates, COLLEAGUES -

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Ngo Major Group & my own organization, Childhood Education International

Education is at the heart of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It provides the knowledge and skills required for decent work and good health. It reduces inequalities, and is key for peace and justice. Quality education decreases the vulnerability to child labour, as well as the vulnerability to child marriage which is significantly lower for girls who attend school. EDUCATION is a powerful tool in the development of people and in breaking down cycles of exclusion. And of course SDG 4 is strongly interlinked with and underpins all other Goals.

COVID-19 shed a harsh light on existing inequalities, and drastically increased the already concerning number of children out of school. Governments must ensure that schools are safely open, and that ways be found to make up the tremendous learning gap.

We call on all Governments to PUT EDUCATION AT THE TOP OF THE POLITICAL AGENDA

- **SUPPORT FREE PUBLIC QUALITY EDUCATION – including free Pre-School and free Secondary Education - parents' ability to pay should not determine a child's future**
- **INVEST IN ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE – well equipped schools including access to technology contribute to improved learning. Inadequate schools, poor teaching methods and unsafe environment – both physical and emotional – are barriers to learning and are drivers of child labour and child trafficking.**
- **INVEST IN SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS – foster a climate free from discrimination and bullying**

- **INVEST IN TEACHERS AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION – support adequate compensation and training, including ongoing professional development, access to lifelong education for teachers at all levels, enabling them to be upskilled with new developments in their field, to use emerging new technologies, and to develop and implement educational curricula and relevant materials needed to ensure the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.**
- **Invest in student centered curricula that include life skills, financial literacy, multi-lingualism, health, climate action and education for sustainable development, empowering students to become agents of change.**
- **Support life-long learning for all ages**

The world of work has undergone major changes – education must be adjusted to incorporate skills appropriate to contemporary requirements. We are increasingly interconnected – how and what students learn will be crucial for global advancement

Therefore we welcome the Secretary General’s initiative calling for the SUMMIT ON TRANSFORMING EDUCATION in September - to take a look at what works, what can be better, and what needs to be totally revised. We appreciate the wide consultative process, the enormous effort that has gone into research and planning for the Summit, especially the major effort to include YOUTH in the process. Thank you Stefania Giannini!

We are looking forward to September, and to an outcome from the Summit that will bring us closer to “LEAVING NO one behind.”