

LETTER TO G20, IMF, WORLD BANK, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS and NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

We write to call for urgent action to address the global education emergency triggered by Covid-19. With over 1 billion children still out of school because of the lockdown, there is now a real and present danger that the public health crisis will create a COVID generation who lose out on schooling and whose opportunities are permanently damaged. While the more fortunate have had access to alternatives, the world's poorest children have been locked out of learning, denied internet access, and with the loss of free school meals - once a lifeline for 300 million boys and girls - hunger has grown.

An immediate concern, as we bring the lockdown to an end, is the fate of an estimated 30 million children who, according to UNESCO, may never return to school. For these, the world's least advantaged children, education is often the only escape from poverty- a route that is in danger of closing.

Many of these children are adolescent girls for whom being in school is the best defence against forced marriage and the best hope for a life of expanded opportunity. Many more are young children who risk being forced into exploitative and dangerous labour. And because education is linked to progress in virtually every area of human development – from child survival to maternal health, gender equality, job creation and inclusive economic growth – the education emergency will undermine the prospects for achieving all our 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and potentially set back progress on gender equity by years. According to the World Bank the long-term economic cost of lost schooling could be as much as \$10 trillion in lost productive output.

We cannot stand by and allow these young people to be robbed of their education and a fair chance in life. Instead we should be redoubling our efforts to get all children into school – including the 260 million already out of school and the 75 million children affected by protracted conflicts and forced displacement, including 35 million children living as refugees or internally displaced - with the comprehensive help they need- and to make it possible for young people to start or resume their studies in school further and higher education.

There is a longer-term challenge. Even before Covid-19, the world faced a learning crisis. Over half of the children in developing countries suffering 'learning poverty' and even at age 11 had little or no basic literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, 800 million of today's young people leave education with no qualifications whatsoever.

When schools reopened after Pakistan's 2005 earthquake attendance recovered, but four years later children had lost the equivalent of 1.5 years of schooling. If we are to avoid this for millions of children who are now preparing to return to school and who have lost over half a year of education, resources are now urgently needed to get young people back into education and enable them to catch-up. What is more, we should rebuild better : more support for online learning, personalised learning, teacher training, conditional cash transfers for poor families and safer schools that meet 'distancing' rules ; building on the enormous community effort that has been displayed during the pandemic and the coalition of global organisations that has now joined forces in the 'Save our Future' initiative launched on August 4.

Yet at the very time we need extra resources, education funding is in danger on three fronts :

1. As slower or negative growth undermines tax revenues, less money may be available in almost every country for public services, including education.
2. When allocating limited funds, governments are prioritising expenditure on health and economic recovery leaving education crowded out and underfunded.
3. Intensifying fiscal pressure in developed countries will result in reductions in international development aid, including aid for education, which has already been losing out to other priorities in the allocation of bilateral and multilateral aid. There is also a danger that multilateral donors, who already under-invest in education, will reallocate funds.

The World Bank now estimates that, over the next year, overall education spending in low and middle-income countries could be \$100-150 billion lower than previously planned.

This funding crisis will not resolve itself.

We call on the G20, the IMF, World Bank and regional development banks and all countries to recognise the scale of the crisis and support initiatives to enable catch-up to happen, and progress towards SDG4 to be resumed :

- First, every country should pledge to protect education spending, prioritising the needs of the most disadvantaged children through where possible, conditional and unconditional cash transfers to promote school participation.
- Second, the international community must increase aid for education, focusing on the most vulnerable, including the poor, girls, children in conflict situations and the disabled. The quickest way to free up resources for education is through debt relief. The 76 poorest countries have to pay \$86 billion in debt-service costs over the next two years. We call for debt suspension with a requirement that the money for debt servicing be reallocated to education and other priority investments for children.
- Third, the IMF should issue \$1.2 trillion in Special Drawing Rights (its global reserve asset) and its membership should agree to channel these resources toward the countries that need them most, creating a platform for recovery.
- And fourth, the World Bank should unlock more support for low income countries through a supplementary International Development Association budget, and, following the lead of the UK and Netherlands which have now pledged \$650m to the new International Finance Facility for Education (IFFED) to help unlock billions in extra finance for education in lower middle income countries, invite additional guarantees and grants from donors. This is in addition to - and compliments - over the next 2 years the replenishment of GPE (Global Partnership for Education). scaled up investment in ECW (Education Cannot Wait) and continued support for the UN agencies focused on education and children led by UNESCO and UNICEF. We also call on private sector corporations and foundations to make support for global education a greater priority.

Sustainable human development can only be built upon a foundation of quality education. While the challenges are momentous, the impact of the crisis on children has made us even more determined to realise our ambition contained in Sustainable Development Goal 4, that ours can be the first generation in history in which every child is at school and has the chance to develop their potential to the full. Now is the time for national governments and the international community to come together to give children and young people the opportunities they deserve and to which they are entitled.

Signed,

- Dr Shamshad Akhtar - UN Under Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP & Assistant Secretary-General at UN DESA (2013-2018); Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan (2006-2009)¹
- Dr Farida Allaghi - Ambassador of Libya to the European Union (2015-2016)³
- HE Dr Abdulaziz Altwaijri - Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (1991-2019)³
- Dr Roger Ames - Director of the Center for Chinese Studies, University of Hawaii
- Dr Kwame Anthony Appiah - Professor of Philosophy and Law, NYU
- Shaukat Aziz - Prime Minister of Pakistan (2004-2007)³⁴
- Professor Julian Baggini - Academic Director of the Royal Institute of Philosophy
- Jan Peter Balkenende - Prime Minister of the Netherlands (2002-2010)²
- Carol Bellamy - Executive Director of UNICEF (1995-2005)¹
- Nicolas Berggruen - Chairman of the Berggruen Institute⁴
- Tony Blair - Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (1997-2007)
- Irina Bokova - Director-General of UNESCO (2009-2017)¹
- Kjell Magne Bondevik - Prime Minister of Norway (1997-2000; 2001-2005)²
- Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz - Vice Chancellor, University of Cambridge (2010-2017)
- Ouided Bouchamaoui - President of UTICA (2011-2018); Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (2015)³
- María Eugenia Brizuela de Ávila - Minister of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador (1999-2004)¹
- John Bruton - Taoiseach of the Republic of Ireland (1994-1997)²⁵
- Kim Campbell - Prime Minister of Canada (1993)²
- Fernando Henrique Cardoso - President of Brazil (1995-2003)²
- Dr Vinton G. Cerf - Co-Inventor of the Internet³
- Hikmet Çetin - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey (1991-1994), Speaker of the Grand National Assembly (1997-1999)³⁵
- Baroness Lynda Chalker - Minister of Overseas Development of the United Kingdom (1989-1997)⁵
- Helen Clark - Prime Minister of New Zealand (1999-2008); UNDP Administrator (2009-2017)²³⁵
- Joe Clark - Prime Minister of Canada (1979-1980)⁵
- Emil Constantinescu - President of Romania (1996-2000)³

- Radhika Coomaraswamy - UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict (2006-2012); UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women (1994-2003)¹
- Chester Crocker - Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, United States (1981-1989)⁵
- Dr Antonio Damasio - David Dornsife Professor of Neuroscience, Psychology and Philosophy; Director, Brain and Creativity Institute, USC
- Dr Hanna Damasio - Dana Dornsife Professor of Neuroscience and Psychology; Director, Dornsife Cognitive Neuroimaging Center, USC
- Marzuki Darusman - Attorney General of Indonesia (1999-2001)⁵
- Frederik Willem de Klerk - State President of South Africa (1989-1994)⁵
- Gareth Evans - Foreign Minister of Australia (1988-1996); President and CEO of International Crisis Group (2000-2009)⁵
- Jan Fischer - Prime Minister of the Czech Republic (2009-2010); Finance Minister (2013-2014)³
- Professor Tom Fletcher CMG - UK Ambassador to Lebanon (2011-2015); Principal-Elect of Hertford College, University of Oxford
- Franco Frattini - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy (2002-2004; 2008-2011); European Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security (2004-2008)³
- Dr Anton Friedrich Koch - Professor of Philosophy, Universität Heidelberg
- Nathalie de Gaulle - Chairwoman & Co-founder of NB-INOV; Founder of Under 40³
- Lord Anthony Giddens - Director of the London School of Economics (1996–2003); Professor, Department of Sociology, LSE
- Dr Lawrence Gonzi - Prime Minister of Malta (2004-2013)⁵
- Dr Alexander Görlach - Senior Fellow at the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Relations, University of Cambridge
- Dalia Grybauskaitė - President of the Republic of Lithuania (2009-2019)²
- Rebeca Grynspan - Ibero-American Secretary-General; Second Vice President of Costa Rica (1994-1998); UN Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator of UNDP (2010-2014)¹
- Ameenah Gurib-Fakim - President of Mauritius (2015-2018)³
- Dr Han Seung-soo - Prime Minister of South Korea (2008-2009)²
- Senator Robert M. Hertzberg - Majority Leader of the California State Senate, United States
- Dr Noeleen Heyzer - UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP (2007-2015)¹³
- Mo Ibrahim - Founder of Celtel; Chairman of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation⁴
- Enrique Iglesias - Foreign Minister of Uruguay (1985-1988); President of the Inter-American Development Bank (1988-2005)²⁵
- Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu - Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (2004-2014)³
- Dalia Itzik - Interim President of Israel (2007); President of the Knesset (2006-2009)³
- Mladen Ivanić - Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014-2018)³
- Pico Iyer - Distinguished Presidential Fellow, Chapman University; Writer & Essayist, TIME
- Garry Jacobs - President & Chief Executive Officer of the World Academy of Art and Science³
- HE Ellen Johnson Sirleaf - President of Liberia (2006-2018); Member of The Elders⁵

- T. Anthony Jones - Vice-President and Executive Director of the Gorbachev Foundation of North America²
- Ivo Josipović - President of Croatia (2010-2015)²³
- Jean-Claude Juncker - Prime Minister of Luxembourg (1995-2013); President of the European Commission (2014-2019)²
- Mats Karlsson - Vice President, External Affairs at the World Bank (1999-2002)³
- Rima Khalaf - Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2010-2017)¹
- Ban Ki-moon - UN Secretary General (2007-2016); Deputy Chair of The Elders²
- Jadranka Kosor - Prime Minister of Croatia (2009-2011)³
- Chandrika Kumaratunga - President of Sri Lanka (1994-2005)²³
- Aleksander Kwaśniewski - President of Poland (1995-2005)²
- Rachel Kyte - Dean of The Fletcher School, Tufts University; UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All (2016-2019); World Bank Group VP & Special Envoy (2012-2015)¹
- Ricardo Lagos - President of Chile (2000-2006); Member of the Elders²⁴
- Zlatko Lagumdžija - Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2001- 2002); Foreign Affairs Minister (2012-2015)²³
- Yves Leterme - Prime Minister of Belgium (2009-2011)²³
- Dr Margaret Levi - Director of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences & Professor of Political Science, Stanford University
- Professor Justin Yifu Lin - Chief Economist & Senior Vice-President of the World Bank (2008-2012); Dean of Institute of New Structural Economics, Peking University³
- Petru Lucinschi - President of Moldova (1997-2001)³
- Ricardo Luna - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Peru (2016-2018)⁵
- Susana Malcorra - UN Under-Secretary-General for Field Support (2008-2012); Chef de Cabinet to UN Secretary-General (2012-2015); Minister of Foreign Affairs of Argentina (2015-2017)¹
- Purnima Mane - UN Assistant-Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director UNFPA (2007-2012)¹
- Moussa Mara - Prime Minister of Mali (2014-2015)³
- Paul Martin - Prime Minister of Canada (2003-2006)⁴
- Péter Medgyessy - Prime Minister of Hungary (2002-2004)³
- Rexhep Meidani - President of Albania (1997-2002)²³
- Rovshan Muradov - Secretary General of NGIC
- Joseph Muscat - Prime Minister of Malta (2013-2020)³
- Dawn Nakagawa - Executive Vice President, Berggruen Institute
- Dr Rebecca Newberger Goldstein - Philosopher
- Bujar Nishani - President of Albania (2012-2017)³
- Josiah Ober - Professor of Political Science and Classics, Stanford University
- Džoomart Otorbaev - Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan (2014-2015)³
- Ana Palacio - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain (2002-2004)¹³⁵
- Elsa Papademetriou - Vice President of the Hellenic Parliament (2007-2009)³
- George Papandreou - Prime Minister of Greece (2009-2011)³
- P. J. Patterson - Prime Minister of Jamaica (1992-2005)²⁵
- Dr Philip Pettit - L.S. Rockefeller University Professor of Politics and Human Values, Princeton University

- Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering - United States Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (1997-2000); Ambassador to the UN (1989-1992)⁵
- Rosen Plevneliev - President of Bulgaria (2012-2017)³
- Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca - President of Malta (2014-2019)³
- Romano Prodi - Prime Minister of Italy (2006-2008); President of the European Commission (1999-2004)²
- Michael Puett - Walter C. Klein Professor of Chinese History, Department of East Asian Languages and Civilization, Harvard University
- Jorge Quiroga - President of Bolivia (2001-2002)²
- Iveta Radičová - Prime Minister of Slovakia (2010-2012)²
- José Ramos Horta - President of Timor Leste (2007-2012)²⁵
- Òscar Ribas Reig - Prime Minister of Andorra (1982-1984; 1990-1994)²³
- Lord George Robertson - Secretary General of NATO (1999-2003)⁵
- José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero - Prime Minister of Spain (2004-2011)²
- Dr Michael Roth - President of Wesleyan University
- Nouriel Roubini - Chairman & CEO, Roubini Macro Associates LLC
- Ruslana - World Music Award and Eurovision Song Contest winning recording artist; Special Envoy of NGIC
- Isabel Saint Malo - Vice President of Panama (2014-2019)¹
- Amartya Sen - Nobel Laureate for Economics (1998); Professor of Economics & Philosophy, Harvard University
- Ismail Serageldin - Vice President of the World Bank (1992-2000); Co-Chair of NGIC
- Fatiha Serour - Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Somalia (2013-2014)¹
- Rosalía Arteaga Serrano - President of Ecuador (1997)³
- Javier Solana - Secretary General of the Council of the EU (1999-2009); Secretary General of NATO (1995-1999)²⁵
- Michael Spence - Nobel Laureate for Economics (2001); William R. Berkley Professor in Economics & Business, NYU⁴
- Dr Eduardo Stein - Vice President of Guatemala (2004-2008)⁵
- Joseph Stiglitz - Chief Economist of the World Bank (1997-2000); Nobel Laureate for Economics (2001); Professor, Columbia University⁴
- Petar Stoyanov - President of Bulgaria (1997-2002)³
- Laimdota Straujuma - Prime Minister of Latvia (2014-2016)³
- Lawrence Summers - United States Secretary of the Treasury (1999-2001); Deputy Secretary of the Treasury (1995-1999); Chief Economist of the World Bank (1991-1993); Director of the National Economic Council (2009-2010)⁴
- Jigme Y. Thinley - Prime Minister of Bhutan (2008-2013)²
- Eka Tkeshelashvili - Deputy Prime Minister of Georgia (2010-2012)³
- Professor Laura D'Andrea Tyson - Director of the United States National Economic Council (1995-1996); Faculty Director, Haas Institute for Business & Social Impact, University of California, Berkeley⁴
- Cassam Uteem - President of Mauritius (1992-2002); Vice-President of WLA-Club de Madrid²⁵
- Juan Gabriel Valdés - Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile (1999); Ambassador to the UN (2000-2003)⁵
- Marianna Vardinoyannis - UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador; Board Member of NGIC
- Vaira Vike-Freiberga - President of Latvia (1999-2007)²; Co-Chair of NGIC

- Filip Vujanović - President of Montenegro (2003-2018)³
- Kateryna Yushchenko - First Lady of Ukraine (2005-2010); Board Member of NGIC
- Viktor Yushchenko - President of Ukraine (2005-2010)³
- Fareed Zakaria - Host of Fareed Zakaria GPS, CNN⁴
- Min Zhu - Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (2011-2016)⁴

- ActionAid UK - Girish Menon, CEO
- BRAC International - Dr Muhammad Musa, Executive Director
- CARE International UK - Laurie Lee, CEO
- Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) - Christine Allen, Director
- Theirworld - Dr Justin van Fleet, President
- Dr. Lahcen Haddad, MP, Vice President of Society for International Development and Trustee of World Learning

¹ Member of Global Women Leaders: Voices for Change and Inclusion

² Member of the World Leadership Alliance-Club de Madrid

³ Member of Nizami Ganjavi International Center (NGIC)

⁴ Member of the Berggruen Institute 21st Century Council

⁵ Member of Global Leadership Foundation