

Response to focus area four on education from Major groups of children and youth, workers and trade unions, women, and indigenous people

We welcome the broad priorities outlined in the section on education, such as accessibility, equity, quality and completion, and consider them integral to what must be a stand-alone goal on education. The reference to the universal right to education is fundamental, but if we are serious about guaranteeing quality education *for all*, there are three key messages for you to bring to the negotiations.

Firstly, we welcome the emphasis on ensuring equitable access to education for the most marginalised. This has to be coupled with specific measures, and we would like to propose adding “free” education as a central element of an education agenda beyond 2015. The financial burden on households, i.e. tuition fees and indirect costs of education, still form the single greatest barrier to participation in education. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights insists on free education primarily at the elementary levels, and education cannot be equally accessible to all without eliminating fees at all levels of education. A renewed commitment to free early childhood, primary and secondary education is urgently needed; by 2030, no child should be excluded from quality education because of cost.

This, in turn, requires sustainable and public financing sourced primarily from domestic revenue; government hold the primary responsibility for guaranteeing the right to equitable quality education for all. Education is the chief source of the full development of human personality and students from less privileged backgrounds must have access to education of the same quality as their most privileged peers. Education is source of emancipation and of betterment of the society as a whole, and is thus a common good that must be available to all.

Secondly, quality education demands more than a focus on learning outcomes. In order to truly achieve quality and secure relevant and important student learning outcomes, there must be specific and deliberate emphasis on educational inputs as well as the teaching and learning processes that yield these outcomes. Put simply, one can exist without the others. We therefore urge a broad interpretation of quality that covers all elements of the educational process, including broad-based and inclusive curricula, adequate teaching and learning materials, teaching and learning methods, physical environment, teacher supply and training and reasonable class sizes. Every student has the right to be taught by a highly qualified, trained and well-supported teacher, and to learn in safe schools with adequate infrastructure, facilities and resources. Without these critical elements of *inputs* and *process*, strong and relevant student learning outcomes cannot be realized

Further, for education to play its transformative role, our aspirations must go beyond a narrow and almost exclusive focus on literacy and numeracy as privileged learning outcomes. Education has the potential to provide people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and creativity needed to solve problems locally and globally and can actively contribute to sustainable and democratic social and economic development. These quality outcomes cannot be realized if we set our sights primarily or exclusively on promoting literacy and numeracy over the next 15-year horizon. Literacy and numeracy are important

but not sufficient. Quality education should promote human rights, non-discrimination, and non-violence, challenge norms and prevalent patterns of production and consumption, and enable citizens to question and apply knowledge creatively, and take action for more just societies.

We welcome your commitment to education for sustainable development, and would propose that the scope is broadened to also include global citizenship education. Moreover, comprehensive sexuality education is an integral part of quality education and must be guaranteed. For Indigenous Peoples, it is important to include mechanisms for protecting, sharing, and promoting traditional knowledge and culturally appropriate education, in accordance with UNDRIP and other human rights mechanisms and legal frameworks.

Thirdly, the focus area fails to address the incredible gender gap in education; whereas boys will have universal primary by 2021, the poorest girls in Sub-Saharan Africa have to wait until year 2086. These girls will have to wait for universal lower secondary education until 2111. Moreover, two thirds of the 774 million illiterate adults are women and the poorest women won't have universal literacy before 2072 (UNESCO Global Monitoring Report 2013/14).

Therefore, there must be a specific target on eliminating women's illiteracy by 2030. It should aim to provide formal and non-formal education for all women and ensure they are aware of, and able to exercise their human rights. Targets should include curricula to eliminate gender- and other stereotypes, sexism, homophobia as well as teacher training for non-discriminatory education. Finally, the post-2015 agenda must include specific means to address the social and cultural practices that prevent girls and women from accessing and completing education and life-long learning, create enabling environments for girls' education, including safety, hygiene and sanitation and mobility.

Finally, it is time to go beyond a focus on access to primary education; ensuring completion of a full cycle of education requires specific targets on ensuring free access to and completion of early childhood as well as secondary education, as well as disaggregated data for the different levels.

Thank you for your attention.