



2020 GEM Declaration

FIRST DRAFT (Version 18 September 2020)

Preamble

1. **We**, Heads of State and Government, ministers and delegates; representatives of United Nations agencies, development partners, and civil society organizations; and members of teaching and research communities and the private sector, joined on 20 and 22 October 2020, for the extraordinary session of the Global Education Meeting (2020 GEM), organized by UNESCO and co-hosted by the Government of United Kingdom.
2. **We note** that the unprecedented social and economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed our world's fragility and interdependence, affecting every country, community and family. However, the COVID-19 crisis cannot be reduced to a health emergency. We face a major threat to our joint efforts to leave no one behind in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.
3. **We appreciate** the mobilisation of UN organizations, regional organizations and development partners to advocate for education and to create multi-sectoral partnership to support countries to ensure adequate education response to COVID-19.
4. **We are convinced** that education is an essential lever for an inclusive and sustainable recovery of all nations. To avoid what the UN Secretary General described as a "generational catastrophe," we must build back more resilient, inclusive and gender-responsive education systems, with emphasis on measures to support the learning continuity of the most marginalized.
5. **We agreed to:**
 - Invest in education *now* to save our future;
 - Uphold our commitment to SDG 4 to transform education to drive sustainable development, leaving no one behind; and
 - Strengthen our global cooperation mechanisms in education to strengthen political support for and efficiency of multilateral actions.

Our commitment to protect education finance at the time of COVID-19

6. **We hereby commit to:**
 - Increase or maintain the share of public expenditure on education and ensure that national recovery stimulus package include allocations to: a) remediation classes to recover all disadvantaged students' learning loss during education disruption and b) reenrolment campaigns for learners who are at risk of not returning to school.
 - Ensure the share of education in official development assistance increases to 15% as it was in the early 2000s and that international financing of education is aligned to national COVID-19 response and recovery plans, targeting countries and populations most in need.

Our priority actions to accelerate progress towards SDG 4 in the COVID-19 context and beyond

7. **We further commit** to the implementation of the following actions over the next 12 months:
 - Reopen schools safely using international guidance; establishing closer collaboration between the education, health and social protection sectors; and ensuring that school reopening plans are equity-focused, gender-responsive and inclusive and adequately funded.

- Support *all* teachers as frontline workers, involving their representative in decision making and ensuring their personal and professional well-being and professional development needs including digital and pedagogical skills for differentiated instruction upon school reopening.
- Invest in skills development for inclusive recovery, decent work and sustainable development through reskilling and upskilling opportunities for *all* youth and adults who lost or are at risk of losing their jobs.
- Halve the gap in school connectivity to internet and build digital commons, with a view to enabling equitable and inclusive technology-based learning.

Way forward

8. We will monitor the implementation of these commitments over the next 12 months and report on their fulfilment at the next ordinary session of the Global Education Meeting planned in 2021 (2021 GEM).
9. We request UNESCO and its partners to assess the impact of the current crisis on the achievement of the SDG 4 targets, and propose relevant and realistic benchmarks of key SDG 4 indicators for subsequent monitoring.
10. We invite UNESCO to lead a consultation in coordination with all relevant actors in order to propose an improved, effective global education coordination mechanism, to be adopted at the 2021 GEM, aligning evidence, policy guidance, financing and action to support national education development. Until this time, we agree to extend the mandate of the current SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee.