

Media Update

21 January 2022

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

VIDEO MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EDUCATION

24 January 2022

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused chaos in education worldwide. Some 1.6 billion school and college students had their studies interrupted at the peak of the pandemic -- and it's not over yet.

Today, school closures continue to disrupt the lives of over 31 million students, exacerbating a global learning crisis.

Unless we take action, the share of children leaving school in developing countries who are unable to read could increase from 53 to 70 percent.

But the turmoil in education goes beyond questions of access and inequality. Our world is changing at a dizzying pace, with technological innovation, unprecedented changes in the world of work, the onset of the climate emergency, and a widespread loss of trust between people and institutions. Conventional education systems are struggling to deliver the knowledge, skills and values we need to create a greener, better and safer future for all. Education is a preeminent public good, and an essential enabler for the entire 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The international community cannot afford to be agnostic about its provision, quality and relevance.

That is why I am convening a Summit on Transforming Education later this year.

The time has come to reignite our collective commitment to education. That means investing in comprehensive plans to help students recover from learning losses.

It means putting education at the heart of broader recovery efforts, aimed at transforming economies and societies and accelerating progress on sustainable development.

It means financial solidarity with developing countries. And it means embarking on a process of reflection and analysis to identify how national education systems can evolve and transform between now and 2030.

The Summit on Transforming Education will be the first time that world leaders, young people and all education stakeholders come together to consider these fundamental questions.

On this International Day of Education, and as we prepare for the Summit later this year, I call on everyone to unite around education as a public good and a top political priority for the recovery and beyond.

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