



Organizers' Statement

Education Summit 2016: Empowering Girls and Women through Education

Joint Event organized by Sophia University, Global Partnership for Education and JICA
Supported by: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan, Japan NGO Network for Education (JNNE), UNICEF Tokyo
May 17, 2016

We, organizers and participants of the event, “Empowering Girls and Women through Education” organized on 17 May, 2016 at the margins of the G7 Leaders Summit, assembled to discuss the importance of investing in the education of girls and women. The commitment to ‘leave no one behind’ is central to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were formally adopted by world leaders in September 2015. This vision of ensuring inclusion and equity as key drivers of social and economic development is particularly evident in SDG4, which sets out universal targets for quality education and lifelong learning for all. The education of girls and women is one of the clearest opportunities for achieving gender equality and other SDGs.

As members of the global education community, we are committed to take concrete steps and joint actions to support better quality education, especially for girls and women. We note that leaders of G7 countries also increasingly recognize the importance of this issue, as girls’ education is one of the best investments for achieving real gains in improving socio-economic development, equal participation in society, and human security. Education enlarges girls and women’s life choices and helps fulfil their aspiration and dreams. More educated girls and young women are healthier and go on to have healthier children and are able to contribute positively to their societies and economies. Educating girls and women also helps to ensure that they can acquire knowledge and skills necessary for decent work and entrepreneurship.

We also recognize that barriers like a lack of separate sanitation facilities, discriminatory social and cultural factors, early marriage and school-related violence continue to prevent girls and women from having access to quality schooling, or in continuing their schooling to receive the benefits that education entails. The largest gender gaps are in the poorest countries, and girls who face multiple disadvantages are the furthest behind. We note that girls suffer significantly more than boys during conflict and crisis, and are two and a half times more likely to be out of school in these contexts. When schools are used by military forces or armed groups, it creates an inappropriate and dangerous environment for children, particularly for girls. Thus we welcome the upcoming discussions regarding the education in emergencies and protracted crisis and the related new Education Cannot Wait Fund in Istanbul at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2015.

We recognize the importance of integrating gender-responsiveness in education sector policies and planning to advance gender equality within national contexts. Such policies and plans include measures to eliminate gender stereotype and discriminations, to provide gender-sensitive



learning environment, and make teaching and learning more responsive to the needs of both girls and boys. It is also important to empower and ensure more female leaders in the education sector, including teachers, head teachers and principals, and female business leaders and executives, and women in government at all levels. Policies and plans to achieve gender equality require rethinking of the existing social structure and education systems.

We believe increased efforts in external and domestic financing for the education of girls' and women while using existing resources more effectively, increasing capacity building efforts, and increased collaboration amongst all partners is important for reducing the barriers and achieving the goals set out in the SDGs and Education 2030 agenda.

We welcome the actions of all partners, including those present at today's event, as well as the leaders of the G7 countries, to continue to support and advocate for increased investment and engagement to empower girls and women through education, so that they can lead their lives in dignity wherever they are.