



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

20 February 2009

Excellency,

Following the initiative by Member States (document A/63/500), and in keeping with the priorities of the sixty-third session outlined in my inaugural address, I am convening an informal General Assembly thematic debate on access to education in emergency, post-crisis and transition situations caused by man-made conflicts or natural disasters, on Wednesday, 18 March, 2009 at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The General Assembly thematic debate will address the obligation to insure that the right to education for all is fulfilled, especially in the most adverse environment. Our aim is to explore the unique challenges posed by emergencies and commit to a series of actions. The session will build upon the results of the recent report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education in emergency situations A/HRC/8/10 and of other initiatives and worldwide experiences in providing education to all even in the worst circumstances. It will highlight proposals and make recommendations on ways forward to improve awareness, enhance funding, accountability and an overall increase in humanitarian response for quality education based on interagency standards and other suggestions from the debate.

I will reiterate my personal commitment to ensure the right to education. The debate will be a full-day event with three interactive panel discussions. Two morning panels will focus on education in emergencies as one of the biggest impediments to fulfilling the Education for All commitment and how to successfully overcome this. The afternoon panel will explore accountability and the roles of governments and other key players within the UN system and beyond to ameliorate the situation. I will share highlights, key concerns and recommendations in a summary note as the outcome document of the thematic debate, bearing in mind the importance and need for further action by the General Assembly.

The panels will bring together Member States, United Nations system experts, academia, civil society, teachers and learners to promote how to most effectively address the lack of education in emergency situations.

Delegations are encouraged to engage in an open and interactive discussion with panellists, special guests, as well as representatives of civil society, academia and non-governmental organizations based on comments and questions rather than prepared statements. Thus, there will

All Permanent Representatives
and Permanent Observers
to the United Nations

be no established list of speakers and interventions should be limited (a maximum of 3 minutes is strongly encouraged) to give room for as many speakers as possible. Attached herewith is a background paper on the subject.

I look forward to your cooperation and personal participation.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann', written over a horizontal line.

Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann