



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

24 April 2017

Excellency,

Further to my letter dated 8 February and as part of a universal push to strengthen momentum around SDG implementation during the 71st session, I am convening a High-Level SDG Action Event on Education on 28 June, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., at United Nations Headquarters, New York.

The event will focus attention on what's needed to drive universal implementation of SDG 4. It will bring together key actors from the education community and beyond to engage in frank discussions around delivering universal access to quality and equitable education including through effective financing and innovation in learning. The event will also highlight actions being undertaken to educate children and young people about the SDGs.

I encourage participation in this SDG Action Event at the highest possible levels.

A concept note and a provisional programme are attached, and further information will be made available on my website. For additional details, please contact Advisors, Ms. Naomi Parekh ([parekh1@un.org](mailto:parekh1@un.org)) or Mr. Mohammed Al-Buainain ([al-buainain@un.org](mailto:al-buainain@un.org)).

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Thomson'.

Peter Thomson

To All Permanent Representatives  
and Permanent Observers of the United Nations  
New York

# **PGA High-Level SDG Action Event on Education (SDG4)**

## **CONCEPT NOTE**

**28 June 2017; 10:00am – 6:00pm**

**Trusteeship Council Chamber, UN Headquarters, New York**

As part of his SDG Action Event series aimed at generating momentum around the implementation of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the President of the General Assembly will convene a High-Level SDG Action Event on 28 June focused on SDG 4 - ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

This one-day event seeks to further galvanize the efforts of the many global alliances and initiatives that are supporting the implementation of SDG 4 and to increase awareness on how best to promote SDG learning in schools and other education institutions.

### **Background**

Sustainable Development Goal 4 seeks to advance the realization of the fundamental human right to education and its implementation is essential for the successful implementation of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. SDG 4 underscores that education is the foundation for addressing the social, environmental and economic challenges facing the world today. Moreover, it recognizes that equity in access to quality education for girls and boys, women and men, is critical to achieving gender equality, reducing child mortality, delaying marriage and developing female leaders.

The implementation challenge is significant. Some 61.4 million children of primary school age go without education, 35% of whom live in 32 countries affected by conflict (2014). Girls remain 1.5 times more likely than boys to be excluded from primary school. The situation for children with disabilities in the developing world is equally unacceptable with some 90% not going to school. Furthermore, given that 250 million children either do not make it to grade 4 or do not have basic skills in reading, writing and math by the time they reach grade 4; the quality of education is a major concern. Moreover, remoteness is often a barrier to children in rural areas or on small islands.

Building on the global progress made over recent decades, however, education stakeholders from around the globe – at the local, regional, national and global levels – are readying themselves for a major drive towards implementation. SDG advocates, national governments, traditional donors, the UN system, international financial institutions, private sector actors; technologists, teachers and young people are identifying new and innovative ways to complete the unfinished business of the MDGs, reach young learners, and ensure that people everywhere have the learning, tools and skills they need to flourish in today's world.

Steps are also being taken to raise awareness about the new Sustainable Development Agenda, helping to foster a better understanding about the SDGs and their interconnectedness and to

promote global citizenship, all of which play an instrumental role in making progress not only towards SDG 4, but also across the entire 2030 Agenda.

### **Objectives:**

The President's High-Level SDG Action Event on Education seeks to highlight the growing momentum around the implementation of SDG 4, including in the area of SDG Learning. It seeks to galvanize the efforts of the world's leading education stakeholders and to raise awareness about the obstacles and opportunities for achieving universal access to quality education and lifelong learning including through technical and vocational education and training.

The objectives of the meeting are therefore:

- To outline the case for more and better financing to achieve SDG 4, through domestic resource mobilization, bilateral aid and multilateral efforts as well as strong political will and good policies.
- To encourage integration of innovative technologies in teaching and learning so as to scale up filling the global gap in access and quality education.
- To further highlight the importance of addressing the challenges which young people are facing in accessing and completing basic and higher education, in conditions of social and geographic fragmentation, and in post-conflict and post-disaster regions.
- To emphasize the importance of raising awareness and teaching about the SDGs including for the 126 million children who will be eighteen years old in 2030.

### **Format:**

The full-day high-level event will be divided into four sections: opening segment, plenary debate, interactive panel discussions and a closing segment. The President of the General Assembly will present a summary of the discussions as an outcome of the event.

### **Participants:**

The high-level event will include participation of the President of the General Assembly, the UN Secretary-General (TBC), High-level representatives from Member States and observers, women, young stakeholders, civil society, UN agencies, education experts, innovators and other relevant stakeholders.

### **Contributions:**

The Office of the President of the General Assembly, is currently working with UNESCO, UNICEF, FAO, ILO, the Global Partnership for Education, the Global Commission on Education among others, in preparing this event. Member States are invited to contribute to the content of the event and to contact the OPGA in this regard.

# PGA High-Level SDG Action Event on Education (SDG4)

## PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

**28 June 2017; 10:00am – 6:00pm**  
**Trusteeship Council Chamber** (*unless otherwise stated*)  
**Programme Outline**

|                        |   |   |   |
|------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>10.00am</b>         | <b>Opening segment</b>  |   |   |
| <b>10:30am</b>         | <b>High-Level Plenary Segment</b>   |   |   |
| <b>11:30am</b>         | <b>Panel discussion I - Tackling SDG 4: What will it take?</b><br>Showcasing opportunities, challenges and solutions to push for universal access to quality lifelong education including by addressing the need for adequate, effective and accountable financing for free primary and secondary education |   |   |
| <b>1:00pm</b>          | <b>Lunch break</b>  |   |   |
| <b>3:00pm</b>          | <b>Panel discussion II – Innovation in Education</b><br>Integration of innovative technologies in teaching and learning in light of the SDGs  |   |   |
| <b>4:00pm</b>          | <b>Plenary (cont.)</b><br><br>Extended Plenary session for contributions from Member State representatives  | <b>Panel discussion III</b><br><i>Conference Room TBD</i><br><br>Education in vulnerable and humanitarian emergency situations including fragmented, marginalized and disadvantaged geographic regions with emphasis on discrimination based on gender, disability, ethnicity and language. | <b>Panel discussion IV</b><br><i>Conference Room TBD</i><br><br>SDG 4.7: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): Raising awareness about the SDGs for all including global citizenship education |
| <b>5:30pm – 6:00pm</b> | <b>Wrap up and Closing segment</b>  |   |   |