



Statement by H.E. Mr. Irakli Garibashvili

Prime Minister of Georgia

Transforming Education Summit

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Honorable Secretary-General,

Distinguished Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my honor and pleasure to address the Transforming Education Summit (TES), which has provided an excellent platform for acknowledging the importance of education as a universal foundation for peace, prosperity, and sustainable development.

The Government of Georgia believes that inclusive, equitable, high-quality education is a fundamental human right and recognizes the importance of promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. We have thus elevated education as one of our top strategic priorities. Education creates a foundation for personal growth and professional development for every individual, which in turn strengthens our nations.

We acknowledge that it is vital to enable students to access preschool, general, vocational, and higher education without any barriers and to equip themselves with the life skills and competences through competitive and student-oriented education systems. Investment in science, technology and innovation is essential for sustainable economic and social progress.

The long-term education policy of the Government of Georgia is built on three main pillars: Quality, Equity, and Good Governance. The goals and strategic objectives resonate with five thematic action tracks highlighted in the report of the International Commission on the Future of Education, and it is fully in line with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We are proud of the tenets of our National Statement of Commitment to Transform Education, and to reach these ambitious goals the Government of Georgia has committed to increasing public funding of education up to 6% of GDP.

The Government of Georgia plans to redouble our efforts to improve curriculums, provide modern and diverse education resources, and invest in professional development for teachers and educators, who are the backbone of our efforts to equip the future generation with adequate skills and knowledge. We are steadfast in our belief that these efforts are key to shaping a society of well-educated, skillful, responsible, and active citizens.

One of our next steps is to build and renovate 800 schools by 2026. By 2030, all Georgian schools will be fully modernized and aligned with internationally recognized standards.

By 2030, all Georgian education institutions will undergo a new, multifaceted authorization process focused on ensuring effective education practices and the implementation of quality assurance mechanisms to promote accountability.

It is clear, that Covid-19 pandemic forced leaders worldwide to reconsider education and mobilize efforts to uphold the UN principle of “Leaving No One Behind”. In the early days of the pandemic, Georgia successfully enabled the education system to operate in distance-learning mode by introducing a number of free and accessible online and broadcast tools for students and teachers at all education levels. The crisis in fact sparked a surge of innovative solutions. Georgia was among the first globally to introduce curriculum-based TV programs thanks to joint efforts

by the Ministry of Education and Science and Georgian Public Broadcasting. The programs continue to grow in popularity and serve the best interest of our society as a whole. And, I am proud to share that Georgia's efforts and success in introducing distance learning was acknowledged by the international community.

Global education challenges remain related to accessibility and equity, to which Georgia is not immune. We must persevere to close the digital divide, with particular attention to schools located in remote areas and those serving socio-economically disadvantaged communities, students with disabilities, ethnic minorities, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and refugees.

Our country, like so many of those I see in this room, has seen firsthand the difficulty faced by internally displaced persons and refugees. We know that among the complex needs of these communities, ensuring access to quality education and providing comprehensive support to students is critical. Continuing educational pursuits can provide a sense of normality in times of

crisis and equips these members of our international community with tools they will need to be successful.

In Georgia, we are prioritizing educational support for students in our occupied territories where the ongoing Russian occupation has disrupted many parts of daily life. Additionally, we have successfully placed in Georgian schools more than 1,500 Ukrainian students who were forced to flee due to Russian aggression. To do so we established streamlined enrollment procedures and provided general education in the Ukrainian language according to standard Ukrainian curriculums with the help of qualified specialists. Additionally, Ukrainian students pursuing higher education in Georgia can now do so without passing National Examinations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are determined to reduce social, cultural, and financial barriers by providing access to preschool, general, vocational, and

higher education without hindrance. We will also provide scientific research opportunities for the younger generation. Furthermore, the Georgian education system will support the development of a wide array of 21st century skills and competencies at all levels.

Georgia commits to implementing effective mechanisms to improve the quality and attractiveness of the teaching profession. Facilitating the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers and specialists at all levels of education and supporting their continuous professional development will be at the top of the education policy agenda.

Georgia will also implement activities designed to ensure inclusive, safe, and healthy school environments by supporting school nutrition and access to medical, psycho-social, and emotional support services.

Distinguished audience, in conclusion, let me underscore the importance of UN-led international cooperation to transform education for a better shared future, peace, and prosperity. Georgia is proud to join our peers here today, who have committed to empowering their communities through education. With joint efforts and international consolidation, we will chase the momentum for education and the humanity.

Thank you!