



**Statement by His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the
Co-operative Republic of Guyana at the Transforming Education
Summit – Leaders Roundtable I (19 September 2022, UN Headquarters
in New York)**

Education is a core element of Guyana’s social transformation. Investments in education are aimed at

- unlocking the potential of our students,
- to help them realize their aspirations,
- while enhancing the repository of skills available for national development.

Guyana commits to an inclusive education system, one that leaves no one behind. This entails narrowing access and attainment gaps by ensuring that every school-age child in every Region is entitled to a sound primary and secondary education. Tertiary education will be provided free of cost by 2025.

As part of our efforts to revamp the education system, the government will increase education expenditure to 20% of the national budget and 6% of the country’s Gross Domestic Product, thereby ensuring adequate and sustainable financing for education.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted schooling for more than 20 months. However, initiatives were initiated to ensure that the absence of formal schooling did not mean the end of learning.

Remote learning was implemented and digital and non-digital learning resources were provided. As expected, challenges were encountered. Many teachers were not fully comfortable with this form of delivery and not all students enjoyed internet access. As a consequence, learning losses ensued.

In response, diagnostic assessments in numeracy and literacy were conducted to assess the extent of such losses during the pandemic. The data generated is being used as a guide for remedial measures. Among the measures being planned to recover from the learning losses, occasioned by the pandemic, are

- accelerated tutoring services,
- the creation of a learning platform to bring students back to grade-level and
- an 'early warning' system to identify students at risk of falling behind.

Guyana remains committed to Sustainable Development Goal #4 – an inclusive and quality education for all. Presently, however, there are educational gaps nationally which can frustrate this objective. We are adopting measures to narrow these gaps. These include:

- introducing more in-person tutoring particularly for rural, hinterland and migrant communities;
- reforming the national curriculum;
- extending the usage of ICT in education;

- increasing access to digital and non-digital educational resources; and
- increasing distance education.

Government is also supporting children's school attendance. We have

- reintroduced the *Because We Care* initiative which provides an annual cash grant to every school child to assist with and relive any hardships which parents may experience in sending their children to school.
- Implemented an expanded schools' nutrition programme to boost classroom attentiveness, school attendance and performance.

Our teachers are the backbone of our educational system. Trained teachers are critical to the attainment of our educational objectives. As such, we are investing in teachers' training with the goal of ensuring that by the end of the decade our schools are staffed by 100% trained teachers. In-service training of teachers is also being strengthened.

Guyana commends the Secretary General for this initiative and commits to sustaining its efforts to transform education.