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Sustainable development: education for sustainable development

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2023

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/78/461/Add.7, para. 7)*]

78/156. Education for sustainable development in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution [76/209](#) of 17 December 2021 and other previous resolutions on education for sustainable development,

Reaffirming its resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Reaffirming also its resolution [75/233](#) of 21 December 2020 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and its general guidelines and principles, as well as its resolution [72/279](#) of 31 May 2018 and Economic and Social Council resolution [2020/23](#) of 22 July 2020, and welcoming the efforts of the Secretary-General to better position the United Nations operational activities for development to support countries in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda,

Reaffirming further the commitment made in the 2030 Agenda to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all,



Noting with concern that, despite the considerable progress on education access and participation over the past years, 250 million children and youth aged 6 to 17 were still out of school in 2022, more than half of children and adolescents are not meeting minimum proficiency standards in reading and mathematics and teacher shortages persist, with an estimated global gap of 44 million additional qualified teachers, that, while rapid technological and digital changes present opportunities and challenges, the learning environment, the capacities of teachers and the quality of education have not kept pace, with only half of countries having standards for developing teachers' information and communications technology skills, while, globally, only 40 per cent of primary, 50 per cent of lower secondary and 65 per cent of upper secondary schools are connected to the Internet, and that refocused efforts are needed to improve learning outcomes for the full life cycle, especially for women, girls and people in vulnerable situations,

Reaffirming the commitment made in the 2030 Agenda to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development,

Noting the Transforming Education Summit, convened by the Secretary-General in New York from 16 to 19 September 2022, as well as its Pre-Summit, hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris from 28 to 30 June 2022, as a contribution towards the acceleration of progress in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4,

Reaffirming its resolution [69/313](#) of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

Acknowledging the importance for achieving sustainable development of delivering quality education to all girls and boys, which will require reaching children living in extreme poverty and rural areas, children with disabilities, migrant and refugee children and those in conflict and post-conflict situations, Indigenous people and children in vulnerable situations and providing safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all, and recognizing the importance of scaling up investments and international cooperation to allow all children to complete free, equitable, inclusive and quality early childhood, primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes, including by scaling up and strengthening initiatives, such as the Global Partnership for Education, as part of the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as well as the six Partnerships launched at the 2022 Transforming Education Summit, and by upgrading education facilities that are child-, disability- and gender-sensitive and increasing the percentage of qualified teachers in developing countries, including through international cooperation, especially in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and middle-income countries,

Recognizing that, despite gains in providing access to education, girls are still more likely than boys to remain excluded from education owing to gendered barriers,

Acknowledging the importance of ensuring that all children, youth and adults achieve literacy and numeracy skills by 2030,

Acknowledging also the importance of adopting science, technology and innovation strategies as integral elements of national sustainable development strategies to help to strengthen knowledge-sharing and collaboration and the importance of scaling up investments in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and digital literacy education and enhancing technical, vocational and tertiary education, distance education and training and of ensuring equal access for women and girls and encouraging their participation therein,

Acknowledging further the importance of education for achieving sustainable development, including in the context of the 2030 Agenda, and building on the Millennium Development Goals, Agenda 21,¹ the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation),² the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, organized by the Government of Japan and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, in 2014, the World Education Forum 2015, held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, the Education 2030 Framework for Action, adopted on 4 November 2015 by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its thirty-eighth session, the framework entitled “Education for Sustainable Development: towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals” (ESD for 2030), endorsed by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its fortieth session, and the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Government of Germany, held online from Berlin from 17 to 19 May 2021,

Recalling the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development,³ the Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development, adopted at the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development,⁴ and the Incheon Declaration of the World Education Forum 2015,⁵

Noting with great concern the severe negative impact on human health, safety and well-being caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, as well as the severe disruption to societies and economies and the devastating impact on lives and livelihoods, and that the poorest and most vulnerable are the hardest hit by the pandemic, reaffirming the ambition to get back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by designing and implementing sustainable and inclusive recovery strategies to accelerate progress towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to help to reduce the risk of and build resilience to future shocks, crises and pandemics, including by strengthening health systems and achieving universal health coverage, and recognizing that equitable and timely access for all to safe, quality, effective and affordable COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics are an essential part of a global response based on unity, solidarity, renewed multilateral cooperation and the principle of leaving no one behind,

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

² *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

³ See [A/69/76](#), annex.

⁴ [A/70/228](#), annex.

⁵ Incheon Declaration: Education 2030 – towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all (see United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Final Report of the World Education Forum 2015, Incheon, Republic of Korea, 19–22 May 2015* (Paris, 2015)).

Noting with great concern also the unprecedented global school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which have affected more than 1.5 billion children and youth worldwide, resulting in significant learning losses and increased dropout rates disproportionately impacting teachers and students in vulnerable situations, particularly girls and women, and exacerbated pre-existing inequities between and within education systems, as education is a primary driver across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, bearing in mind the impact that the pandemic has had on students' and teachers' mental health and well-being, emphasizing the importance of investing in accessible learning platforms, digital hybrid learning, including through safe, better, universal, affordable and equal access to the Internet, stronger parental or guardian support, targeted teacher capacity-development programmes and the development of online learning platforms and resources, reaffirming the importance of safely reopening schools as soon as possible, and of supporting all children to return to school, and noting with appreciation the action of the Global Education Coalition, launched by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to support countries in their efforts to mitigate the impact of school closures, address learning losses and adapt education systems, as well as that of the School Meals Coalition as a joint initiative by Governments, development agencies, academia and the private sector to address the nutrition gap caused by school closures worldwide,

Acknowledging the important lessons that were drawn from the COVID-19 pandemic in health, culture, education, science, technology and innovation and digital transformation for sustainable development,

Acknowledging also the importance of implementing safe, nutritious and sufficient school feeding programmes as an effective and affordable platform for the inclusion, development and re-engagement of children and youth in schools, and taking note of the convening of the first global summit of the School Meals Coalition, in Paris on 18 and 19 October 2023,

Reaffirming its resolution [73/25](#) of 3 December 2018, by which it proclaimed 24 January the International Day of Education,

Recognizing the importance of promoting a holistic approach to education for sustainable development and of encouraging the reinforcement of the interdisciplinary linkages of the three pillars of sustainable development, economic, social and environmental, including different branches of knowledge,

Recognizing also the role of education for sustainable development in promoting and enhancing public awareness of the eradication of poverty, of sustainable consumption and production, of combating climate change, of conserving biodiversity and ecosystems, of building disaster-resilient communities and of promoting a culture of peace and non-violence, among other things,

Reiterating the pledge that no one will be left behind, reaffirming the recognition that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, and the wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society, and recommitting to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first,

Deeply concerned about the annual estimated 97 billion United States dollar financing gap for low- and lower-middle-income countries to achieve by 2030 the Sustainable Development Goal 4 targets that they have set for themselves, which already fall short of the universal global Goal 4 aspiration, with African countries accounting for the largest share of this financial gap, concerned also about the overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on levels of public spending on education in low- and lower-middle-income countries, a situation compounded by increasing fiscal pressures, and taking note of efforts such as those of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Sustainable Development Goal 4-Education

2030 High-level Steering Committee and the multilateral financing of education initiative to increase education financing, including through a strategic dialogue on the strengthening of the multilateral education financing system for greater coherence, impact and accountability,

Deeply concerned also about the risk of education being underfunded and the impact of disrupted educational services during humanitarian emergencies on efforts to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all, and recognizing the need to support early childhood education, as well as to promote tertiary education, skills training and vocational education in conflict and crisis situations, where higher education serves as a powerful driver for change, shelters and protects a critical group of young men and women by maintaining their hopes for the future, fosters inclusion and non-discrimination and acts as a catalyst for the recovery and rebuilding of post-conflict countries,

Looking forward to the holding of the first ESD-Net 2030 global meeting in Tokyo in December 2023, and taking note of the previous ESD-Net regional meetings, held in Addis Ababa, Bali, Indonesia, Beirut, Paris and Santiago by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on education for sustainable development,⁶ which provided a review of the implementation of education for sustainable development in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;⁷

2. *Takes note with appreciation* of the Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development, the outcome statement of the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, held from 17 to 19 May 2021 online from Berlin, organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Government of Germany;⁸

3. *Reaffirms* education for sustainable development as a vital means of implementation for sustainable development, as outlined in the Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development and the Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development, and as an integral element of the Sustainable Development Goal on quality education and a key enabler of all the other Goals, and welcomes the increased international recognition of education for sustainable development in quality education and lifelong learning;

4. *Calls upon* the international community to provide inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels – early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary and distance education, including technical and vocational training – so that all people, irrespective of sex, age, race or ethnicity, and persons with disabilities, migrants, Indigenous people, children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations, may have access to lifelong learning opportunities that help them to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities to participate fully in society and contribute to sustainable development;

5. *Reaffirms* the commitment at the very heart of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind and commit to taking more tangible steps to support people in vulnerable situations and the most vulnerable countries and to reach the furthest behind first;

⁶ [A/78/219](#).

⁷ Resolution 70/1.

⁸ [A/76/228](#), annex.

6. *Calls for* the scaling up of efforts by relevant stakeholders to better collaborate to strengthen implementation of the framework entitled “Education for Sustainable Development: towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals” (ESD for 2030) at the global, regional and national levels, as well as to promote education responses to sustainable development challenges in all three pillars;

7. *Encourages* Governments and other relevant stakeholders to commit to building resilient, inclusive, quality education systems by (a) providing increased support to teachers and educational personnel, including through targeted professional development for digital and pedagogical skills; (b) investing in skills development, including social and emotional learning and well-being, and psychosocial support, and mental health for inclusive recovery, sustainable development, decent work and enhanced employability, and full and productive employment; (c) eradicating poverty, combating inequality and bridging the digital divide through open education resources and equitable, affordable and inclusive technology-supported learning, based on critical thinking and sustainability principles with a proper assessment of risks and benefits and by ensuring that the access, development and use of technologies are responsive, safe, equitable and inclusive; (d) building emergency preparedness and response capacity of education systems; and (e) building more inclusive education by ensuring gender equality and non-discrimination in access to knowledge and skills;

8. *Encourages* Governments and other stakeholders concerned to scale up education for sustainable development action through the implementation of the “Education for Sustainable Development: towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals” (ESD for 2030) framework and its road map;

9. *Encourages* Governments to increase efforts to systemically integrate and institutionalize education for sustainable development in the education sector and other relevant sectors, as appropriate, including through, inter alia, the provision of financial resources, the inclusion of education for sustainable development in relevant policies and the development of the capacities of policymakers, institutional leaders and educators, as well as through the strengthening of research and innovation, and monitoring and evaluation on education for sustainable development in order to support the scaling up of good practices;

10. *Reaffirms* the commitment to continue to increase investment in inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all, including early childhood education, youth and adult literacy programmes and initiatives, digital education, cultural education, education for sustainable development, digital technologies for education, skills enhancement, affordable higher education and vocational training, education in emergencies and teachers’ continuous professional development, recognizes that early childhood education and care can generate substantial benefits for children, and reaffirms the commitment to address barriers to girls’ education, gender and disability gaps and to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in and through education and safe, healthy and stimulating learning environments that enable all learners to achieve their full potential and physical, mental and emotional well-being;

11. *Encourages* all countries, intergovernmental bodies, organizations of the United Nations system, relevant non-governmental organizations and all other relevant stakeholders to enhance international cooperation in supporting the efforts of developing countries towards the realization of the full potential of education for sustainable development;

12. *Emphasizes* the importance of further developing and implementing educational and public awareness programmes, training scientific, technical and managerial personnel, fostering access to information and promoting public participation in addressing climate change challenges;

13. *Decides* to continue to give consideration, as appropriate, to the contribution of education for sustainable development in the follow-up and review framework of the 2030 Agenda;

14. *Notes* Member States' engagement throughout the Transforming Education Summit process, including through national consultations, and invites the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and relevant stakeholders, including the Sustainable Development Goal 4-Education 2030 High-level Steering Committee, to support Member States, upon their request, in the country-level implementation of their national commitments made during the Transforming Education Summit process, as well as other relevant national strategies for transforming education and accelerate national efforts towards Goal 4;

15. *Reaffirms* the mandated role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as the specialized United Nations agency for education, to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 agenda; including through the strengthened Sustainable Development Goal 4-Education 2030 High-level Steering Committee, and encourages the High-Level Steering Committee to take all steps necessary to achieve maximum cooperation and coordination in order to make effective progress towards Goal 4;

16. *Invites* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as the lead agency for education for sustainable development, to continue to coordinate the implementation of the framework entitled "Education for Sustainable Development: towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals" (ESD for 2030) through its road map, in cooperation with Governments, United Nations organizations, funds and programmes, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, and to continue to advocate the importance of ensuring adequate resources for education for sustainable development, and calls upon the United Nations system to increase efforts to mainstream a gender perspective into the implementation of the framework;

17. *Invites* the organizations of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to continue to provide support and assist States, upon their request, in developing their national capacities to promote education for sustainable development, including through knowledge-sharing and standard-setting, youth empowerment and mobilization, the exchange of best practices, data collection, research and study;

18. *Invites* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other relevant United Nations bodies to continue to assess, in consultation with Member States, progress towards the achievement of education for sustainable development;

19. *Encourages* all countries, relevant intergovernmental bodies, organizations of the United Nations system, relevant non-governmental organizations and all other relevant stakeholders to give due consideration to the contribution of education to the achievement of sustainable development in the formulation of national, regional and international development policies and international cooperation instruments;

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its eightieth session an action-oriented report on the implementation of the present resolution, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its eightieth session, under the item entitled "Sustainable development", the sub-item entitled "Education for sustainable development".

*49th plenary meeting
19 December 2023*