

## High-Level Steering Group Meeting - Minutes

Thursday, 11 April 2019, 6:45am at the Salon III A, Ritz-Carlton Hotel, 1150 22<sup>nd</sup> St., N.W., Washington, DC

### Participants:

Chair: Gordon Brown, United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, Ulla Tørnæs, Minister for Development Cooperation (Denmark), Dag-Inge Ulstein, Minister of International Development (Norway), Mirwais Balkhi, Minister of Education (Afghanistan), Deng Deng Hoc Yai, Minister of General Education and Instruction (South Sudan), Matthew Rycroft, Permanent Secretary, Department for International Development (United Kingdom), Henrietta H. Fore, Executive Director (UNICEF), Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (OCHA), Christopher MacLennan, Assistant Deputy Minister, Global Issues and Development (Canada), Julie Cram, Deputy Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment USAID (United States), Carin Jämtin, Director General of the Swedish International Development Agency (Sweden), Reina Buijs, Director General for International Cooperation (Netherlands), Stefano Manservigi, Director General, International Cooperation and Development (European Union), Bill Costello, Minister Counsellor, Washington. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), Tariq Al Gurg, Chief Executive Officer (Dubai Cares), Jaime Saavedra, Senior Director, Education (World Bank Group), Margriet Schreuders, Head of Charities, Dutch Postcode Lottery (Novamedia), Tanya Barron, CEO (Plan International), Dean Brooks, Director (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies), Alice Albright, Chief Executive Officer (Global Partnership for Education), Yasmine Sherif, Director (Education Cannot Wait)

### Observers:

Jana Babatunde-Bey, President (the Will and Jada Smith Family Foundation), Madge Thomas, Senior Director Global Policy & Government Affairs (Global Citizen), Dr. Waleed Al-Wohaib, Director General (Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development), Khemais El Gazzah, Senior Advisor to the DG (Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development)

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### Meeting Minutes

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone, in particular those attending for the first time: the Minister of Education from Afghanistan, the Minister of General Education & Instruction from South Sudan, the Minister of Development from Norway, Global Citizen, the Will & Jada Smith Family Foundation and the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development who were all attending for the first time. He outlined that the meeting would look at progress on ECW's pioneering approach to education in crisis-settings and discuss HLSG's political support to reach ECW resource mobilization targets. He handed over to the ECW Director for a presentation of key results.

### 1. Director's Update

- The ECW Director highlighted that ECW has so far reached 1.3 million children across pre-primary, primary and secondary education in 19 countries with quality education and expects to reach two million children by the end of 2019.
- A further 1.3 million children have been reached in Yemen with exam and school feeding services.
- ECW will have launched 11 Multi-Year Resilience Programs, ECW's main vehicle for reaching children caught in crisis and conflict with quality education, by the end of 2019.
- ECW is responding to sudden onset disasters and emergencies through its First Emergency Response funding window, applications which are being developed in 10 countries (Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Columbia, Ecuador, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Peru and Zimbabwe) with additional financial support from DFID and Dubai Cares for Cyclone Idai response.

The Chair concluded by reporting that ECW has recently joined a new partnership with HP for provision of technology in up to 20 schools for refugees and host-communities in Uganda, and a partnership with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Islamic Development Bank to support education in 19 crisis countries in OIC members states, starting with Niger.

The Chair handed over to H.E. Dr. Mirwais Balkhi, Minister of Education to brief on ECW's investments in Afghanistan.

## **2. Education in Afghanistan: ECW Investment**

- The Minister highlighted progress achieved since 2001 in Afghanistan, noting that the total number of students and the proportion of girls have significantly increased. Today, out of 9 million students, 37% are girls. However, despite the progress made, an estimated 3.7 million girls and boys are still out of school with the majority being girls. Moreover, 95% of children with disabilities do not attend school.
- ECW plays critical role as part of the Ministry of Education's commitment to ensure that every child is able to access education by 2030. The ECW facilitated Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP) aims to provide access to education to 500,000 children per year, for at least three years with a particular focus on girls and displaced and returnee children. MYRP seed funding is currently establishing 4,000 Community-Based Education programmes which are providing education for 120,000 children.
- The Minister stressed the need for building more community-based schools, recruiting teachers, especially female teachers and capacity building. He called for further support to reach ECW MYRP targets and ensure immediate humanitarian needs are met and longer term structural barriers to education are addressed in Afghanistan.

The Chair thanked Minister of Afghanistan and handed over to Mark Lowcock, the Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator of OCHA to introduce the Humanitarian-Development Nexus Paper.

## **3. Humanitarian-Development Nexus Paper**

- OCHA noted that ECW serves as an excellent example of efforts to shift the way we work to address not only the immediate, but also the longer-term needs of people affected by crisis, at the same time as reducing their risk and vulnerability. Education focusing on

fragile and conflict-affected states, can bring together humanitarian and development actors.

- The ECW Nexus Paper makes a convincing case for education as a particularly suitable sector for realizing the Humanitarian-Development Nexus. Importantly, it highlights the need for substantial financial investments, combining humanitarian and development funding while also drawing from diverse financing sources, such as the private sector, foundations and leveraging capital markets. The true test of the ECW model will be to align and harness the appropriate streams of bilateral and multilateral financing.
- OCHA drew attention to one of the key common issues emerging, in line with the ECW paper, the challenge of harmonizing resources and financing. The Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator stressed the need for more dialogue with key bilateral donors and International Financial Institutions, building for example on the recent OECD-DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus.
- Humanitarian financing is at record levels while some key areas are still underfinanced, including education. CERF has started prioritizing education in the area of youth, which could generate example of best practice which could be replicate elsewhere. The USG asked all Humanitarian Coordinators to prioritize education in their CERF requests.
- UNICEF supported the comments by OCHA and acknowledged the achievements of ECW to date. UNICEF stated that ECW is helping change the way we work in the field, to bring together humanitarian and development actors in multi-year approaches to planning for children and young people's education across the humanitarian-development continuum. The Executive Director referred directly to the presentation of the Minister of Education from Afghanistan and acknowledged the achievements which have been made. She highlighted that girls and children with disabilities are especially vulnerable with about 60% of the out-of-school children being girls, and only 5% of children with disabilities being able to access education within Afghanistan. Girls at all ages are less likely to attend school than boys. She stressed that it is important when discussing the work across the continuum that we take a holistic view. She promised that UNICEF will continue to support ECW with this at country and global levels. The Executive Director stated UNICEF will continue to support joint missions to ECW investments and lend visibility to ECW's approach and investments.
- UNHCR highlighted that education is an essential piece in the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and it provides solutions to tackle the challenge that development investments are slow to yield concrete results. The High Commissioner encouraged more discussion in this regard and noted that the GCR will have its first review in December and invited all HLSG members to participate. The Commissioner also noted that \$6.5 billion in additional resources has been mobilized through bilateral contributions under the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.
- The World Bank stressed the importance of quality of delivery, to look at what is happening from a learning perspective, rather than just the number of people reached. A \$2 billion financing window is now available to help countries manage refugee influxes, targeting both refugees and host communities with longer-term solutions. It is hoped that the next IDA replenishment will increase the size of this window and be able to focus even more on education.
- Denmark expressed strong support for ECW's approach and echoed the comments from OCHA to prioritize education in humanitarian financing. Demark also underlined the importance of host communities and was pleased to see ECW has investments working

with host communities, governments and stakeholders in in Uganda, Ethiopia and Bangladesh.

- European Union noted that the nexus is a tripartite approach involving development, humanitarian action and security. It is necessary to align structures and money. Governments are key in this work as the EU's experience with budget support based on clear progress indicators shows.
- GPE agreed on the importance of the nexus and noted that funding comes together at local level. GPE emphasized its close working relationship with ECW in country and looked forward to working together more closely in the field on coordination. At global level, there are good opportunities for joint efforts.
- United Kingdom announced up to 4 million pounds in additional financing through ECW to support the response to Cyclone Idai. The UK echoed support for points made on a joined-up response and would provide further suggestions in writing. The UK emphasized the role of ECW in leading well-coordinated, high-quality Multi-Year Resilience Proposals in forgotten crises, for example Chad, and the UK supports ECW in their focus to develop targeted interventions that focus on learning outcomes and children's well-being, including mental health.
- The Chair thanked UK for the contribution of up to 4 million pounds and continued support to ECW.
- The United States supported the points on focusing on learning outcomes and announced the USAID/ECW Road Show to attract foundations and strengthen engagement with the private sector.
- Sweden praised ECW for changing things on the ground by moving with unprecedented speed and urgency. The Director General expressed her full support to ECW by saying "If we wouldn't have ECW we would have to invent it". Sweden also supported the nexus approach and echoed the points from OCHA and UNICEF, highlighting the need for long term strategies for children in protracted crises and the importance of quality education.
- The Minister of Norway recounted his visit to a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh and noted how education programmes helped to bring back hopes and dreams to girls who are able to receive education in the learning centers. Norway would like to see ECW give quality education to children with disabilities. The Minister thanked ECW for its work.

The Chair thanked the participants for their interventions and highlighted the importance of the "Humanitarian-development continuum". He suggested UN agencies and the World Bank keep this on the agenda and moving it forward through better coordination and continued support for the multilateral system. He then invited H.E. Deng Deng Hoc Yai, Minister of General Education and Instruction to brief the HLSG on the situation in South Sudan and ECW's forthcoming investments.

#### **4. Education in South Sudan: Forthcoming ECW Investment**

- The Minister recounted the experiences of himself and his senior aid as young children and refugees during the turbulent war in South Sudan. By noting how education has completely changed their lives, the Minister drew attention to the 2.2 Million children who are still out of school in South Sudan, with the majority being girls and those living in rural areas.
- South Sudan has made noticeable progress, by providing 10,000 text books, a new national curriculum and training of teachers. The Minister thanked the UK government for

investing 60 million pounds into the girls' education in South Sudan program. He also thanked the EU for supporting the teacher incentive program and stressed that the South Sudanese government will do more to make sure teachers are paid.

- The Minister outlined the need to construct new schools, train primary school teachers, provide salaries, develop new text books, improve school management systems and increase quality learning resources. He also stressed the importance of training a number of inspectors in order to improve the quality of education.
- Obtaining a quality education is the basis for creating sustainable development. To ensure children not left behind, the Minister highlighted the need to lobby for an increase of government allocation from the current 10% of national budget for education.

The Chair thanked Minister of South Sudan and handed over to the ECW Director for a quick update on resource mobilization.

#### **5. A Call to Action: Open Discussion to Support ECW Resource Mobilization Efforts**

- The ECW Director stressed that with nearly 1.3 million children and youth reached and \$340 million mobilized for the Trust Fund, ECW must continue collective efforts to mobilize the US\$1.8 billion and reach the 9 million children and youth in emergencies and crises by 2021. This entailed the need to mobilize \$560 million for the Trust Fund to support First Emergency Responses and seed investments in Multi-Year Resilience joint programmes, and an additional \$1.2 billion which needs to be leveraged in country and/or at regional levels.

The Chair referred to two documents: A Call for Action: The Case for Investment in Quality Education in Crisis, providing more details on ECW targets and its added value; the Options Paper for HLSG, which provides concrete action that HLSG members can support to inspire political commitment and generate additional funding for ECW. The Chair then opened the floor for brief comments.

- Dubai Cares announced \$2 million to support ECW's emergency response in Mozambique.
- The Chair thanked Dubai Cares for the contribution of US\$2 million and commitment to ECW.
- The European Union underlined its full support to make the call to action and ECW more permanent and strategic. The Director General highlighted the availability of EU Delegations in each country to share experience/analysis and anchor it better locally. He also suggested using the upcoming European Development Days in June to present some of the outcomes of ECW.
- Canada underlined two things learned as leaders on G7: the importance of the Nexus (how to get education results in some of the toughest situations when there are other urgent needs) and the importance of girls' education- getting more girls into schools is contributing to long term development. Canada reiterated its \$50M Canadian Dollars contribution to ECW for girls' education in crisis.
- The Chair thanked Canada for their contribution of \$50M Canadian Dollars to ECW.
- Plan International voiced the full support of Civil Society for ECW and its replenishment event during UNGA 2019. Civil Society is pleased to see the concrete and driving messages from the Case for Investment and thanked ECW for walking the talk and



contributing to the richness of discussion. The CEO stressed the importance of mobilizing civil society and called for events to bring everyone together.

The Chair referred to Hollywood movie star Will Smith, who bungy-jumped from a helicopter on his 50th birthday for ECW – in order to illustrate the need to conquer fear to deliver education to 75 million children and youth in crisis. The Chair invited the representative from the Will & Jade Smith Family Foundation and Global Citizenship to make an announcement.

The Will & Jade Smith Family Foundation and Global Citizen advised that Will Smith's bungy-jump was followed by a fundraising campaign and the Foundation will provide a contribution to ECW.

The Chair thanked Will & Jade Smith Foundation for the forthcoming contribution, as well as Global Citizen for their support to ECW.

## **6. AOB**

- Dubai Cares updated the HLSG on the Education EXPO 2020 in Dubai and noted that a major global education forum will be the highlight for EXPO 2020. The CEO extended an invitation to this benchmark event to all participants.

The Chair summarized the meeting, noting the approval of the Humanitarian-Development Nexus Paper and the paper: A Call for Action: The Case for Investment in Quality Education in Crisis. He announced Peter Tabichi's appointment as Education Cannot Wait's Champion for Children in Conflicts and Crisis. He referred to the Third International Conference on Safe Schools, which will be held on 28-29 May in Spain, and encouraged all HLSG members to endorse and support the Safe Schools Declaration and attend the conference.

**The next HLSG meeting will be held in September 2019 in New York on the margins of the General Assembly week.**