

High-Level Steering Group Teleconference – Minutes

Tuesday 20 September 2022, 07.30-08.45 AM

1- Chair's Welcome and Introduction

The Chair, the Rt Hon. Gordon Brown:

- Welcomed all participants, including newcomers: H.E. Ms Awut Deng Acuil, Minister of Education of South Sudan, H.E. Ms. Julieta Valls Noyes, Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of State, Ms. Anne Birgitte Albrechtsen, CEO of the LEGO Foundation and Sigrid Van Aken, CEO of the Postcode Lottery/Novamedia Group
- Thanked participants for attending this important meeting in person and announced the agenda for the meeting.

2- Current Priority Crises: Girls' Secondary Education in Afghanistan, Crises in Pakistan and Ukraine

The Chair:

- Noted how the world had been gripped by the recent flooding in Pakistan, and the dire needs caused by the recent war in Ukraine and change of power in Afghanistan and stressed ECW's commitment to supporting the response to these crises.
- ECW responded to the emergency in Ukraine via a USD 5million First Emergency Response grant which was approved on 15th March, less than three weeks after hostilities began on 24th February. The grant focused primarily on access, protection and mental health and is being implemented jointly by UNICEF and Save The Children. Building on this initial investment, the development of a Multi-Year Resilience Programme will be initiated later this year.
- In Afghanistan, ECW continued to provide educational support to children and adolescents across some of the most remote and underserved regions of the country. 58% of ECW's learners are girls and adolescent girls. However, it is unacceptable that nearly 1 million girls and adolescents were banned from going to school and learning, and ECW and its partners were working to try to resolve this issue with the authorities in Afghanistan.
- In Pakistan, ECW were approving at the time of the meeting a USD 5 million First Emergency Response grant to help establish temporary learning centres, purchase and disseminate teaching and learning materials, and ensure the safety and well-being of the children who have been affected by these devastating floods.
- Invited Catherine Russel, Executive Director, UNICEF to provide an update on the needs of children and girls in crisis-affected countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Ukraine, and Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, to provide an overview of the humanitarian needs in all three settings, and how to make education central to the response that is urgently needed.

Catherine Russel, Executive Director, UNICEF

- The UNICEF Executive Director visited Ukraine, to mark the launch of the Back to Learning Together Initiative, developed by both the Ukraine Ministry of Education and UNICEF. Children were facing a set of challenges in and out of Ukraine.
- Children who have remained in Ukraine face the devastation of the war daily. Schools had been destroyed by bombardments which illustrated how devastating this war was for children. The Ukrainian government was currently limiting the number of children who were able to attend school, which represented a small number at a time, to ensure that bomb shelters could accommodate these numbers. The focus remained on allowing first graders to attend school as a priority. UNICEF has worked closely with these schools to modernise the facilities and the bomb shelters and ensure they were fit for purpose.
- Children who had fled the conflict in Ukraine with their families were facing a different set of challenges with online learning and adapting to new environments and languages. The online learning curriculum was fortunately in place since the Covid-19 pandemic and continued to serve children in and out of the country. However, with no indication of the length of time these families would continue to find themselves in refugee situations, children were facing the likelihood of having to enrol in the national educational systems of host countries, exacerbating the challenges they were already facing.
- The UNICEF Executive Director met with the Taliban authorities in Afghanistan to discuss the importance of education and particularly girls' education. Parts of the Taliban government clearly understood and supported girls' return to school.
- Girls were allowed to attend school in some parts of the country. UNICEF was also providing community-based education in other areas. UNICEF and its partners were awaiting the resumption of the school year in March which would determine whether the ban would remain in place or if new measures were to be implemented.
- The UNICEF Executive Director also visited Pakistan which now saw a third of the country affected by the floods and highlighted UNICEF's great concerns for the millions of children and particularly girls who were out of school and the very high stunting numbers. These worrying impacts were not solely the result of the recent floods. More resources to help children in Pakistan were clearly and urgently required.
- UNICEF was optimistic that the TES will bring positive change but only if it is the first of many discussions and interactions, which will require continued commitment, monitoring and support for these countries to try to better support education.

Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, OCHA:

- Schools and children are sadly in the frontline and suffer terribly in war. The world is overwhelmed by different crises triggered by war, climate shocks, the Covid-19 pandemic, amongst others, which have left seventy-eight million children out of school today, and dangerously steering efforts away from Sustainable Development Goal 4.
- The hopes and aspirations of the international community for the children and girls of Afghanistan were dashed when the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan last year. Although girls are allowed to attend school in up to ten provinces, the number remain alarmingly low and undependable. The UN and OCHA will continue to strongly advocate for their right to an education and welcome Education Cannot Wait's active efforts in the country to make education available for all.
- In Pakistan, as a result of the recent floods, over 22,000 schools have been damaged or destroyed. Up to three and a half million children are affected by this crisis alone. The country will need more than a year to rebuild these schools to properly resume children's learning.

- The conflict in Ukraine has affected 5.7 million children, denying many their right to education. As shocking 47% of schools have been damaged, destroyed or have been unable to reopen as a result of this conflict. The international community must reiterate the sanctity of schools from attacks and the imperative to continue providing education in times of crisis.
- Education is sadly affected in each crisis and girls' education is furthermore disproportionately impacted or even forgotten at times. Resourcing and sustainability are crucial to providing inclusive education, which is so important to children and families in crisis, and OCHA remain fully supportive to these commitments.
- It is impossible to recover from crises without recovering access to basic services, one of which is education, which finds itself in the frontline of crisis but also in the frontline of recovery.

The Chair opened the floor for interventions. The following statements were made:

Rana Tanveer Hussain, Minister of Federal Education and Professional Training, Pakistan.

- The education sector in Pakistan had fallen behind in recent times following the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and recently due to the floods. Over 22 million children were now out of school and an uncountable number of schools had disappeared or been destroyed.
- The role ECW, GPE and UN agencies was playing was instrumental and extremely appreciated. However more aid was needed as the needs were due to increase and will only be truly assessed once the flood waters start receding.
- Pakistan looked forward to receiving further support and funding from partner organisations.

Dr. Bärbel Kofler, Parliamentary State Secretary to the German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development.

- Germany was deeply concerned by the crises affecting education in Ukraine, Pakistan and Afghanistan but also by the multitude of violent conflicts and the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic that continue to block access to education for girls and boys.
- Germany supports ECW and wished to assert this support with their upcoming pledge of EUR 10 million due to be announced during Global Citizen Festival. This financing will allow ECW and its partners to kickstart the reconstruction of the education sector in Ukraine.

Bård Vegar Solhjell, Director-General, Norad, on behalf of Anne Beathe Tvinnereim, Minister of International Development, Norway.

- Noted Norway's concern about the Taliban's decision to ban girls' access to secondary education and expect schools beyond the primary level to be open for both girls and boys. Norway expressed their concerns directly to the Taliban, publicly, and at the UN Security Council, and will continue their clear messaging on this issue.
- Girls and women in Afghanistan need the international community's support now more than ever. Education and supporting the freedom of girls remains a top priority for Norway in Afghanistan. Collectively, the HLSG will need to support the existing education system and to find effective ways to reach the girls that are forced to stay home, whether by community-based education or other methods. Norway welcomed and supported ECW and its partners' efforts to promote education for the most marginalised children in Afghanistan.
- Expressed sincere regrets about the severe impact on the education sector in Pakistan by the recent flood emergency. Children will need longer term learning support and help to cope with psychosocial challenges and

must not suffer a gap in learning. Norway welcomed ECW's rapid response through the launch of a First Emergency Response in Pakistan.

- Norway highlighted the enormous consequences the war on Ukraine was having on the civilian population. Protection of civilians is a priority and Norway was particularly concerned by the plight of children, often the most severely affected by war. Norway sincerely welcomed ECW's rapid response and the Ukrainian education authorities' efforts to reach as many children as possible.
- Education and schools must be protected better. Norway called for the full implementation of Security Council Resolution 2601 on protection of education, and for universal support for the Safe Schools Declaration.

Charles North, Acting CEO, GPE, on behalf of Jakaya Kikwete, Chair, GPE:

- ECW's High level Steering Group was being convened at a very crucial time due to momentous crises in many countries impacting the learning of millions of children such as in Pakistan, Ukraine or Afghanistan amongst many, and in parallel world leader's commitments for transforming education during the TES.
- GPE is fully committed to working closely with ECW and the international community to provide timely and effective support for children learning.
- In response to the devastating floods in Pakistan, GPE was working closely with the government and partners to address the urgent needs. A portion of GPE's existing programs can be reallocated immediately for flood relief efforts to ensure children have continued access to learning. In addition, GPE has informed the local government that up to 20 percent or roughly USD 28 million of GPE's next allocation can be accessed early under the accelerated funding modality. It is important that both ECW and GPE work closely along with the international partners to ensure that education is resumed, and better and safe schools are constructed.
- GPE strongly condemns the ban on girls' access secondary education in Afghanistan, where GPE also works closely with ECW on the ground. In consultation with partners, GPE is ensuring that all of its funded activities provide support for girls' education and is working closely with UNICEF and other partners to ensure girls in secondary education have access to textbooks.
- GPE stands in solidarity with Ukraine and joins calls to take special measures to protect children and schools, where the current conflict impacted the learning of over 5.7 million children. Over the past months, GPE has been working with the Ministry of Education and partners to mobilise funding to unlock up to USD\$ 40 million from the GPE Multiplier.
- ECW and GPE teams are actively working together to strengthen the mutual collaboration and partnership to ensure that children's education all over the globe, especially in conflict affected countries and regions, is well supported.

3- Director's Progress Update and TES Stocktake

- The Chair handed the floor to the **ECW Director, Yasmine Sherif**, to provide a presentation on ECW's 2021 Annual Results Report and on ECW's new Strategic Plan 2023-2026 before their submission to the HLSG for approval **[please refer to the Video and PowerPoint Presentation]**:
- The Director reaffirmed ECW's close cooperation with GPE and IFFEd. The needs have reached shocking proportions with an ECW study showing that 222 million children and adolescents have had their education disrupted in emergencies and protracted crisis, alone, in addition to hundreds of millions in non-crisis yet low-income countries. None can do it alone. The role of ECW, GPE and IFFEd is complementary, and cooperation is of essence to manage the enormous needs.

- She announced that ECW had just released a First Emergency Response to Pakistan in response to the flooding, that ECW was conducting a mission to Ukraine to build on its initial First Emergency Response and in order to develop a multi-year resilience investment, and that ECW and partners were strongly engaged in advocating for girls' education in Afghanistan, where ECW will make a second multi-year investment focussing on secondary girls' education.

Strategic Plan

- Developing the Plan was a collective and consultative effort over many months. The final product is a bold and ambitious plan that will be our strategic anchor for the next four years.
- The Director presented a short video setting out the key elements of the Plan.
- The Plan continues ECW's track record as a global convenor and transformative force in the sector. It also pushes ECW to go further and faster, especially on climate and gender.
- The Director announced the launch of the ECW Case for Investment and Financing campaign to ensure complete funding for the new Strategic Plan 2023-2026.

Annual Results Report 2021

- ECW has published its 4th annual results report presenting progress toward its objectives as set out in its results framework and strategic plan. The whole report and executive summary was shared with the HLSG.
- The Director presented a brief overview of ECW's investments and results achieved to date.
- ECW has mobilised a total of USD 1.1 billion since its inception, through investments supporting 43 crisis affected countries reaching close to 7 million children in less than five years.
- Both the Strategic Plan and the Annual Results Report 2021 build on the empirical experience of ECW's work and on the findings of three independent evaluations of both the MYRP and FER investment windows, and on a comprehensive Organisational Evaluation Review.
- The urgency to meet the challenge of financing education for 222 million children affected by crisis strongly featured in the Transformative Education Summit sessions and recommendations. This challenge can only be met with full collaboration of all key partners and stakeholders.

The Chair opened the floor for interventions. The following statements were made:

Flemming Flemming Møller Mortensen, Minister for Development and Nordic Cooperation, Denmark

- Denmark was proud to deliver education for children in crisis settings through its partners. Partnerships were key to achieving results and ECW's title has become increasingly clear and crucial over time.
- Denmark shared a common focus with ECW's core strategic priorities such as providing quality education for all and gender equality through education.
- Denmark encouraged ECW to ensure coherence between the humanitarian and development activities through cooperation with other education initiatives.
- The TES provided a unique opportunity to bring education to the top of the global political agenda and ECW must seize this summit as an opportunity to accelerate investments and ensure crisis affected children receive a quality education in line with its ambitious strategic planning.

Filipo Grandi, UN High-Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR

- UNHCR approved both the new Strategic Plan and the Annual Results Report 2021. UNHCR welcomed the consultative process in developing the Strategic Plan and commended the focus on support for inclusion in national education systems aligning the Plan closely with the provisions of the Global Compact on Refugees.
- However, a high proportion of refugee situations have lasted more than five years with little end in sight, and many refugee response plans in such situations are funded at less than 50%. UNHCR therefore urged for greater progress on the joint ECW, World Bank and GPE pledge made at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum to ensure complementary funding packages that support the institutionalisation of financing for refugee education across the nexus and in ways that ensures sustained access to education.
- UNHCR further welcomed the commitment to continue investing in secondary education in both emergencies and protracted crises as this was often under-financed.
- UNHCR urged ECW to continue ensuring that its funding investments, particularly through its Multi-Year Resilience Plans, address the specific needs of those left furthest behind – noting that refugees often fall outside of the scope of development initiatives in countries.
- UNHCR commended ECW for the results achieved in 2021 despite the very complex settings in which ECW partners had to deliver on the ground but highlighted that the number of refugee children under UNHCR's mandate reached by ECW in 2021 decreased since 2020.
- UNHCR welcomed the continued focus ECW was able to bring globally on the need for adequate, predictable funding to education in emergencies and protracted crisis. However, the Case for Investment claims that refugees can be included in national systems with an investment of USD 130 over three years (\$45 pa) but this is not supported by data modelling from UNHCR and the World Bank who calculated the annual cost of including refugees into national systems at \$4.85bn. ECW plays a critical role in financing inclusion but it is important to clarify that the total cost is much greater.
- UNHCR also raised some related concerns about the cost per child, and whether the number was realistic in terms of the aspirations of ECW and how this impacted the ability to bring in other donors and fund meaningfully at the nexus.

Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen, CEO, LEGO Foundation:

- Thanked ECW for its tremendous work especially with such constrained budgets and expressed that ECW had clearly proven its model and concept in the past five years. ECW was a needed vehicle for coordination and joined up efforts to address education in emergencies.
- Thanked ECW's ExCom for its work on the Strategic Plan which fully, aligns with LEGO's strategic direction, including gender transformative education, inclusive, playful learning, strengthening teacher and care workforce and strengthening education systems so that they can deal with disruption.
- Building strong systems is crucial. LEGO has been working on the education system in Ukraine, closely with partners for the last thirteen years to take on new holistic child-centered approaches to education. The innovative pedagogies and playful approaches to learning were currently helping teachers and administrators reframe the support to children amidst the disruptions.
- The LEGO Foundation encouraged ECW to keep slowly increasing the percentage of funding going to early childhood.
- The LEGO Foundation will announce its pledge to ECW's financing campaign on September 24th as an indication of its increased support to ECW and will consider how the Foundation can potentially support beyond what is pledged on this date.

Chiara Adamo, Director, Directorate General for International Partnerships, European Commission, on behalf of Jutta Urpilainen, Commissioner for International Partnerships, EU

- The EU and its member states who partner with ECW provide around 60% of ECW's funding and recognize that the needs are increasingly rising.
- Partners must continue supporting organisations such as ECW which promote mutual cooperation at the center of the humanitarian and development nexus.
- One of the EU's key priorities was to continue improving and increasing efforts and partnerships at the country level both in terms of humanitarian funding, where 10% of all humanitarian funds were devoted to education in emergencies, and development funding where 13% , up from 7%, of funds were devoted to education.
- The EU supported ECW's Strategic Plan which was aligned with EU priorities such as focusing on teachers as an essential condition for quality education but also gender equality, localisation and community participation.

Maki Katsuno-Hayashikawa, Director for Education 2030 and head of the TES Secretariat, on behalf of Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

- UNESCO fully supported ECW's new strategic plan and welcomed its reinforced focus on climate crises, girls and young women affected by emergencies and protracted crises and comprehensive education data.
- At the Transforming Education Summit, Member States and partners, including ECW, GPE, UNESCO, UNHCR and UNICEF, jointly launched the Call to Action to transform education in emergencies and protracted crises. The Call to Action and the Strategic Plan speak the same language of transformation in building resilient education systems and implementing actions that increase access, improve learning and well-being, and boost financing. It is a perfect example of the triple nexus in action.
- The launch of the Call to Action was only the first step. Partners now needed to mobilise all forces to ensure its full implementation. With this objective, UNESCO urged all donors to join efforts and use the momentum of ECW's financing conference in February 2023.

Susan Hopgood, President, Education International

- During the Transforming Education Summit, governments and the international community committed to improving "the recruitment, retention and continuous professional development of qualified female and male teachers and to ensure continuity of learning for crisis affected children and youth in safe spaces and [that] teaching is gender-transformative and inclusive". Education International welcomed this important commitment but reiterate the need for governments to walk the talk by making sure that these commitments are translated into reality on the ground. Many governments are yet to implement the Safe Schools Declaration, while educators and students continue to be attacked, kidnapped for ransom or even killed in many African and other countries.
- Education International welcomed the inclusion of teachers in the new ECW strategic plan. Having teachers as a programmatic priority will go a long way towards achieving equitable inclusive quality education for all children and youth in emergency contexts. It is vitally important that the strategy's operational plan include teacher-related indicators in order to monitor and evaluate progress.
- Teachers in many crisis and emergency contexts (Afghanistan, some Nigerian States, South Sudan etc.) go for several months without pay. Education International called for the creation of a Teachers in Emergences Fund (TIEF). Such a fund would help ensure the payment of teachers' salaries in situations where governments have collapsed or are unable to do so. Education International convened a meeting of key stakeholders working in emergency settings, with experts from diverse international development and aid institutions, and the philanthropic community, to discuss how the proposed fund could be financed, pulling together funds from different sources. Education International and stakeholders recently agreed to use the momentum of the TES to explore the development of the funding mechanism for the TIEF.

- ECW's new strategy will not be implemented unless partners mobilise the necessary resources to reach the USD 1.5 billion ECW financing target. Education International endorsed the strategy and will mobilise its members, both in the Global South and North to support ECW's resource mobilisation effort.

Michael Messenger, President & CEO, World Vision

- The ECW team and its leadership have been hard-at-work since the launch of the #222MillionDreams investment campaign which has garnered a lot of positive attention.
- World Vision highlighted the efforts of its civil society and sector partners who have been widely sharing across social, writing op-eds, and organising events to amplify this critical campaign. The EiE Champions group was also able to significantly raise the profile of education in emergencies and ECW's upcoming replenishment in this year's G7 Summit and TES Pre-Summit by organising a virtual roundtable and developing a G7 EiE Call to Action endorsed by 66 organizations.
- Most recently, an education in emergencies Call to Action was launched in Uganda and was championed throughout the Transforming Education Summit through a related youth-led EiE session, EiE engine room discussion, and in coordination with UNESCO to further drive member state commitments to education in emergencies.
- World Vision looked forward to further raising awareness for education in emergencies and for the #222MillionDreams campaign to translate to an impactful replenishment moment, enabling millions of girls and boys affected by the refugee crisis to realise their right to safe, quality education.

Patricia Danzi, Head of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

- Thanked ECW for the inclusive process adopted for the development of the Strategic Plan 2023-2026 and the 2021 Annual Results Report
- Switzerland appreciated the continued focus on children and adolescents most left behind as well as on protracted crises in ECW's new Strategic Plan and welcomed the prioritisation of localisation, gender transformative approaches, disability inclusion and the inclusion of displaced learners.
- Switzerland approved the Strategic Plan 2023-2026 and looked forward to co-hosting the ECW High-Level Financing Conference in February 2023 with the aim to mobilise USD 1.5 billion for the implementation of the new Strategic Plan.
- Switzerland congratulated ECW and its partners on the great results achieved in 2021 and endorsed the 2021 Annual Report.
- Switzerland congratulated ECW for its strong advocacy efforts to ensure that education in emergencies was widely discussed at the TES.

LeAnna Marr, Deputy Assistant Administrator, USAID

- Congratulated ECW for the participatory and collaborative manner in which the strategy was developed.
- USAID welcomed the balance of funds going to the Emergency Response window given the increased number of crises arising. Thanks to its mandate, ECW is the only organisation that can respond with such speed.
- USAID thanked ECW for its focus on those populations that may need additional protection, including children with disabilities and the inclusion of gender diversity in the language of the strategy.

Refaat Sabbah, General Secretary and Founder, Arab Coalition for Education for All

- Across the Arab region, complex situations have created a range of issues which at times hinder the work and efforts of civil society organisations or are causing a shrinking of the space these can operate in.
- Urged international organisations working at the country level to prioritise working with local NGOs and not compete against them wherever possible.

Sigrid Van Aken, CEO, Novamedia/Dutch Postcode Lottery

- The Postcode Lottery Group is proud to be part of Education Cannot Wait and have always had a strong focus on supporting education and in particular girls' education
- The Postcode Lottery Group have direct multi-year unrestricted funding relationships with charity partners including Theirworld, UNICEF, Plan International, Save the Children, Girls not Brides and UNHCR.
- Applauded ECW 's work and especially its Multi-Year Resilience Programme in Afghanistan focused on adolescent girls and building a larger base of female teachers.
- The Postcode Lottery Group approved the new Strategic Plan.

Ute Klamert, Deputy Executive Director, WFP

- Thanked ECW for their continued leadership in ensuring that children in Emergencies and Protracted Crisis settings receive access to education and commended the new Strategic Plan as a robust framework that will solidify existing gains in promoting the right to an inclusive and continued quality education as well as a responsive tool that includes the wellbeing of children and youth.
- The alarming Global Food Crisis was driving millions of children to the brink of starvation, hitting the world at the worst possible time where conflict and climate shocks, compounded by COVID-19, had devastating impacts on the education, health, and nutrition of children.
- In the last two years alone, the number of acutely food insecure people has more than doubled. 345 million people are facing acute hunger now, half of which - 153 million - are children under 18. Millions of vulnerable children are now returning to school, after having lost between one to two years of learning. The World Bank estimates that 70% of 10-year-olds in low and lower-middle-income countries are unable to read a simple text. They are carrying the double burden of lost learning and increased hunger. These colliding crises will affect generations in the future and human capital because it is impacting children and their ability to learn and thrive. Today, children are returning to underfunded schools, coming from homes that are more food insecure and poorer than before. Scaling up, or at least protecting, safety nets like school feeding can support vulnerable populations now and help countries rebuild the education systems that were affected during the pandemic, simultaneously.
- WFP recognizes ECW's integrated and multisectoral approach to child well-being addressing the multi-faceted barriers to advancing education outcomes in Education in EiEPC settings. Partners must continue to support mechanisms that engage multisectorally on problems grappling the education sector. The Education Commission has also proposed a series of multisectoral win-wins, among those school health and nutrition.
- The Transforming Education Summit was an important moment to call all partners to repurpose education and rethink all learning environments to cater to the intrinsic value and well-being of every learner. In order to increase children's access to school and their ability to learn, stakeholders must pay attention to the inequalities that are affecting them which include rising poverty, hunger, and malnutrition. This means connecting the dots between what is happening to children broadly, with how that translates into their ability to access education and learn.

Alicia Herbert, Director Education, Gender, Equality & Special Envoy for Gender Equality, FCDO, on behalf of Vicky Ford, Minister for International Development, UK.

- The UK is proud to be a founding member and a leading donor to Education Cannot Wait. Too many young people are missing out on the education they deserve because of the increase in conflict, crises, and extreme weather events. Education is important not only because of the future opportunities it provides but because it helps protect children from past and ongoing trauma.
- Too often, it's children who are hardest hit and lives are put on hold with no future prospects or hope. Millions upon millions of children are without protection or a quality education that is lifesaving in times of crisis.
- The UK welcomed ECW's work in reaching almost 7 million children – almost 3.5 million girls - since it began in 2017. The number and severity of crises are sadly growing. Girls are disproportionately affected with 200 million adolescent girls living on the frontlines of the climate crisis. When girls drop out, resources are then used to survive instead of learning, trapping girls in existing
- For these reasons, the UK endorsed ECW's new Strategic Plan which sets out a greater ambition to support even more emergency responses, to prioritise the climate crises, and to ensure that crisis affected girls and children with disability can also receive a quality education.
- Following the Transforming Education Summit, the HLSG meeting presented a critical moment to approve the new plan for action which will make an important contribution to delivering on the Education in Crisis Commitment to Action priorities such as:
 - Generating better data to track how EiEPC investments are impacting on crisis affected children, especially girls and those with disabilities. The UK welcomed commitment to supporting the international community to track global reach of EiEPC investments.
 - Improving external financing for education in emergencies and protracted crises with more accountability for our spending and a greater focus on the most marginalised including refugee and stateless children. The UK also welcomed ECW's commitment to establish a new observatory for tracking EiEPC financing.
 - Building crisis-resilient education systems through better cooperation across governments, humanitarian and development actors and more inclusive policies and programmes. ECW's commitment to go deeper and further with fewer multi-year programmes to reach children with better quality and to drive forward on the climate response as extreme weather events become more frequent will be critical.
 - Scaling high impact, evidence-based interventions in response to crises. A reformed Acceleration Facility will be central to making progress in this regard.

Dr. Bärbel Kofler, Parliamentary State Secretary to the German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development.

- Germany welcomed the consultative drafting process and the close involvement of members of the Executive Board leading to an ambitious Strategic Plan which took account of the Fund's continuous growth.
- Germany worked actively to enshrine gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment even more firmly.
- Germany approved the Strategic Plan and welcomed the inclusion of its key priorities in document such as the firm establishment of the rights of children and persons with disabilities and the close involvement of local actors in the implementation of the measures promoted.
- It was now time to move to the phase of implementation and Germany was committed to ensuring that by the end of the new Strategic Period, 20 million children and young people who were affected by conflicts and crises will be reached with high-quality education.

Peter MacDougall, Assistant Deputy Minister, Global Issue and Development, on behalf of the Honourable Harjit Sajjan, Minister for International Development, Canada

- Canada approved the new Strategic Plan and appreciated the collaborative process that led to the development of the Plan.
- Canada endorsed the 2021 Annual Results Report and congratulated ECW and partners on the results achieved this past year, despite difficult circumstances.
- Canada looks forward to continuing to work with ECW on the ExCom and the HLSG to advance efforts to strengthen ECW capacity to deliver the new strategic plan, integrate climate change responses into the operationalisation of the strategic plan and strengthen synergies with other global funds and programs, notably GPE.
- It is clear that in times of fragility, education and schools provide stability, security and hope to communities. There have been significant COVID-19-related learning losses and levels of climate-related disasters and conflict are on the rise. For these reasons, Canada prioritises education for youth affected by conflict and displacement, with a particular focus on those at greatest risk of being left behind, including girls and adolescent girls.
- Canada looks forward to ECW's high-level financing conference in February 2023, and to opportunities for continued collaboration.

Rob Doble, Sector Director, Porticus

- The new ECW Strategy set out a fertile ground for continued partnership and collaboration, as it paved the way for moving beyond an access focus to a funding model that is based on learning and child development in a holistic way.
- ECW was indeed championing this transition from access orientation to holistic learning outcomes in education in emergencies and protracted crisis.
- Porticus have supported this process by strengthening capacities to measure and assess learning outcomes within MYRPs and look forward to continuing its collaboration within the new strategic framework – a strategy which was wholeheartedly endorsed.

4- ECW High-Level Financing Conference

Patricia Danzi, Head of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

- Switzerland congratulated ECW on the strong launch of the #222MillionDreams campaign, which kicked off in June 2022 and brought international attention to education in emergencies and protracted crises.
- Switzerland is proud to co-host the ECW High-Level Financing Conference in Geneva in February 2023 in partnership with ECW and the co-conveners Germany, Niger, Norway and South Sudan.
- Switzerland called on all High-Level Steering Group members to renew their strong support to ECW and to make predictable, sustainable funding commitments to ECW for the next Strategic Plan period of 2023-2026.
- Switzerland also encouraged High-Level Steering Group members to serve as champions in the lead-up to the High-Level Financing Conference to mobilise the commitment of new partners, including Member States, foundations and the private sector. There is an urgent need for collective efforts by all ECW members to raise the required resources for ECW's new Strategic Plan 2023-2026. Switzerland was actively working with Swiss private sector entities to mobilise their support for ECW.
- In the current difficult context, strong support from all partners was needed to ensure a successful replenishment of ECW to provide 20 million more children and adolescents with access to quality education.
- **Awut Deng Acuil, Minister of Education and Instruction, South Sudan**

- Thanked the HLSG Chair, the ECW Director and Secretariat for their work noting that South Sudan has benefitted greatly from the support provided by ECW.
- Commended the practical approach and the flexibility of the Fund on programme implementation, which allowed a rapid response to the Covid-19 pandemic and to truly focus on the most disadvantaged groups of children, such as children with the disabilities.
- As the recent ECW study showed, the needs of children are on the rise globally. Bearing the brunt of the devastating impacts of armed conflicts, Covid-19, and climate change, an estimated 222 million children, 2,8 million children of whom were in South Sudan. These children suffer from severe education crisis; manifested in learning poverty, either unable to achieve minimum competencies in reading and mathematics despite attending school, or not going to school at all.
- If these children continue to be left behind, the international community will not achieve SDG4 and ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all in eight years from now.
- In this regard, ECW has been providing a critical support in addressing this global crisis in education. That is why it is significant that ECW has the resources needed to deliver on its ambitious strategic plan for the next four years.
- South Sudan was pleased to host the ECW HLFC on 16 and 17 February 2023 together with Switzerland, Germany, Niger, Norway to raise additional funding for transforming education.
- In addition to discussing the barriers to learning for the most disadvantaged, those left behind in crises and offering the voice and contributions of children and youth living in crisis-affected contexts, the Conference will be an opportunity and a platform for governments and donors from the private sector to announce financial and policy commitments to ECW and to education in emergencies and protracted crises.

Dr. Bärbel Kofler, Parliamentary State Secretary to the German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development.

- Germany was pleased to co-convene ECW's High-Level Financing Conference 16 and 17 February in Geneva together with Switzerland, Norway, South Sudan and Niger.
- Germany encouraged all partners to work to make the conference a success and mobilise USD 1.5 billion for the new Strategic Period.

Merete Lundemo, on behalf of Anne Beathe Tvinereim, Minister of International Development, Norway.

- Norway is proud to co-lead and support the preparations for the High-level Financing Conference in February together with ECW, Switzerland, Germany, Niger and South Sudan.
- The ambitious financing target set represents the threshold needed to fulfil goals and meet needs, as outlined in the new Strategy and Norway we will do our utmost to mobilise and advocate.
- Norway remained committed to mobilizing and advocating to make the Conference a success.
- Norway announced its plans to host an Executive Committee meeting in the Spring of 2023 after the High-Level Financing Conference.

Julieta Valls Noyes, Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of State

- The United States has long championed education for refugees, stateless and other displaced children without education. These children face overwhelming challenges that can prevent them from integrating into new societies and fulfilling their potential, and that includes hindering them from contributing economically to their families later in life.

- The Covid-19 pandemic interrupted education for billions of children, particularly girls, posing a risk they may never return. Refugee children already falling behind. The international community must find a way of keeping these children in school.
- The US announced an additional USD 7 million contribution from the U.S. Department of State for ECW, bringing the US's total contribution to ECW to USD 102 million since the Fund's inception.
- The US remains committed to ECW and looked forward to galvanising the international community around the HLFC event in 2023.

Abbas Al Halabi, Minister of Education, Lebanon

- Thanked ECW and its partners who have supported Lebanon over the years and continue to do so.
- This year will be very critical year in Lebanon due the multidimensional crises that hit the country and accumulated over the past years. The predicted gap in financing will put children and adolescents' education and learning at risk, with an estimated 700 000 children potentially out of school.
- Without adequate financing, the country will face a humanitarian crisis piling onto the existing crises. The country will face great challenges in providing education to refugee children if Lebanese children are themselves unable to attend school.
- Lebanon urged donors to continue and increase their funding in the coming year to help the country navigate through these crises.

5- AoB

Dean Brooks, Director, INEE:

- Over the last twenty-two years, the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) has solidified its role as the go-to network for Education in Emergencies (EiE) actors and stakeholders to co-create and source tools, resources and guidance on carrying out and improving the quality of education in crisis-affected contexts.
- The INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery (INEE MS) is the network's foundational tool and a pinnacle example of its members' collective impact. The INEE Minimum Standards are upheld within the 2010 UN Resolution A/RES/64/290: The right to education in emergency situations and the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action (section 26). First published in 2004 and revised in 2010, they provide concrete guidance to ensure safe, relevant, and quality education to all. The INEE MS represents the collaboration and consensus of thousands of EiE professionals and affected peoples worldwide.
- Consultations have been carried out in 17 emergency contexts and hundreds of INEE members have provided in depth feedback into the update process (while also carrying out cross-cutting and thematic reviews of the Minimum Standards). This update process also seeks to reflect the changes made in the humanitarian-development landscape over the past decade (e.g., the creation of ECW, etc.).
- The attached PowerPoint provided a brief overview of work to date, which will benefit all of ECW's HLSG organisations. The final version is expected to be available in March 2023.

6- Chair's Summary and Close

The Chair thanked HLSG members for providing insightful views and for approving both the new Strategic Plan 2023-2026 and the Annual Results Report 2021.

The next HLSG will be convened on the margins of the World Bank Spring Meeting in Washington DC in the spring of 2023.