

High-Level Steering Group Meeting - Minutes

Tuesday, 24 September 2019, 7:00 am at the Maurice Pate Conference Room, UNICEF House

Participants:

Chair: Gordon Brown, United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, Yasmine Sherif, Director (Education Cannot Wait), Sigrid Kaag, Minister for Foreign Trade & Development Cooperation (The Netherlands), Rasmus Prehn, Minister for Development Cooperation (Denmark), Dag-Inge Ulstein, Minister of International Development (Norway), Mirwais Balkhi, Minister of Education (Afghanistan), 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), Fitsum Arega, Ambassador to the United States (Ethiopia), Carlos dos Santos, Ambassador to the United States (Mozambique), 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), Stefano Manservigi, Director General, International Cooperation and Development (European Union), Annemiek Hoogenboom, Country Director (Novamedia), Birgitte Lange, Secretary General, (Save the Children), Rose Caldwell, Chief Executive (Plan International UK), Tariq Al Gurg, Chief Executive Officer (Dubai Cares), Jaime Saavedra, Senior Director, Education (World Bank Group), Dean Brooks, Director (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies), Alice Albright, Chief Executive Officer (Global Partnership for Education), Carol O'Connell, Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration at the State Department (United States), Ina von Frantzius, Head of Education Section, BMZ (Germany)

Observers:

Mahboub M. Maalim, Executive Secretary, The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Senior Minister of Education (Singapore), Khalifa Al-Kuwari, Director General (Qatar Fund for Development), John Goodwin, Chief Executive Officer (LEGO Foundation), Stephen Twigg, Chair (International Development Select Committee/UK), Peter Tabichi, Winner of the 2019 Global Teacher Prize (Kenya) and ECW Champion.

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The Chair opened by welcoming participants and observers. He noted growing interest in Education Cannot Wait, which is rapidly growing and now reaching approximately 1.5 million children and youth with quality education in the world's worst humanitarian crises. He outlined that the meeting would discuss ECW's results and strategic policy in relation to ECW's contribution to the Grand Bargain, followed by an update on the forthcoming Global Refugee Forum and a brief on a new ECW partner in Private sector i.e. the EGO foundation. He then invited the ECW Director to present the key results.

ECW Annual Report 2018

- The ECW Director gave a presentation on the 2018 results report and ECW achievements to date, crediting the collective efforts of governments, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and private sector.
- With the support of all of ECW's partners more than 1.5 million children and youth reached, of whom 50% girls. She noted that ECW will continue to take affirmative action to increase girls'

education. An additional 1.3 million children and youth in Yemen have received school feeding and financial support to conduct exams.

- By 2019, ECW now supports a total of 32 countries, including 10 Multi-Year Resilience Joint Programmes (MYRPs): Afghanistan, Bangladesh, CAR, Chad, Ethiopia, State of Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Uganda). By 2021, ECW is expected to have facilitated renewable and sustainable MYRPs in 25 priority countries.
- With thanks to ECW's strategic donor partners, since its inception, including new announcements during UNGA, ECW will have mobilized US\$560 million. By 2021, ECW and its partners seek to mobilize US\$1.8 billion to reach 9 million children and youth annually.
- One reason for ECW's rapid growth pertains to its unique added value of bringing together humanitarian and development actors, using existing coordination mechanisms designed for emergencies and protracted crisis, focusing on joint assessments, joint implementation and joint measuring of results, while also advancing the Grand Bargain commitments. Speed, cost-efficiency, field-focus and sustainability drive ECW.
- In conclusion, she noted that ECW had exceeded the 25% localization target by reaching 30% in 2019 in empowering local actors to deliver quality education.

The Chair thanked ECW Director and expressed appreciation to the generous contributions made to support ECW investments. HLSG members acknowledged the Fund's efforts to strengthen education responses and outcomes, and welcomed the results achieved to date. Norway, United Kingdom and Denmark made the following statements,

- The Minister of International Development for Norway recounted his recent visit to Sahel region together with the ECW Director and noted that urgent and comprehensive responses were required to address the enormous needs of children and youth in displaced communities. Norway reaffirmed its commitment to education in emergencies by increasing its contribution to ECW and encouraged everyone else around the table to do so to ensure that 9 million children are reached by 2021.
- The Permanent Secretary of the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom referenced the UK's recent major pledge of £90 million, announced at G7 summit in August. The contribution will support 600,000 children in conflict and crisis zones to access quality education. It will accelerate girls' education as a priority, as well as with disabilities. It will also deliver mental health and psychosocial support, as another area of priority.
- The Minister of Development Cooperation for Denmark stated that Denmark will maintain strong profile on girl's education, while increasing its annual contribution to ECW. He commended LEGO foundation for taking leading role in private sector engagement.

The Chair thanked Norway, UK and Denmark and handed over to Ms. Sigrid Kaag, the Minister for Foreign Trade & Development Cooperation of the Netherlands, and Eminent Person for the Grand Bargain, to open the discussion on the Grand Bargain in ECW's investments.

Plenary Discussion: Progress in ECW's Investments: The Grand Bargain

- The Minister for Foreign Trade & Development Cooperation of the Netherlands opened the discussion by commending ECW for its commitment towards making the Grand Bargain a reality. She noted the importance of demonstrating progress towards effective impact and stressed the need of more un-earmarked funds and increased multi-year funding to ensure greater predictability and continuity in humanitarian response. She encouraged participants to use flexible and predictable funding to enhance efficiencies and reduce management costs. She

called for more support to local and national responders, as well as engaging the private sector more actively and the use of Ed-tech. She also added that ECW could serve as a perfect platform and test-case to see how collective interventions can succeed, address failures and what they can deliver. She reiterated that ECW has now exceeded the 25% target for the localization agenda and reached 30% in empowering local actors to deliver education to children and youth caught in emergencies and protracted crisis.

- HLSG members echoed the Minister’s statements and noted that flexible and multi-year financing remains a challenge.
- UNICEF Executive Director stressed the importance of bringing together humanitarian and development actors towards collective outcomes and emphasized the necessity of engaging with private sector and local actors.
- UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education highlighted the need to strengthening national educational systems and the multilateral platform to ensure coordination and sustainability.
- UNHCR High Commissioner for Refugees stated that UN reform streams include one on efficiency and this requires agencies to work for collectively outcomes. UNHCR and UNICEF are revising their MoU to this effect. He noted that an increasing amount of earmarked funding risk crippling organizational and state agility in responding to needs. UN advocates strongly for funding to be un-earmarked and for greater trust.
- OCHA Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs & Emergency Relief Coordinator voiced his support for UNHCR’s statement and added that transaction costs would be reduced if the grants provided were on a longer-term basis, rather than limited to 6-9 months.
- European Union Director General for International Cooperation and Development called for urgent action to strengthen the humanitarian and development nexus in education and stressed the need of stepping up efforts in the Sahel.
- World Bank Senior Director for Education echoed the multi-year planning and financing, noting that the full circle of education requires long-term approach and a focus on learning outcomes.
- Deutsche Postcode Lottery Country Director welcomed the partnership with ECW and its flexible funding windows, also drawing attention to the refugee crisis in Greece.
- The Global Partnership for Education CEO highlighted the need of an aid system that can respond quickly to crisis and provide long-term development assistance. Both short-term and long-term funding are thus needed.
- The Minister of Education for Afghanistan noted that the seed funding provided by ECW has reached 111,238 children and youth in 2019. Although impressive gain in education in Afghanistan, still 3.7 million children are out of school with a majority, (60%) being girls. Education is a right and cannot wait. He called for further support to ECW to reach the targets in the Afghanistan multi-year resilience programme for education, so to ensure immediate humanitarian needs are met and longer-term structural barriers to education are addressed. \$150 million required over the next three years to support access to education for 500,000 children and youth targeted in the ECW-facilitated MYRP.
- The Ambassador of Ethiopia highlighted the achievements linked to ECW’s initial investments in Ethiopia and stressed the importance of the ongoing development of an ECW-facilitated Multi-Year Resilience Programme. He also stated that the Government of Ethiopia remains committed to address the educational needs of emergency affected children in Ethiopia, including nearly 1 million refugees and over 2.2 million internally displaced due to conflict and climatic events which is world’s largest internally displaced crisis.
- The Ambassador of Mozambique praised the flexibility and speed of ECW funding in response to the cyclone. He highlighted that ECW funding was used in helping to rebuild and restore

education the hardest hit areas by Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, and to support schools and quality learning, dealing with the psychological impact on learners and teaching staff. ECW response reached more than 200,000 children in Mozambique.

The Chair concluded by noting that Education Cannot Wait can be an SDG model for the UN and the broader multilateral system in situations of emergency and protracted crisis. He urged participants to support multi-year funding and private sector integration. He also invited more proposals on the Grand Bargain, which could be presented by Minister Kaag for continued strategic discussions.

The Global Refugee Forum

- The UNHCR High Commissioner for Refugees updated the HLSG on the Global Refugee Forum. The UN High Commissioner stated that the Forum stems from the Global Refugee Compact, which has four objectives. These are implemented through the Comprehensive Refugee Response framework, supported by several initiatives, including the WB'S IDA refugee sub-window, substantial support from the EU, regional initiatives such as the IGAD declaration in East Africa, political initiatives such as the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework in Central America. These bring on a broader coalition of stakeholders, including the private sector. The GRF will address achievements to date, good practices and pledges for action to achieve the commitments of the Global Compact on Refugees.
- The High Commissioner then highlighted that education is an essential piece in the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and one of the six streams. Education is a major theme for the forum and already has over 40 co-sponsors, including 10 states, and alliance of actors. Three outcome areas include Inclusion, Access to Tertiary Education and Emergency response. The HC encouraged all present to join as co-sponsors of education, and to participate in the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva on December 17–18.

The Chair thanked the High Commissioner and called for strong support to refugee education and the upcoming Global Refugee Forum in Geneva in December.

• **Private Sector Partnership**

- The CEO of LEGO In his presentation “Play-based Early Childhood Education in Emergencies”, Mr. John Goodwin noted that LEGO endeavors to “Redefine Play and re-imagine Learning” by building a future in which learning through play empowers children to become creative, engaged, and lifelong learners. He also highlighted the partnership with ECW to ensure that play-based approaches and Early Childhood Education becomes an integral part of interventions supported by ECW and broadly in humanitarian responses.
- UNICEF and the World Bank indicated their strong support in early learning and reaffirmed their commitments to spend 10% of their education budgets on pre-primary education.

The Chair thanked Mr. Goodwin. He summarized the meeting and thanked everyone for their valuable contributions and for continued generous financial and strategic support to ECW. He noted that the next HLSG meeting, which will be held in April 2020, in Washington, D.C in the margins of the IMF-World Bank Spring meetings.