**Global Campaign for Education**

**Statement on occasion of the Sustainable Development Summit**

The Global Campaign for Education recognizes the importance of the recently held Sustainable Development Summit and the UN Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General’s reaffirmation of a vision of the world with access to inclusive and equitable quality education and calls for governments to continue increasing investment, primarily but not only through the implementation of tax justice policies, in the provision of education and life-long learning opportunities for all.

While participation was highly restrictive, there were valuable opportunities to contribute to some of the discussions, especially during the SDG Action Weekend.

The GCE wishes to express appreciation to the work of Dr. Leonardo Garnier, Special Adviser to the UN's Secretary General for Transforming Education, and recognizes his contribution to the implementation of the sustainable development agenda.

The [Political Declaration | United Nations](https://www.un.org/en/conferences/SDGSummit2023/political-declaration) on sustainable development agreed under the auspices of the General Assembly, has included substantial challenges for the implementation of the SDG Agenda.

The GCE acknowledges the governments and international communities efforts to make progress towards SDG4 but notes with concern that political rhetoric has failed to mobilise practical action to leave no one behind and, rather than making progress towards SDG4 and the whole agenda, some regions and countries are moving backwards.

States are responsible for ensuring the right to education for all and in doing so they must provide adequate and sustainable public funding for education. This key obligation is enshrined in several binding human rights instruments and stressed by the Sustainable Development Agenda, which includes the call for all governments to allocate the maximum of available resources to education.

The lack of education financing is due to multiple factors such as ignoring that free quality education is a fundamental right for all, regressive tax systems, unsustainable debt-repayment, privatisation and commercialisation of education, and weak international cooperation to low-income countries. It is estimated that the annual financing gap to achieve SDG4 in low and lower middle-income countries is $148 billion, but this estimate may vary according to different sources, so the gap could be even bigger.

The Transforming Education Summit adopted a comprehensive approach to the most pressing problems in education financing, calling to mobilise more resources, to increase equity and efficiency of investments on education and to build stronger and accurate education financing data and accountability.

In the Political Declaration of the high-level political forum, emphasis has been placed on the need to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, for which the implementation of the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda .:. Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=2051&menu=35) should be considered as an integral part of the 2030 Agenda.

However, GCE notes that effective financing for education and lifelong learning continues to be a task unduly assumed by states and this has consequences for the entire agenda and not only with regards to SDG4.

GCE is also concerned by the increasing cooptation of the SDG Agenda’s processes by corporate actors and privatisation trends in many regions of the world. That is why we want to reiterate the importance of safeguarding public decision-making spaces, in which states and organised civil society actors play the central roles. GCE supports the call of the SDG Summit to strengthen country governance capacities, accountability systems and public institutions to accelerate progress in the SDGs.

The fight for climate justice cannot be achieved without a commitment in favour of equitable, free and quality public education. The commitment of member states in favour of the right to education therefore should be translated into concrete actions to increase investment in inclusive and equitable quality education and life-long learning opportunities for all. This includes but not only financing for early childhood education, youth and adult literacy programs, gender equity, education for sustainable development and global citizenshi, digital technologies for education, and progressively free higher education and vocational training, education in emergencies and teachers' continuous professional development.

We trust that the commitment of the states can be strengthened in the coming months, intergovernmental cooperation realised to deliver on the Leave No One Behind agenda and that the Summit of the Future will advance in the adoption of a global pact that seriously leads to the achievement of the sustainable development goals.