

Joint Message on the occasion of the World Teachers' Day

5th October 2015

"Empowering teachers, building sustainable societies"

Every year on World Teachers' Day, we celebrate educators and the central role they play in providing children everywhere with quality education. Today, as the global community comes together around the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, the role teachers play has never have been more important.

The new global education goal, SDG 4 which is at the heart of the Education 2030 Agenda, calls for "inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". Realising this goal is critical to achieving all our global development targets – for strong societies depend on well-educated citizens and a well-trained workforce. But we can only realize this agenda if we invest in recruiting, supporting, and empowering teachers.

Quality teachers are increasingly recognized as the most important factor in children's learning – and thus, in improving educational attainment levels, increasing the ability of young people to participate in society and today's knowledge economies, boosting productivity and prosperity. Especially in poor communities and countries

affected by conflict, quality teaching can literally change a child's life – helping children overcome enormous challenges and preparing them for better lives and brighter futures.

But around the world today, far too many teachers are undervalued and disempowered. There is a mounting shortage of quality teachers, unequal distribution of trained teachers, and inadequate or non-existent national standards for the teaching profession. These are all key contributing factors to wide equity gaps in access and learning. The poorest regions and schools and the earliest grades – those most in need – are often the most affected. This is a deeply troubling gap, as study after study shows that reaching children in the earliest years is critical to their development.

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics estimates that to achieve universal primary education by 2020 countries will need to recruit a total of 10.9 million primary teachers.

This is a global education crisis in the making – unless we act. Recognizing the looming crisis at the 2015 World Education Forum, held in Incheon,