

THE RESOLUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ONLINE FORUM "CHILDREN'S RIGHTS TO EDUCATION: RELEVANCE, CONTINUITY AND INNOVATIONS DURING THE PANDEMIC"

The COVID-19 pandemic has become a global crisis – it has negatively affected the health and wellbeing of dozens million people worldwide, has negatively affected social-economic development of the countries, with the resulting global recession estimated to push millions of households into poverty.

The COVID-19 pandemic has as well caused the largest disruption of education systems in history and has pushed the efforts towards realizing the Sustainable Development Goal into jeopardy. By estimates of experts, children with disabilities and children from poorer households and rural areas are more likely to suffer in the process.

Education continuity during the uncertain times of COVID-19 is important as it provides children and young people not only with a sense of predictability but plays a critical role in protecting public health, ensuring the safe work of schools in conditions of pandemic and continuity of learning and promoting mental health and psychosocial wellbeing.

The governments all over the world tried to formulate adaptive, coherent, effective and equitable education responses to the current crisis and address the challenges that so many children face, including the most marginalized.

Globally, the immediate or short-term strategies adopted by States included education continuity through distance learning and promotion of health and hygiene habits among children.

On November 19, 2020, the Zamin International Public Foundation, the United Nations Office and UNICEF Country Office in Uzbekistan jointly organized an international web forum on "Children's Rights to Education: Relevance, Continuity and Innovations during the Pandemic" to discuss the challenges faced in the education sector and the relevance and opportunities for introducing innovative alternative education pathways.

The forum was attended by the senior UN officials, representatives of international and regional organizations,

government agencies, national human rights institutions, the diplomatic corps, civil society institutions and academic and pedagogic circles.

This resolution reflects the deliberations during the web forum, and the decisions arrived at after the deliberations.

We, the participants of the web forum,

Celebrate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations and the 31st Anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on November 20, as well as the International Children's day. It is time for us to reiterate our promise to children on their rights, particularly rights of children to education, and make every effort to realize their rights by:

(a) provision: children with access to food, clothing, shelter, education and similar amenities and services;

(b) protection: legal and practical protection of children from violence, including physical, mental, psychological and sexual violence, child trafficking, and their participation in armed conflict;

(c) participation: Considering the active involvement of children in decision-making processes that affect their whole lives, and the division of children into categories that provide ample opportunities for participation.

- Reaffirm our commitment to implementation of Fourth Goal of the Sustainable Development Goals: "Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all";

- Emphasize the important role of children in the future of humanity and the need for applying special measures to promote diversity, inclusion, social cohesion, civic identity and tolerance;

- Recognizing the problems children face during the pandemic, reaffirm the International Human Rights norms and standards, which emphasizes that the rights of the child are universal, holistic, interdependent, complementary and mutually reinforcing and that all human rights must be treated fairly and equitably, on the same basis, with the same approach and with equal consideration;

- Referring to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, recognize that children face social difficulties in exercising their rights due to their age, and that there are various gaps in the protection and exercise of their rights;

- Note the UN Secretary-General's call for action on human rights, as well as the initiative "We Need for a Future Wanted by the United Nations: Reaffirming Our Multilateral Collective Commitment";
- Commit to the goals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, with a deep concern for the global nature of the threat to health, security and human wellbeing, to pay special attention to strengthening multilateral international cooperation, mutual assistance and human rights;
- Invite all parties to enhance partnership to address specific issues faced by children by shaping and promoting their rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Call for the coordination of educational policies between all countries in the context of the pandemic, the exchange of best practices, the expansion of stakeholders and the strengthening and development of cooperation in the priority areas of mutual policy.

The participating countries and institutions are encouraged to implement the UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank-WFP-UNHCR Framework for reopening school and focus on:

a) safe operations: prepare critically important programmes, procedures and financing plans needed to improve schooling, with a focus on safe operations, including strengthening remote learning practices;

(b) learning continuity: addressing learning losses and preventing dropouts, particularly of marginalized groups; supporting the teaching profession and teachers' readiness; removing barriers to connectivity; and strengthening the articulation and flexibility across levels and types of education and training;

(c) inclusion of the most marginalized; for which strengthening the resilience of education systems for equitable and sustainable development by focusing on equity and inclusion; reinforcing capacities for risk management, at all levels of the system; ensuring strong leadership and coordination; and enhancing consultation and communication mechanisms;

(d) wellbeing and protection; by suppressing transmission of the virus and plan thoroughly for schools reopening, ensure the safe school environment, planning for inclusive reopening, listening to the voices of all concerned; and ensuring better coordination between key actors – health and education communities;

(e) programmes development and implementation in the sphere of child protection from infectious diseases, teaching them to appreciate health and education;

(f) planning of long-term measures to ensure the preparedness to pandemic, response to it and recovery after that, taking into consideration the necessity to strengthen the potential of educational facilities;

(g) financing: protecting education financing and coordination for impact by strengthening domestic resource mobilization, preserving share for education as a top priority and tackling inefficiencies; strengthening international coordination and protecting official development assistance for education.

Pay due attention to ensuring that children have the opportunity to receive continuing education in all circumstances.

In this regard, ensure that the following measures are implemented:

a) school reopening, application of blended learning and organization of distance learning for school-age children with full coverage, including extensive use of information technology, the Internet, television and online education;

(b) meeting the educational needs of children with disabilities by supporting inclusive education;

c) ensuring safe educational conditions in educational institutions in accordance with sanitary-epidemiological standards.

We, the participants of the International Web Forum "Children's Rights to Education: Relevance, Continuity and Innovation during the Pandemic", stressed the important role of international organizations, national governments and civil society organizations in protecting and implementing the legal rights, freedoms and interests of children.

Conclude with an agreement to strengthen global cooperation in the field of education to provide effective political, financial and technical support to countries in need based on their needs and requests as well as agree on holding an international forum on the rights of the child on a regular basis.

Adopted in Tashkent

(in the form of videoconferencing)

November 19, 2020