Final Statement and Recommendations

Final Statement of Financing Education 2030 Conference in the Arab World and East Europe

On Thursday evening, the third of May 2018, the Arab Campaign for Education for All concluded its first conference in Beirut, in the presence of delegations of coalitions from (Sudan, Jordan, Yemen, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Somalia, Egypt, Kuwait Bahrain, Palestine, Mauritania, Georgia, Moldova and Albania) with the participation of the deputy ministries of Education and their representatives;

The conference was conducted under the patronage of the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education in cooperation with the Arab Network for Popular Education, the Lebanese coalition for Education for All, the Global Campaign for Education for All, UNESCO, DVV International and the Open Society foundation

During its three days, the conference discussed three main themes:

- Domestic Financing for education.
- Education in emergencies.
- Social accountability towards achieving SDG4

In light of approaches, insights and exchanges of views and ideas, participants have succeeded in reaching clearer directions for the role of civil society and relations with governments across the conference themes. It is also decided to hold the conference every two years in a country.

Participants emphasized the need for Governments to advocate for the elimination of educational disparities between rural and urban areas and to ensure the right to education for marginalized groups, as well as the expansion of technical and vocational education, as this guarantees the gradual reduction of the problem of graduates unemployment that is already spread in most countries of the Arab world and third world countries.

The participants also appreciated the distinctive efforts of the educational coalitions in promoting social participation in education in parallel with the governments' efforts and called for the activation of these efforts, especially in the implementation of social accountability, and the development of educational coalitions, teachers unions and civil society in social accountability as one of the key roles of civil society to protect the right to education.

Participants called for serious action towards achieving the sustainable development goals and in particular, the fourth development goal-SDG4, and to promote the Arab movement concerning achieving it. The participants called also to contribute to support the international movement represented by the Global campaign for education GCE. As well as the call for international donors to support education 2030 in the developing countries, the quick act of their funding
commitments upon Incheon declaration in 2015 and emphasizing the importance of the Arab countries to raise their Budgets to the minimum rate 20% of the public budgets and at least 6% of GDP, in parallel with activating the social responsibility through private sector commitments to pay the taxes for education.

The conference witnessed interventions by Deputy Ministers of Education, which highlighted the obstacles to education in their countries and their commitments towards achieving SDG4 2030.

The conference concluded the following recommendations accordingly:

First, in regards to Financing, the recommendations are:

1. To convince decision-makers to reformulate national priorities in such a way that education portion of the GDP at least 6% and of the annual public expenditure at least 20% .

2. Establish a scientific-based information system based linked with the school unit in the Ministries of Education and all higher levels of budget and exchange on education in such a way as to help in determining the cost of the student at each stage of the primary education. Also to determine the rate of expenditure on public education and determine the amount of the contribution of each source of education funding to education expenditure; which is considered necessary to develop realistic plans for education 2030.

3. Adopting the principle of participation in financing of education between governments with their various institutions on one hand and between the civil society and the private sector on the other hand. In addition to thinking about effective methods that encourage popular participation in financing education, which leading to the maximum benefit of the available human, material and financial resources. In addition to activating the local components through the establishment of an Arab funding resource that’s called Arab Fund for Education for All 2030.

4. Search for non-governmental funding sources such as:
   - Establishment of public educational bodies to encourage donors to contribute to funding the education sector and to use the taxes revenues for the benefit of Education.
   - Encouraging the private sector participate and invest in education.
   - Provide incentives to attract foreign aid

5. To benefit from successful experiences related to the economics of education in countries with similar conditions.

6. Address the problems of disparities in public education between countries and gender by allocating a central fund to ensure the growth of balanced education and the right to education.
7. Develop a large Arab educational project for the rehabilitation of the public education sector with international donors within the framework of loans, in a manner that does not affect the sovereignty of States.

8. Formulate a plan of action and a strategy to promote technical and vocational education to raise the level of professions and expand the professional choices, especially among the unemployed young people.

9. At least 10% of the UNDP country program should be allocated as the most important indicator of commitment to education 2030.

10. To spread the culture of the economics of education in its various fields among the leaders of educational work, and to expand studies and research on the economics of education, which study all aspects of the educational process and its cost, and to benefit from the studies that have been done in the field of spending on education and funding.

11. Extend the mandate of the Global Partnership for Education for All (GPE) initiative to encourage States to address SDG4 with particular emphasis on teacher training.

12. Increase the knowledge on education through establishing a center for data on training levels, as well as conducting analytical studies on the reality of education and assessing its impact.

13. To ensure the coordination of the concerned bodies on a regular basis to ascertain the achievements in achieving SDG4, and that this conference will be periodically every two years. In this regard, the next session will be held in Khartoum, Sudan, in February 2020.

14. Provide internal and external sources of financing to fund training of teachers programs and to build the capacity of all staff of national, regional and international institutions and organizations working in the field of education.

Second. In relation to education in emergencies, the recommendations are:

1. To warn against the large increase in spending on arms compared to the expense of development spending, especially education, in light of the shocking indicators of the reality of education, especially in countries experiencing armed conflicts, taking into account the consequences of the presence of refugees in different countries.

2. To call on duty-holders, especially governments and international donors, to fulfill their obligations to protect the right to education, whether associated with emergency education or education, in order to achieve SDG4.

3. To call upon the parties to the conflict in Yemen and Syria to neutralize education from the conflict, to ensure the continuation of the educational process and safe access of students to their schools, and to protect educational institutions from conflict.
4. To affirm the protection of the right to education in Palestine from the Israeli occupation and to affirm UNRWA's commitment not to avoid from its responsibility of providing free education to Palestine refugees inside and outside Palestine, to support challenge schools established in areas threatened with confiscation as it is intersected with SDG 4 while praising the idea of these schools, which was developed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Palestine two years ago.

5. As conflict situations are shifting to being normal life situations in many countries, thus the development of programs of education under crises, pre-planning systems, strategies for dealing with long-term crises and the creation of mechanisms to provide adequate funding to achieve them are all unavoidable commitments.

Third. On the level of social accountability and advocacy in education, the most prominent recommendations are:

1. Emphasize the role of educational coalitions in promoting community participation in education in line with government efforts.

2. To demand the effective implementation of social accountability in education, and to develop the capacities of educational coalitions, teacher associations and civil society in social accountability, and to consider it as one of the main roles of civil society in protecting the right to education.

3 - Emphasize the activation of advocacy tools, and create methods that make them effective and influential, and exchange experiences around civil society across the world.

4. Establish More Arab Education coalitions in all the Arab countries and have them as members in the Arab Campaign for Education for All.

The participants call for the media to play a role in supporting the efforts of coalitions and governments to support education. They also call for Arab and international campaigns that monitor their revenues to support education in marginalized areas.

Participants consider education a tool of liberation and peace and look forward to providing funding for education as an integral part of policies adopted by all countries.

The participants thank all the initiators who support education from the official, civil and popular sectors.