

# SPECIAL EVENT ON TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

*Convened by the UN Secretary-General in collaboration with the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Economic and Social Council*



**Thursday, 11 July 2024 | 10:00AM-1:00PM | ECOSOC Chamber**

## OVERVIEW

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As we approach the two-year anniversary of the Transforming Education Summit (TES), the Secretary-General will convene a Special Event on Transforming Education on 11 July 2024 in collaboration with the President of the General Assembly and the President of ECOSOC on the margins of the High-Level Political Forum.

The Special Event will seek to spur greater commitment and action on education transformation including through the upcoming Summit of the Future and the 2025 World Summit on Social Development and the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development.

## BACKGROUND

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In September 2022, the Secretary-General convened the Transforming Education Summit to respond to a global crisis in education of quality, equity and relevance. The Summit helped elevate the global education crisis on the global agenda and spur greater action and commitment to education through the following key outcomes:

- Presentation of national commitments to transform education by over 140 countries.
- Elaboration of the Secretary General's Vision Statement on Transforming Education
- Strengthening international cooperation on education in crisis settings; foundational learning; greening education; girls' education, digital learning; and the teaching profession.
- Launch of a Call to Action on Education Financing to spur greater investment in education.
- Strengthening of the global education movement, including through a Global Youth Initiative.

Since the Summit, the UNESCO-convened SDG-4 High Level Steering Committee (HLSC) has overseen Summit follow-up, including by tracking progress towards national commitments and advancing work on innovative financing and the TES Global Initiatives.

Halfway to our 2030 deadline, however, headline indicators on education worldwide remain deeply concerning. At current rates of progress, only a sixth of countries will achieve the SDG4 target of universal access to quality education; some 7 in 10 children in the world are unable to read a simple text by age 10; some 25 percent of young people are not in education, employment or training; and investment in education has stagnated at a time of growing need. To turn the tide, a series of meetings will be held in 2024 aimed at accelerating the education transformation agenda and spurring greater progress on SDG4 between now and 2030. In addition to the Secretary-General's Special Event, a formal TES Stocktake with leading education decision-makers and partners will be convened by the SDG4 High Level Steering Committee on 17 June in Paris while UNESCO will convene a Global Education Meeting in October in Fortaleza, Brazil, in the context of the Brazilian Presidency of the G20.

## OBJECTIVES AND FOCUS

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The Special Event on Transforming Education will consider the outcomes of the TES Stocktake and seek to strengthen support for the advancement of education with the UN's overall agenda. In advance of the Summit of the Future in September 2024 and the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Social Summit in 2025, it will place a particular spotlight on two key issues: investing in education and building learning societies.



## **Financing Education**

In 2023, UNESCO estimated that the investment gap for developing countries to achieve their SDG4 targets is now at \$100 billion a year – a figure that increases by almost fifty percent when the costs of digital transformation of education are included. This leaves developed countries able to spend a shocking 150 times more on a student's education than low-income countries.

The lasting effects of COVID-19 pandemic rescue efforts and the socio-economic impacts of the war in Ukraine and other conflicts have had a dramatic effect on developing country finances. Debt service repayments have now surpassed external inflows to governments, leaving some 19 developing countries spending more on debt servicing than on education. Challenges relating to the efficiency and equity of domestic investment in education also persist as do perceptions among many decision-makers that education financing should be treated as a standard public expenditure and not as a long-term essential investment in a country's future that should be protected at all costs and expanded equitably where possible.

Building on the outcomes from the Summit of the Future, the 2024 FFD conference will address several issues that are central to expanding domestic and international investment in education. These include issues of debt relief, access to concessional lend, strengthening international tax cooperation, ensuring policy coherence among international financial institutions, boosting domestic resource mobilization and enhancing the contribution of Official Development Assistance and innovative financing in the most vulnerable countries, especially least developed countries, Small Island Developing States and Landlocked Developing States. The Special Event will examine opportunities to advance these and other financing issues from the perspective of securing more and better investment in education.

## **Towards learning societies**

As part of preparations for the Summit of the Future, the Secretary-General called on member states to embrace a new vision for the creation of learning societies – to ensure education betters serves as a foundation for peace, human rights and opportunity for all and that societies are better equipped to navigate economic and societal shifts spurred by new and emerging technologies, the triple planetary crisis and a weakening of the social contract.

Learning societies require governments to move away from the traditional static, siloed vision of education and to progressively build adaptable and effective lifelong learning systems. They also call for a learning environment that pursues radical inclusion, a fresh national and global consensus around the knowledge, skills, mindsets and capacities needed for the world today, a repositioning of the role of teachers in the learning process and the harnessing of digital tools and resources for better education access, experience and outcomes.

As we look ahead to the Summit of the Future and the World Summit on Social Development, the Special Event will consider the application of this concept in different contexts, with a particular focus on systems for skilling and reskilling and the role of international cooperation.

## **MEMBER STATE PARTICIPATION**

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- Please note that there will be no list of speakers for this event.
- Member States wishing to contribute to the two panel discussions from the floor are encouraged to indicate their interest to the Secretariat in the room.
- Given time constraints, interventions from the floor will be for two minutes only.
- Priority will be given to interventions from attending Ministers.

For further information, please contact: [tes@un.org](mailto:tes@un.org)



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## PROGRAMME

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*Master of Ceremony and moderator:* **Ms. Redi Tihabi**, International broadcaster and moderator

### 10:00 High level opening

- Opening by **Mr. António Guterres**, UN Secretary-General
- Address by **H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis**, President of the UN General Assembly
- Address by **H.E. Ms. Paula Narváez**, President of the Economic and Social Council
  
- *Keynote address* by **H.E. Ms Sahle-Work Zewde** President of Ethiopia, former Chair of the International Commission on the Futures of Education (tbc)
- *Special Address* by **Ms Christina Williams**, Executive Member, SDG4 Youth and Student Network
- Video Address by **Ms. Audrey Azoulay**, Director General of UNESCO

### 10:40 From TES Stocktake to SDG4 Acceleration

- Fireside chat with H.E. **Mr. Nicolás Cataldo**, Minister of Education of Chile and Co-Chair of the SDG4 High-Level Steering Committee and **Ms. Catherine Russell**, Executive Director, UNICEF
  
- Address by **Ms. Merete Fjeld Brattested**, Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations and Chair of the Group of Friends of Education and Lifelong Learning
- Video Address by **Ms. Vera El Khoury Lacoeuilhe**, Chair of the UNESCO Executive Board

### 11:00 Panel I: Overcoming obstacles: Transforming education financing

Video Address by **H.E. Ms. Jutta Urpilainen**, EU Commissioner for International Partnerships

#### Panelists

- **H.E. Ms. Kadiatu Allie**, Deputy Minister of Finance, Sierra Leone
- **Ms. Cristina Duarte**, UN Special Adviser on Africa
- **Ms. Niranjali Amerasinghe**, Executive Director, ActionAid, USA

11:35 Reactions and statements by Member States – Part 1

### 11:55 Panel II: Towards a true learning society

Video Address by **H.E. Mr. Mohamed Belhocine**, Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation, African Union

#### Panelists

- **H.E. Ms. Ligia Deca**, Minister of Education, Romania
- **Mr. Quddus Pativada**, CEO & Founder, ASI
- **Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon**, Special Representative to the United Nations, ILO
- **Mr. David Edwards**, General Secretary, Education International

12:30 Reactions and statements by Member States – Part 2

### 12:50 High level closing

- Remarks from H.E. **Mr. Nicolás Cataldo**, Minister of Education, Chile, Co-Chairs of the SDG4 High Level Steering Committee
- Closing by **Ms Amina J. Mohammed**, UN Deputy Secretary-General