



Seventh International Conference on Adult Education

15 to 17 June 2022

Marrakech, Morocco

Opening address by

Her Excellency Sahle-Work Zewde

President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Chair of the International Commission on the Futures of Education

15 June 2022

Monsieur le Ministre,
Honorables délégués,
Mesdames et Messieurs,

J'ai, ces dernières semaines, envoyé des messages vidéos à plusieurs conférences organisées dans différents continents.

J'avoue décidé, suite à l'invitation de mon amie la Directrice Générale, de participer en personne à cette 7eme réunion de la Conference Internationale sur l'Education des Adultes. Il ne m'en fallait pas autant pour revenir dans cette ville mythique de Marrakech mais cet ennemi invisible, qui nous déstabilise depuis quelques années maintenant a eu raison de ma volonté.

Je serais représenté par monsieur L'Ambassadeur António Novó, un éminent membre de notre Commission qui a dirigé le comité de recherche et de rédaction de notre rapport. Nous aurons l'occasion de l'écouter lors du Panel.

Je voulais être parmi vous car c'est l'endroit où il faut être pour défendre l'éducation à tous les âges. Elle a pour but de mobiliser la Conference Internationale sur l'Education des Adultes et informer les politiques publiques.

Car il est temps de développer une nouvelle culture d'un apprentissage tout au long de la vie, afin de faire de l'inclusion sociale une réalité pour tous.

Adult Learning and Education is a key element of our collective commitment to ensure the right of education for all.

Adult Learning and Education is part of the 2030 commitment to 'ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'.

This commitment is not new.

It was integral to the Jomtien Declaration on Education for All in 1990 when the international community committed to meeting the basic learning needs of every child, youth and adult.

And yet, despite these repeated commitments, we see continued exclusion of too many from educational opportunity.

- Over 250 million children are out-of-school.
- In lower middle-income countries 1 in 4 adults is not literate.
- And in low-income countries, more than 2 out of 5 women are not literate.

This situation is unacceptable in 2022.

It is unacceptable in the digital age when information and knowledge are available to all.

We can and must do better.

But more of the same type of education provision is not good enough.

We need to transform our education systems.

We urgently need a fundamental rethink of our education systems, our educational approaches and models.

This was precisely the mandate of the International Commission on the Futures of Education that I had the honour of chairing over the past two years.

The report of our Commission calls for a new social contract for education -

A new social contract for education that can repair past injustices and shape more just and sustainable futures.

In forging a new social contract for education, we need a systemic, cross-sectoral and whole-of-government approach.

In fact, we need a whole of society approach.

The diverse range of stakeholders involved in adult learning and education – both governmental and non-governmental – must actively contribute to reimagining our education systems. This implies participation in policy dialogue and formulation, in provision, and in public accountability.

The right to education throughout life is a collective responsibility.

A failure to deliver on this would be our collective failure.

This is the spirit of the call of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, in his report, Our Common Agenda.

We must reimagine education and our shared futures together.

This cannot be done without the due recognition of the range of institutions and organizations committed to adult learning and education.

It is together that we must forge a new social contract for education for more just and sustainable futures.

I wish you all a very successful Conference.