Concept Note
The Role of Education in the Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

25 May 2016

The discussion today addresses innovative education concepts and solutions to build sustainable communities and global citizens. Speakers will draw on lessons from Tanzania, Sri Lanka, United States of America and elsewhere to explore ways and means of bridging the economic and digital divide by working with youth and adults to increase literacy and technical skills, to empower marginalized communities, to allow for entrepreneurship and artistic expression and in doing so, to ensure that no one is left behind. The discussion will also center on the importance of establishing the civil and financial identity of women and youth; and educational reform as a means of transformative justice that will help heal the wounds of conflict.

The Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative's #WhatIsSDG4 social media advocacy campaign will expand on each of the 10 Targets of SDG4, starting with #SDG4T1 to promote change among governments, donor countries, specialized agencies, institutions, and even individuals. Through the #WhatIsSDG4 advocacy campaign, the Initiative aims to build momentum not only around the education goal but the 2030 Agenda as a whole, to mobilize young people and civil society at large for a common humanity.

We will explore the crucial role of education in their implementation by using the three pillars of (i) formal education, (ii) informal education and training, and (iii) advocacy and public information as a means to raise awareness worldwide about the new Sustainable Development Goals. Audience participation is encouraged as we discuss such issues as innovative methods of education, encouraging entrepreneurship among women, promoting a shared culture of intellectual social responsibility and promoting Youth skills.

We will focus primarily on SDG Goal 4. Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all; Goal 5. Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls; Goal 8. Promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; Goal 16. Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and Goal 17 Strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development.

In a world that is becoming increasingly violent due to disenfranchisement and poverty, we will also focus on the idea of education as a means of social cohesion. In this regard Sri Lanka as a country that has emerged from a thirty year conflict has taken steps to incorporate national unity and reconciliation as a pillar within the education sector. It has begun to mainstream reconciliation into policy, curriculum, teacher education and co-curricular activities and to promote these concepts through the twining of schools and by setting up programs for students and teachers.