



Education International
Internationale de l'Éducation
Internacional de la Educación
Bildungsinternationale

Statement delivered by Education International at the High-Level Officials Meeting (15 December 2021).

Distinguished delegates,

As many of you noted, education is a fundamental human right and, with children accounting for 42% of all forcibly displaced people, it is central to the fulfilment of the Compact's objectives.

As a global union federation representing more than 32 million educators, Education International champions equitable and free access to quality and inclusive public education for all refugee children and youth.

As a member of the GRF's Education Co-sponsorship alliance, we have been working with partners to further the inclusion of refugees in public education and monitor achievements in that area over the past years.

Though we welcome the progress documented in the first GCR Indicator Report, we are concerned about the 1.8 million refugee children that remain out-of-school. That is in addition to the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on the most vulnerable in education, including refugees, and in particular, girls.

Education International and affiliates around the world have been **calling on governments to conduct educational equity audits in order to inform recovery plans** and help address, in particular, the exacerbated inequities facing refugee students and educators, as a result of the pandemic.

Such equity audits are most effective when they are planned, designed, and implemented through a collaborative and participatory process. Teachers, education personnel and their unions are best placed to assess the impact of this unprecedented crisis on students and help design solutions for a rapid and inclusive recovery in education.

As we explore ways of "expanding support" for refugees, **ensuring meaningful and constant dialogue with social partners is crucial**. Earlier this year, Education International hosted a large forum bringing together representatives of teacher unions, civil society, policy makers and the UN to discuss the challenges faced by the forcibly displaced in Africa, and in other parts of the world, in the context of the pandemic.

Finally, teachers are the cornerstone of quality inclusive education. As highlighted in the previous panel, the lack of qualified teachers is a major challenge. While numerous pledges were made in relation to education, few of them specifically focus on teachers. According to an analysis conducted by the GRF Primary Task team, only 3 out of 41 pledges covering primary education actually focus on teachers. As we identify gaps and areas in need of further support in preparation for the next GRF, **we must step up efforts to support teachers and invest in the recruitment, retention, training, deployment, terms of employment and working conditions of teachers in crisis and refugee-hosting contexts.** Governments must recognise the qualifications of refugee teachers and ensure that they have an opportunity to pursue their teaching career under the same terms and conditions as their local peers.

Dear colleagues, education unions have mobilised to help teachers navigate the challenges posed by the pandemic and mitigate its impact on the most vulnerable students, through numerous initiatives. We are committed to continue collaborating with all stakeholders to advance the right to education and access to decent work for all refugees. Thank you.