

Delivering on all the SDGs both home and abroad matters to us all

Tuesday, 24 September

Mr. President, Your Excellencies,

Four years ago, the world came together, and rightly so. We came together to agree the Sustainable Development Goals.

And one of the things we all agreed upon, each and every one of us, that every child was no matter where they are in the world, has a right to an education, has a right to a fair chance and opportunity in life.

Education, and in particular, girls education, is a priority. It's a priority for the United Kingdom government and in particular, it is a priority for our Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Boris Johnson. He is passionate about girls education, and why? The reason is self-explanatory. There is good reason; by educating girls, we improve countless lives. We improve communities, we improve nations, we improve the world.

From curbing infant mortality, improving child health and boosting economic growth, educating girls, we can address a whole host of the world's economic and, yes, social challenges as well.

Yet, Your Excellencies, Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, here are some facts, tragic facts:

There are about 131 million girls around the world who remain out of school. 27 million children in countries affected by conflict receive absolutely no education whatsoever. This has to change. Indeed, it must change.

We are not even close to achieving our target when it comes to the important issue of education. On current estimates, it will take another 80 years to achieve the equality of opportunity that we said we will deliver in 15 [years]. The task is in front of us. That means decades of girls who should be growing up to be doctors, to be teachers, to be entrepreneurs and prime ministers and presidents as well, having their dreams, their hopes, their opportunities, their ambitions snatched away from them. It cannot be right. Simply put, it is wrong. We must change and we must act. That is why the United Kingdom government has pledged to put its full weight behind championing 12 quality years of education for every single girl around the world, truly to say that we leave no girl behind. Between 2015 and 2019, the United Kingdom has supported at least five point eight million girls to gain a decent education, including those living in conflict zones.

But that is not enough. It is not good enough. And therefore, Mr President, Your Excellencies, on behalf of the United Kingdom government and our Prime Minister, in addition to the sums we have already committed for education around the world I use the opportunity today to announce that we are pledging

a further £515 million, over half a billion pounds, to help over 12 million children, half of them girls, into school and most importantly, to keep them there. I call on everyone here on behalf of our Prime Minister to play their part and ensure that girls get the education they deserve, to get the opportunities they desire to fulfill the ambitions they have.

You know what, your Excellencies, get this right and we together collaboratively, collectively will solve some of the most major problems of the world. We will solve many of the problems confronting humanity today. Delivering on all the SDGs, both home and abroad, matters to us all. They tackle the very issues that matter to people, to people in our country and my country and the United Kingdom and your country, to every country around the world. For we do care deeply about these important issues and we simply cannot achieve the SDGs if we leave half the global population behind. We must educate girls. We are committed to that. But it's not about talk alone. We must act and we must act now. Thank you.