

# PM speech at the Global Education Summit: 29 July 2021

Well, good evening, good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, thank you. Thank you and congratulations to you all. Great to see you in person, by the way, isn't it wonderful that the vaccines have liberated us to be able to come to this conference in London, a wonderful thing.

Great to see you all, despite your masks, I see some familiar friends in spite of the masks, some of you have taken your masks off in a daring way, but that's absolutely fine – you're socially distanced.

Now listen everybody I want to thank you all for raising your hands, raising your hands high and then thrusting them deep into your pockets in the way that you are, producing this staggering sum of \$4 billion going on \$5 billion. We often go to summits, we did before COVID struck, and we'd see very often a lot of men in suits, let's be clear men in suits basically saying that there was a problem before humanity that was so big and so intractable that there was no silver bullet, no quick fix, no simplistic solution. Have you ever been in a meeting like that? Well, this is not that meeting. I want to say this GPE, this Global Partnership for Education, is completely different because this is the silver bullet, this is the magic potion, this is the panacea. This is the universal cure, this is the Swiss Army knife, complete with allen key and screwdriver and everything else that can solve virtually every problem that afflicts humanity.

And I'm absolutely serious, if you educate the world properly and fairly then of course you end a great natural injustice. But also, if you end the injustice that nine out of ten 10 year olds cannot read a story around the country, 132 million kids aren't in school or in many of the countries represented here, alas, there are too few girls in school, and there is a gross disparity, a gross disparity in the education of boys and girls. If you end that injustice and you give every girl in the world the same education as every boy, 12 years of quality education, then you perform the most fantastic benefits for humanity- you lift life expectancy, you lift per capita GDP, you deal with infant mortality, and if you educate proper people properly in the way that they deserve then of course you end or you help to end all kinds of ignorance and prejudice and by educating people you help to end all the things that ignorance and prejudice help to create so you deal with terrorism and with war and extremism, and you help people to tackle climate change.

And so I'm immensely proud of the achievements of this GPE Summit today, I'm proud of what the UK has been able to contribute in spite of the difficult financial circumstances that we're all going through. We have lashed out 430 million pounds, as Julia rightly pointed out, the biggest sum we've ever contributed and I'm proud of the work we do around the world helping to educate young people across our planet, giving lessons in Hausa on the radio in Nigeria, I think it's amazing to see what we do in South Asia teaching young girls in schools. Now I know, as Uhuru has said, that this pandemic has

made things more difficult and we've lost ground and we all know the risk that inequality will now be entrenched but now is the time to make up that ground.

Necessity has been the mother of invention, we've all learned how to cope with Zoom, some of us better than others. I think the younger generation probably are getting the hang of this electronic technology perhaps even better than some of us here in this room and they understand how to impart and imbibe information through the internet and I think we've got to make sure that we support through our GP, we support Edtech, we support the technical progress that we can make through laptops, through devices of all kinds, we should support the creation of infrastructure of classrooms, of course that's the right thing to do.

But never forget fundamentally what this is all about, what is education? Education is the imparting of knowledge of instruction by one human being to another. The people we really need to thank and the people we really need to think about are the teachers across the world. Everybody in this room will probably have somebody that you can think of that was the teacher who made the difference to your life, who encouraged you, who gave you confidence, can you think of one Julia? Mr Crow, there you go, well Julia would not be here without Mr Crow, let's hear it for Mr Crow. Uhuru, I seem to remember that lesson, do you remember that lesson we did with your kids. I owe a lot to all my teachers but I think in particular have a guy called Mr Fox, when I was about, I think about 10 years old, and he took me into the library and I don't know whether he thought I was in need of remedial help, or whether he thought I had potential, it was never clear to me but he said to me I want you to read these books and it made a fantastic difference and a lasting difference to my life.

I just want to say the best thing about this summit here today is that we are supporting with huge injections of cash those amazing people across the world who are inspiring young people to think that they can succeed. And they can succeed. And by the way let me give you one idea, someone somewhere, some child somewhere who is being supported by the over 4bn dollars, [what is it? there's some doubt about this, oh it's over 4bn dollars but going to be 5bn over 5 years] but some child somewhere may well be the one who goes on to develop the next vaccine to deal with cancer or whatever other problem afflicts humanity. Some kid around the world will absolutely no doubt have their lives transformed, many many kids will have their lives transformed by these funds and that is the objective- to unleash potential across the planet.

It's a fantastic thing that you've done, I'm very very proud the UK has been able to be part of it and with Uhuru with Julia to offer leadership.

Thank you for coming to London, thank you for supporting the GPE, thank you for digging into your pockets and thank you for investing in education and young people across our planet, it is the single best investment we can make in the future of humanity. Thank you all.