

UN Human Rights Council 42: General Debate on Item 3

The United Kingdom is committed to ensuring that every girl in the world receives 12 years of quality education by 2030. Educating girls is central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals; it curbs infant mortality, eradicates illiteracy, reduces population pressures, and boosts economic growth.

The UK is proud to champion girls' education through our global campaign to 'Leave No Girl behind'. The UK is demonstrating international leadership to build political commitment and boost global investment in quality girls' education.

Through the UK-funded Girls' Education Challenge – the world's largest fund dedicated to girls' education – we are supporting up to 1.5 million marginalised girls in 17 countries.

However, around 131 million girls worldwide remain out of school, and gender inequality in education persists.

We must work together to create an enabling environment, by tackling the barriers that are stopping girls from accessing quality education, including: poverty; gender-based violence; harmful social norms and attitudes; and practices such as child, early and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation. Many girls become mothers before they can finish school. We call on all states to ensure that all women and girls have access to the sexual and reproductive health services they need, and to scale up the provision of comprehensive sexuality education.

For children in countries affected by crisis or conflict, education is lifesaving. We call upon States to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration, to prioritise the continuation of education during conflict.

Conflict-related sexual violence stops many girls from accessing education. This November, the UK will proudly host an International Conference, Time for Justice: Putting Survivors First, to galvanise further action to prevent sexual violence in conflict.

The UK will continue to champion gender equality, and stand with the most marginalised women and girls to ensure that no girl is left behind.