

UN Human Rights Council 47: UK statement for the introduction of the resolution on girls education

Your Excellencies,

I am very pleased to present this critical resolution on girls' education, together with our partners, the United Arab Emirates. I want to thank delegations for their constructive engagement on the text of this resolution.

We all know that educating girls creates empowered women who can lift their communities out of poverty, grow their economies and shape the destinies of their countries. And the pandemic has set back this vital cause. We estimate approximately 11 million girls are at risk of never returning back to school. So we have got to redouble our efforts.

This is a major international priority for the United Kingdom and we have put it at the heart of our G7 Presidency. At last month's G7 summit, leaders focussed on new targets to get 40 million more girls into education, and 20 million more girls reading by the age of 10. This is a major step forwards to delivering the commitment to 12 years of quality education for all girls.

The resolution that we are presenting today calls on States to really get behind this ambition. It would mark the first time that at the UN, we have agreed a document recognising the importance of ensuring access to at least 12 years of quality education for all girls. And I am pleased that, at the time of recording this message, more than 60 states have already given their support.

The resolution calls on governments to address and eliminate the barriers that girls face in accessing quality education, things like child marriage, the lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services. So we should all get behind this effort, which will be absolutely crucial to delivering the Sustainable Development Goal 4 to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."

And I hope we will all also be supporting the work of the Global Partnership for Education, the largest global fund solely dedicated to transforming the education opportunities in low income countries. The UK will be hosting the Global Education Summit with Kenya later on this month to raise funds for this vital cause.

At the G7 the UK led by example, we put in the largest ever pledge we have ever made to the GPE of £430 million. And together with our G7 partners we agreed a total pledge of at least \$2 billion of funding over the next 5 years. So we call on others to make ambitious pledges as well, to back up the G7's efforts, so that we can get towards the target of £5 billion over this period.

For the good of the next generation, it is time for the world to step up and deliver on girls' education and I urge all Members of the Human Rights Council to really put their shoulders to the wheel and get behind this important resolution.