Remarks at High Level Breakfast meeting on SDG4-Education 2030 in Uganda

By

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Honourable Janet Kataha Museveni, Minister of Education and Sports
Honourable Ministers
Honourable Members of Parliament
Permanent Secretary Ministry of education and sports
Local Government Representatives
Officials from Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies
Representatives from NGOs
Young people present
UN colleagues
Invited Guests
Ladies and gentlemen

It is a great honour for me to join you all at this High-level breakfast meeting on SDG4-Education 2030 in Uganda. I would like to thank the Ministry of Education for organising this important meeting and for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today on this first national consultation meeting on Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) which is in line with 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In September 2015, 193 Member States of the United Nations including Uganda reached consensus on the outcome document of new sustainable development agenda entitled, “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, which was adopted at a special session of the General Assembly. The Sustainable
Development Goals (SDGs) represent an unprecedented agreement among the Member States and are a useful tool for pursuing focused and coherent action on sustainable development.

In comparison to the Millennium Development Goals, which targeted developing countries, the SDGs are global in nature and universally applicable, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. It is, however, important to note that the 17 SDGs are not independent of each other and need to be implemented in an integrated manner.

Ladies and gentlemen

The ultimate and important goal in the SDGs is that of “Transforming the World”. Lessons from history in the development of countries and societies have convincingly shown that education is central to achieving this goal. We cannot transform our nation Uganda and achieve vision 2040 and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development without ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

The first SDG target in education focuses on an even greater challenge of extending achievements gained at the primary level to secondary education to ensure relevant and effective learning outcomes for both boys and girls.
The second education target in the SDGs calls for all girls and boys to access quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education. Children’s success later in life depends on the quality of early home environments and early childhood education.

We know that to compete in this inter-connected and competitive world, quality with relevant and effective learning outcomes must be integral to education at all levels.

Ladies and gentlemen

In a world where technology is moving rapidly and where competitiveness requires a diversified and highly trained workforce, it has become imperative to pay greater attention to post-secondary education.

In Uganda, therefore, it is imperative to focus on this outcome, not only because the economy needs to diversify, but also because more than half of the population is below the age of 25. The third education target in SDG4, therefore, calls for access of all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.

UNDP has strengthened institutional capacity for 12 vocations schools from Northern Uganda (Acholi, Karamoja and Lango sub regions)
through the Local Development and Social Cohesion in Northern Uganda Project. The support entailed equipping the institutions to enable them offer practical training to trainees. Through this support, about 1,500 youth are accessing these facilities.

This year, 2018, a new project, Uganda Graduate Volunteer Scheme Project, graduates from vocational schools from all regions of Uganda (30% of the project targeted youth) will gain employability skills through placements in work spaces, this will make them more competitive in the job market and enhance their chances of getting employment.

Ladies and gentlemen
Education remains very crucial to the Government of Uganda, given the large youth population in the country. If we are to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4, we need education programmes that address issues at all levels of education, including encouraging new focus on science, technology and mathematics; expansion of skills-development activities, particularly analytical thinking and hands-on skills, as well as use of ICT; retraining of teachers; and enhancing initiative, innovation and entrepreneurship. Also raising quality of education, with adequate measurement and making youth ‘fit for purpose’ in an environment of expanding job opportunities, is a significant challenge in Uganda.
I applaud the important strides the Government of Uganda has made in addressing the challenges that affect adolescent girls in the country, including the roll out of the National Youth Policy, the National Strategy to End Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy, the revised Adolescent Health Policy and the draft National Framework on Sexuality Education. This has been complemented by the efforts to strengthen service delivery and referrals for adolescent girls in school, health facilities and communities.

Ladies and gentlemen

We are here today, to share what SDG 4 is all about and prepare a road map on how to align the current education priorities to the new outcome targets in SDG 4 and find solutions to help build the future generation for the world we want. Allow me to share some of the contributions the UN has made towards the achievement of SDG4;

With support from the UN (UNFPA and UNESCO), the Ministry of Education and Sports developed a National Framework on Sexuality Education to guide the delivery and the implementation of sexuality education to improve sexual reproductive health outcomes of adolescent and young people in schools.

UN supported a High-Level Roundtable Dialogue on School Feeding in Uganda was held following the Strategic Review of SDG 2 in
Uganda. It was noted that School Feeding in Uganda requires a multi-sectoral/Ministerial approach, not Ministry of Education and Sports alone.

UNICEF has supported Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to establish an Early Childhood Development secretariat to coordinate implementation of the multisectoral approach to ECD in collaboration with the line ministries and support to local governments. So far 115 districts and 26 municipalities have been oriented on the policy and are now developing district plans to operationalize it.

UNICEF has also worked with Ministry of Education to align guidelines for establishment of ECD centres, training of caregivers, parenting education and standards with the integrated ECD framework. This includes inputs into the review of the Early Childhood Care and Education policy review currently underway with Global Partnership Education (GPE) support.

The ‘Education Cannot wait’, a global initiative hosted in the UNICEF headquarters is another contribution of the UN to Uganda. Uganda was selected as one of the recipients of the ‘Education Cannot Wait’ initiative, which triggered the development of the education response plan for refugees and host communities that has been approved by the Ministry of education and Sports this year. This national three and half year plan, the first of its kind, was jointly developed by UN agencies, donors, civil society organisations, government and other partners.
supporting the education refugee response. The sector was the first to develop a multi-year comprehensive costed strategy that will supported access to quality education for refugees and host communities.

The UN agencies (UNHCR, UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP), Ministry of education and Sports and other partners are implementing the Education cannot wait initiative which aims at meeting the specific educational needs of children living in refugee settlements and their host communities in Uganda with innovative solutions such as accelerated education, double-shifting, adapted infrastructure, as well as refugee teacher training and certification.

Ladies and Gentlemen
We stand at an important opportunity to transform Uganda not just economically but also socially. This will require a new assessment of our partnerships, our strengths, our capabilities and our shared aspirations. Allow me to share a few suggestions:

**Government**

- Can emphasise the implementation of the already existing policies such as the School feeding and Corporal Punishment so that children can stay in school.
- Since the launch of the Government of Uganda’s Universal Primary Education policy in 1996, gross national enrolment has more than doubled from 4 million to over 8 million (National
Education Profile 2014 Update). However, completion and enrolment into secondary education is still a challenge. According to UNICEF, only 1 in 4 children who start primary school makes it to secondary school.

- **Parliament**
  - Continue efforts towards effective policy, programs, dialogue and legislation for quality education.
  - Sensitize districts about the importance of educating a child.

**Media**

- Raise awareness on the consequences of traditional practices that keep children out of school especially girl child.

Ladies and gentlemen

As I conclude, I wish to thank the Government of Uganda for providing leadership in the implementation of the SDGs, starting with this consultative meeting. I particularly extend appreciation to the Ministry of Education and Sports, with support from UNESCO and UNICEF, for being the first sector to organise such a dialogue, and equally call upon other sectors to emulate this example.

I would like to deeply appreciate the Honourable Minister for Education and sports and First Lady of Uganda, for your efforts to champion the rights of the Girl Child to a quality education, health, protection from violence, and participation, which will greatly help to
ensure Uganda’s journey to become an Upper Middle Income country by 2040 is accelerated.

On behalf of the United Nations System in Uganda I would like to reiterate our commitment to work with the government of Uganda to support the acceleration of efforts toward the achievement of SDG4 leaving no one behind.

Thank you all