**Session: Education in Conflict and Emergencies**

Time: October 1, 2019 – 16:30 – 18:00

Moderator: Mr. Hans Brattskar, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Norway

**Innledning – paneldebatt om Education in Conflict and Emergencies**

* First of all I would like to thank the organisers for inviting me to moderate this important panel on education in conflict and emergencies. I would also like to welcome our distinguished panellists, and we look forward to hearing from you in a few minutes.
* I would also like to thank Cuba for putting the topic of promotion and protection of the rights of the child and youth through education and Education in Conflict and Emergencies on the agenda for the Social Forum.
* Education in conflict and emergencies is an integral part of Norway’s global education efforts. In order to reach the sustainable development goals on education we need to focus on those left furthest behind. This includes children and youth affected by crisis and conflict including refugees and internally displaced persons.
* A particular concern to us is the need to ensure inclusion of the most marginalized such as children and youth with disabilities.
* In many contexts, girls and women are disproportionally affected by crisis and displacement. It is therefore important to have a special emphasis on education and protection of girls and to address gender disparities.
* Norway is pleased to see that education has a prominent place in the Global Compact on Refugees. We are also pleased to see that more and more countries are including refugees in their national education systems. For the first Global Refugee Forum that will take place here in Geneva in December, Norway has volunteered as a co-sponsor of the area of education.
* Norway’s global advocacy efforts come together with considerable funding from both the humanitarian budget and the development budget, and we work with a number of partners, both UN organisations and civil society.
* Norway helped initiating- and support the Education Cannot Wait fund, launched at the World Humanitarian Summit. This Sunday, at the Global Citizen Festival in New York, Prime Minister Erna Solberg announced an increase of NOK 500 million for the period 2019-2022 to support the work of Education Cannot Wait. We encourage partners to join the ECW fund to ensure access to education of good quality for children and youth affected by conflict and crisis.
* According to Save the Children’s latest report, almost one fifth of all children live in areas affected by armed conflict. Armed conflicts cause immense humanitarian suffering and have a severe impact on the civilian population. Children are particularly vulnerable. This is why child protection is a key priority in Norway’s new humanitarian strategy.
* Children affected by armed conflict are entitled to protection under international humanitarian law. Failure to protect them has long-term, devastating effects on the individual child and their communities. But when governments and armed groups take steps to strengthen protection of children and their families, this enhances the prospects for peace and reconciliation, promotes the re-establishment of basic services and civilian infrastructure, and facilitates the return and reintegration of displaced people.
* Conflicts leave children traumatised. They are often separated from their families and communities. For these children, it is vital that school is a safe place where they can receive support and an education that offers opportunities for the future.
* Children must be given the legal and social protection they are entitled to as children, regardless of context. The right to education is essential, even in situations of conflict and crisis. We must invest in quality education in these situations, and not just at the primary level. In order to ensure that these investments pay off, we must do more to protect education from attack.
* Such attacks affect children and their future in dramatic ways. They strike at the core of communities and often lead to institutions closing, staff leaving, and systems breaking down. This leaves children vulnerable and drives displacement, recruitment to armed groups, and child labour.
* Rebuilding and restoring these systems and services after conflict often takes a very long time. In effect, children may be denied their right to education for years after a conflict ends.
* This is why civil society, and Norway and Argentina in cooperation with other states and international organisations, started the process that resulted in the Safe Schools Declaration that was adopted in 2015 in Oslo. Since then two global conferences have been held, in Argentina in 2017 and in Spain in May this year.
* Today, 96 states have endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration. This means that 96 states have made a commitment to protect children and education from attack, and to implement the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict*.
* This is indeed an achievement to be proud of. And with this, I would like to turn to our panellists, who will expand on many of the issues that I have already touched upon in this brief introduction to set the stage.

Let me first introduce all the speakers of this session:

* + - * Ms. Luciana Micha, Ministry of Defence, Argentina, General Director of the Center of International Studies of University of Buenos Aires who will speak on *Global progress in protecting education from attack through the Safe Schools initiative*
* Ms. Becky Telford, Senior Education Advisor, UNHCR who will talk about *Upholding the right to education for refugee children and youth*
* Ms. Alison Joyner – Education in Emergencies Specialist, Plan International Norwaywho will discuss how to ensure *Safe and equal access to education for girls and young women in conflict and emergency settings*
* Ms. Arizza Nocum, Extremely Together, Kofi Annan Foundation who will give a presentation on  *Education as a pathway to peace*
* Ms. Bushra Zulfiqar, Global Education Director, Save the Children who will end the panel by talking about *The role of education to safeguard children and youth and rebuild lives in situations of conflict*

Questions to introduce each panellists:

**To Ms. Luciana Micha:**

Luciana, the government of Argentina leads on the *Safe Schools Declaration* and the protection of students, teachers, and educational institutions during armed conflict with Norway. Since the Declaration was adopted in May 2015, nearly 100 States have endorsed it. Can you tell us about the global progress that has been achieved in protecting education from attack through the Safe Schools Declaration, including the various initiatives on implementation of the Declaration and the Guidelines to Protect Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict?

**To Ms. Becky Telford:**

Becky, as senior education advisor for the UN Refugee Agency, can you please talk about the importance of upholding the right to education for refugee children and youth and the challenges they face reaching quality education. How will the new Global Compact for Refugees help ensure education for refugee children and youth?

**To Ms. Alison Joyner:**

Alison, girls and young women are at heightened risk of danger during armed conflict and natural emergencies, meaning that they often cannot attend school and miss out on their education. Can you please tell us how we can ensure safe and equal access to education for girls and young women in conflict and emergency settings?

**To Ms. Arizza Nocum:**

Arizza, you are the founder of KRIS Library, a non-profit organization that uses education as a pathway to peace in the Philippines through building libraries, and promoting the inclusion of peace education in schools for young people affected by conflict and terrorism. Can you please tell us more about the role of education as a pathway to peace and how this forms part of your work with the Extremely Together Project?

**Ms. Bushra Zulfiqar:**

Bushra, education plays a key role in the lives of children and youth in conflict and emergency settings. Can you please explain how educationsafeguards children and youth and helps them to rebuild their lives in situations of conflict and emergencies?

* Thank you to all our panellists. I would now like to open the floor for any comments and questions you might have.

AVSLUTNING

* Let me end by thanking both the organisers of today’s event, all the panellists and all participants for their valuable contributions.
* Ensuring education in emergencies and better protection of schools in armed conflict requires a long-term commitment on the part of the international community. Norway is a consistent partner and will do its part. We will continue to give priority to child protection, education in emergencies, and the implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration.
* We will also continue to emphasise that children and young people need to be included in a meaningful way so that they can influence their own future and that of their communities. Our policies and operational plans must reflect how children are affected in today’s armed conflicts. If we are to achieve the SDGs, we cannot leave any child behind.
* Thank you

BAKGRUNN

Arrangørene har som mål at følgende beskjeder kommer fram i løpet av debatten:

* One in three children and young people is out of school in countries affected by war or natural disasters. Up to 27 million children are out of school due to armed conflict.
* The right to education applies at all times, including during armed conflict.
* Education can provide a stabilising and secure space for children and youth during armed conflict and humanitarian emergencies. It provides normalcy and schools are safe, physical environments that provide access to other crucial services, such as food, health, water, and sanitation.
* Inclusive and accessible education can act as a tool for conflict prevention.
* States should commit to protecting students, teachers, schools and universities in conflict and emergency settings, and ensure that safe spaces for education remain open for children and youth.

For additional information on the Social Forum, please see: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/SForum/Pages/SForum2019.aspx>