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Social development: literacy for life: shaping future agendas

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 2024

[on the report of the Third Committee ([A/79/450](#), para. 39)]

79/151. Literacy for life: shaping future agendas

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution [56/116](#) of 19 December 2001, by which it proclaimed the 10-year period beginning on 1 January 2003 the United Nations Literacy Decade, its resolution [57/166](#) of 18 December 2002, in which it welcomed the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade,¹ and its resolutions [59/149](#) of 20 December 2004, [61/140](#) of 19 December 2006, [63/154](#) of 18 December 2008, [65/183](#) of 21 December 2010, [68/132](#) of 18 December 2013, [69/141](#) of 18 December 2014, [71/166](#) of 19 December 2016, [73/145](#) of 17 December 2018, [75/155](#) of 16 December 2020 and [77/192](#) of 15 December 2022,

Recalling also the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,² which includes Sustainable Development Goal 4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, with a specific target on ensuring that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy by 2030,

Convinced that literacy is crucial to the acquisition by every child, young person and adult of the essential knowledge, skills and competencies that will enable them to address the challenges that they may face in life and represents an essential condition of lifelong learning, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the knowledge societies and economies of the twenty-first century, and to promote inclusive and equitable societies,

Reaffirming the right of Indigenous Peoples to have non-discriminatory access to all levels and forms of education provided by States, and recognizing the importance of effective measures to promote access for Indigenous individuals, in

¹ See [A/57/218](#) and [A/57/218/Corr.1](#).

² Resolution [70/1](#).



particular children, to education in their own language, whenever possible, as addressed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,³

Deeply concerned that, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, an estimated 754 million adults,⁴ two thirds of them women, lack basic literacy skills, and that 70 per cent of 10-year-old children in low- and middle-income countries are not able to read and understand a simple text, and that 244 million children, adolescents and youth worldwide (or one in five) were out of school in 2023 – a figure that has barely changed over the past decade,

Stressing the importance of recovering from a learning loss and addressing negative impacts, including on learners' socioemotional skills, as a consequence of the coronavirus disease (COVID 19) pandemic, in particular girls, who are among those disproportionately lacking access to education,

Recognizing that literacy is an integral part of lifelong learning as a continuum of proficiency in reading, writing and numeracy that is developed throughout life and across different life and work contexts,

Recognizing also that substantial and efficiently spent investments are needed to improve the quality of education in order to enable millions of people to acquire literacy skills for decent work,

Recognizing further the critical role of teachers and educators in ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning, and the importance of strengthening their capacities, skills and competencies, including digital skills, by providing training, support, materials and technological infrastructure, as well as the challenges faced by teachers and educators in online and digital learning, while ensuring their status and working conditions, as appropriate, and reiterating the commitment to substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, by 2030, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries,

Recognizing that literacy is a foundation for lifelong learning, a building block for achieving human rights and fundamental freedoms and a driver of sustainable development, and that the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003–2012) had a catalytic effect as a global framework for sustained and focused efforts for the promotion of literacy and literate environments,

Reaffirming the need to ensure equal access to inclusive and equitable quality education, including digital literacy, in order to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing world, and in this regard stressing that information and communications technologies and applications can create new ways to enhance education, including early childhood education and lifelong learning opportunities, while recognizing the need to close all digital divides and promote digital inclusion by taking into account national and regional contexts and addressing the challenges associated with access, connectivity, affordability, digital literacy and digital skills and awareness, and by ensuring that the benefits of new technologies are available to all, taking into account the needs of those who are in vulnerable situations,

Deeply concerned that the disproportionate impacts of the unprecedented global school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated pre-existing inequalities between and within countries and between and within educational systems in access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities, and that the impact of the pandemic on equal learning opportunity is further exacerbated by the digital divides between those who had the means to continue education remotely

³ Resolution [61/295](#), annex.

⁴ See [A/77/187](#).

and those who did not, as well as the rural-urban, youth-older persons and gender digital divides,

Recalling the International Conference on Girls' and Women's Literacy and Education: Foundations for Sustainable Development, held in Dhaka and co-hosted by the Government of Bangladesh and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in support of the Global Education First Initiative and on the occasion of International Literacy Day, on 8 September 2014, and taking note with appreciation of the adoption of the Dhaka Declaration,

Taking note of the 2024 Global Education Meeting, held on 31 October and 1 November 2024 in Fortaleza, Brazil, and its "Fortaleza Declaration",

Affirming that the realization of the right to education, especially for girls, contributes to the promotion of human rights, gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls and the eradication of poverty, as well as to development,

Recalling the importance of continuing to implement national and subnational programmes and measures to advance literacy worldwide as reflected in the Dakar Framework for Action, adopted on 28 April 2000 at the World Education Forum,⁵ and achieve literacy consistent with Sustainable Development Goal 4, and in this regard recognizing the important contribution of North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation through, *inter alia*, innovative pedagogical methods in literacy,

Deeply concerned about the persistence of the gender gap in education, which is reflected by the fact that, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, nearly two thirds of the world's non-literate adults are women,

Recalling the commitment to substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries,

Concerned that, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, one third of the children not attending school are children with disabilities and that the literacy rate among adults with disabilities is as low as 3 per cent in some countries,

Deeply concerned about the impact of disrupted educational services in humanitarian emergencies on efforts to promote literacy skills, especially for all children and young people,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Literacy for empowerment and transformation";⁶

2. *Commends* the efforts made by Member States, their development partners, the international donor community, the private sector, civil society and the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, particularly the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in promoting enjoyment of the right to education, including by making progress on the five strategic axes of action for the period following the Decade;

3. *Calls upon* Governments at all levels, as appropriate, to scale up literacy, including digital literacy programmes for all boys and girls, youth and adults,

⁵ See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Final Report of the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26–28 April 2000* (Paris, 2000).

⁶ A/79/155.

including older persons, with particular attention to those in vulnerable situations, to foster inclusive and innovative delivery of literacy services, including through further harnessing the innovative and transformative potential of digital technology and a strengthened institutional network, to promote an intersectoral approach by linking literacy learning with multiple sectors to address diverse learning needs, such as through relevant and inclusive educational resources in different languages, to establish multi-stakeholder partnerships with the active participation of civil society and the private sector, to encourage the integration of literacy learning into vocational education and training, to mobilize resources to strengthen literacy measurements and statistics, and to invest in education management information systems and data management capacities according to every State's financial and human capabilities;

4. *Calls upon* Member States to continue to increase investment in inclusive and equitable quality education for all, early childhood care and education, youth and adult literacy programmes or initiatives and skills enhancement, and promote opportunities for lifelong learning, technical and vocational training and digital literacy, allowing for the intergenerational acquisition and transfer of knowledge and skills to advance the prospects of future generations;

5. *Encourages* Member States, United Nations organizations, multilateral and bilateral donors, regional organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector to sustain their collective efforts for the promotion of literacy and literate environments and to contribute to the implementation of the Strategies (2020–2025) of the Global Alliance for Literacy within the Framework of Lifelong Learning, as well as the development of new strategies for synergistic action at the global, regional, national and community levels;

6. *Recalls* the adoption by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization of its Strategy for Youth and Adult Literacy (2020–2025) and its action plan;

7. *Takes note with appreciation* of the adoption of the Marrakech Framework for Action at the seventh International Conference on Adult Education, held from 15 to 17 June 2022, stressing the transformative power of adult learning and education for sustainable development and lifelong learning;

8. *Urges* international development partners and Governments to cooperate in order to strive to ensure that sufficient and sustainable funds continue to be mobilized, including to address or mitigate the effects driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, by and channelled through new and existing international financing mechanisms for education and that they also explicitly target and benefit youth and adult literacy;

9. *Takes note* of the Transforming Education Summit, convened by the Secretary-General from 16 to 19 September 2022, as well as its Pre-Summit, hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris from 28 to 30 June 2022, as well as the stocktake of transformative actions in education, hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris on 17 June 2024;

10. *Welcomes* the establishment of the United Nations Youth Office, takes note of its function to support ongoing efforts towards the mobilization of financial and technical support and investment to promote and upscale quality and inclusive education and training, skills development, capacity-building and bridging the digital divides, in tandem with job creation, for youth and creating an enabling environment for harnessing their talents and abilities to contribute to their societies, and in this

regard recognizes its potential positive contribution towards ensuring youth and adult literacy;⁷

11. *Invites* Member States, the United Nations, regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders to cooperate in strengthening the capacities of school directors, teachers and educators to ensure literacy, including through the development of intercultural and digital skills and competencies among them, as well as of the capacities to develop relevant pedagogical methods in literacy;

12. *Calls upon* States, and invites other relevant stakeholders, to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieve all literacy-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets;

13. *Calls upon* Member States to work with relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society, to take steps to close the digital divides, including the rural-urban, youth-older persons and gender digital divides and those within and between developed and developing countries, and promote digital inclusion by addressing the challenges associated with access, affordability, digital literacy and digital skills, ensuring that the benefits of new technologies, particularly on literacy, are available to all, including those living in rural and remote areas, taking into account the needs of those who are in vulnerable situations, and providing distance learning opportunities, especially in developing countries;

14. *Urges* Member States and other relevant stakeholders to take measures to ensure the proper training of teachers and other educational professionals in digital literacy and the availability of and access to learning materials and remote learning platforms to close all digital divides, including by removing barriers such as poor access to connectivity, the lack of affordability of connection and devices, limited digital skills and the absence of locally relevant digital content, in order to provide distance learning opportunities, *inter alia*, Internet, television and radio teaching alternatives, especially in developing countries;

15. *Invites* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as the specialized United Nations agency for education, to continue its mandated role to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 agenda, in particular through the renewed global education cooperation mechanism, including the strengthened Sustainable Development Goal 4 Education 2030 High-level Steering Committee,⁸ as an inclusive global multi-stakeholder consultation and coordination mechanism for education in the 2030 Agenda in accordance with the 2030 Agenda follow-up and review process;

16. *Requests* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to continue its coordinating and catalysing role through the implementation of its Strategy for Youth and Adult Literacy (2020–2025) and the strategy of the Global Alliance for Literacy and by continuing to provide support to Member States, in collaboration with partners, in enhancing capacities for policy formulation, programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as sharing information and knowledge on policies, programmes and progress in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal targets connected with literacy, especially target 4.1 on reading skills in primary and lower secondary school (including in Indigenous languages) and target 4.6 on youth and adult literacy, and creating synergies of action between the Alliance and other initiatives, including its Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education and Global Network of Learning Cities;

⁷ Resolution [76/306](#), para. 3 (i).

⁸ See [A/77/187](#).

17. *Encourages* efforts to provide quality education in safe learning environments for all, especially for boys, girls and youth, in humanitarian emergencies to contribute to a smooth transition from relief to development;
18. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to submit to the General Assembly at its eighty-first session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;
19. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its eighty-first session, under the item entitled “Social development”, the sub-item entitled “Literacy for life: shaping future agendas”.

*53rd plenary meeting
17 December 2024*
