



**Conference on Education for the Future, the Future of Education
Developing a Progressive Education Agenda
12-14 April 2014, Singapore**

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Background

There is almost a universal consensus among experts, civil society organizations, governments and global institutions with respect to Education's crucial role in fostering individual empowerment collective cohesion, and national as well as regional development. Also, throughout the long history of the emergence and development of social democrats and progressive movements, from labour unions, to civil society groups, and reform-minded intellectuals, Education has remained as a central advocacy. Education is a primary mechanism for empowering members and the broader citizenry, enabling organizational consolidation and coalition-building, fostering vibrant and informed debates around pressing issues in the society, and advancing socio-political consciousness against ignorance and political passivity. Despite the rapid changes in the fortunes and circumstances of progressive movements and workers groups, with many social democratic parties enmeshed in direct day-to-day governance issues, Education still continues to serve as a pillar of public advocacy and outreach -- inspiring new generations of leaders with cutting-edge ideas, guiding political mobilizations, and shaping a socially-conscious citizenry.

The 21st century -- marked by the advent of information technology, simultaneous political integration-fragmentation, and intense competition -- has further underlined the significance of achieving universal literacy, promoting functional education, and pushing for cutting-edge research and innovation to not only ensure social mobility and consciousness among citizens and individuals, but also facilitate sustainable national development and international cooperation. With the Asia-Pacific region emerging as a new center of global economic activity and social dynamism, the issue of Education is of paramount importance, especially vis-à-vis sustaining a strong momentum for growth, tackling poverty, fighting corruption, and harnessing civic engagement and democratic practices. Along health and income, education is one of the key pillars of human development and security -- and a pivotal element of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) under the United Nations.

Nonetheless, despite the expressed consensus by almost all states, civic organizations, and international bodies on the importance of Education, there seems to be a wide gap between agreed upon set of principles and goals on fostering Education, on one hand, and the realities of access to and quality of education (and the actual implementation of relevant programs and reforms), on the other. Across different continents, there are major gaps in the quality and accessibility of education – as well as the degree of importance attached to it, as reflected in the percentage of the GDP spent on education and research and development (R&D) by individual states.

Within the Asia-Pacific region itself, there is a wide spectrum of educational indicators, challenges, pedagogical practices, and overall levels of development – suggesting a complex and less-than-uniform macro-educational landscape. Thus, it is very important to identify common and specific challenges in the realm of education, analyze obstacles to achieving universal and functional literacy, and understand the factors that contribute to a vibrant educational atmosphere within individual states and regions.

Therefore, by gathering participants and presenters from across the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, the conference aims to provide a more nuanced picture and analysis of the educational landscape across varying regions within the Asia-Pacific. The conference aims to critically explore and disentangle a complex web of challenges facing Education in the Asia-Pacific by looking at the role of public investment, educational reform, private sector participation, gender and culture, information technology, and regional cooperation in achieving universal and quality education. More importantly, it looks at how social democrats (have and should) understand Education and educational reform – and its role in ensuring social consciousness, national development, individual empowerment, and democratic participation.

Objectives

- 1) Analyse the current status of education across the Asia-Pacific region, specifically in terms of access, quality, and the latest trends and challenges in the 21st century;
- 2) Provide a platform to discuss, asses, and analyse issues relevant to education in order to facilitate an agreement, or at least a common stance, on unique social democratic point of view, specifically in terms of clarifying policy bottom lines, outlining fundamental principles, and adopting optimal strategies to respond and adopt to existent and emerging challenges;
- 3) Share reflections, and develop comparative assessments on possible models and best practices, within the region and beyond, among education practitioners, policy

makers, and intellectuals as to contribute to a progressive education agenda for now and the future.

Summary of Discussions

I. On Asia's Yearning for Educational Reform

Against the backdrop of sustained economic development in Asia, a new era of prosperity and upward social mobility has brought about greater civic consciousness with respect to rising inequality and the deterioration of public welfare throughout the region. As recent popular uprisings and massive protests across Asia demonstrate -- some in relation to electoral fraud and others in response to the rollback of state services -- there is a general yearning for new ideas and policies, which can bring about true democratic transformation in the region.

Recent years have seen sustained mobilization by the civil society and youth groups, who have not only asked for more political freedom and democratization, but also, perhaps even more importantly, demanded the preservation of the state's welfare responsibilities and the protection of basic public services such as education. More and more people, most especially the youth, have continuously lamented and resisted the growing privatization of public services, since education, among other services, is increasingly being treated as a market commodity -- not as a basic component of human rights and a fundamental responsibility of the state, as social democrats contend. Education is less seen as a tool of social empowerment and self-actualization for individual citizens, but instead increasingly treated as a tool for enhancing the efficiency of the labour markets.

Economic globalization, therefore, has brought about a simultaneous rise in democratic aspirations as well as a decline in public services such as education. In recent years, many have come to view, rather naively, cyberspace as the emerging instrument for upgrading and expanding educational initiatives. But this overlooks the commercial interests underpinning such platforms, and the inherent limitations of such platforms for ensuring optimal face-to-face interaction and critical thinking, which is essential to any quality education.

Many leading universities have introduced Massive Open Online education, thinking this will serve as a panacea to the plethora of educational challenges we face in the 21st century. But this has proven to be very limited in its impact and efficacy, with many leading advocates in the West increasingly admitting so. In short, the advent of information

technology has somehow failed to supplant traditional public education as a source of quality, accessible training as well as an avenue for critical, creative thinking.¹

The commodification of education represents a huge setback for the democratic aspirations of Asia, undermining the long-term trajectory of democratization in the region. And this is precisely where social democrats, who emphasize the centrality of public education to democratic politics and social equity, can play an important role.² In our globalized world, education has gained greater salience, especially for social democrats, who view education as a foundation of a democratic movement aimed at the empowerment of the citizenry.

II. On The European Experience

Inequality is a major challenge today. About two-thirds of the world's poor reside in middle income countries. And education has historically proven to be a pivotal aspect of (overcoming) inequality. Historically, public education, which ensured universal access to quality education among the citizens, served as a linchpin of democratic transformation, social cohesion, and economic equity in Europe. And the social democratic forces, from Germany to Sweden, committed to preserving this egalitarian social order, allowing many ordinary, working class citizens to break through socio-economic barriers, pursuing fruitful careers as individuals as well as fully participating in the determination of the democratic order in their respective countries.

Across Europe, especially in places such as Sweden, employment and education have come to dominate the political discourse ahead of the upcoming election season.³ No wonder, today there is a vibrant debate vis-à-vis the rollback of the welfare state in Europe, and the impact of neo-liberal economic reform on the education sector. In Sweden, the increasing privatization and segregation of the traditionally state-dominated public education sector has led to a dramatic decline in educational standards and competency among the younger generation. In Sweden, the rise of right-wing/liberal governments has been accompanied by (state-subsidized) private schools, which follow standardized curriculum but are driven by profits.

Now more than 40% of Swedish students go to the private schools. Consequently, Sweden has suffered the biggest loss in OECD's education indicators. Segregation and money laundering of state subsidies of these institutions has also become a huge concern -- issues that hardly existed prior to the privatization of education institutions by right-wing governments. No wonder, the social democrats' age-old (and increasingly more assertive)

¹ See opening remarks by FES Resident Representative (PHL) Berthold Leimbach

² See the opening remarks MP Liew Chin Tong and the presentation of Representative Ibarra Gutierrez.

³ See opening remarks by Anna Sundstrom, head of operations at Olof Palme International Center

advocacy of public education has gained unprecedented traction among the electorate, especially the youth, which bodes well for the outcome of the upcoming elections.⁴

For social democrats, especially in places such as Germany, education is viewed as a gateway to emancipation, empowerment, and participation in the labour market and cultural life. It is a gateway to a good life. It is a foundation of democracy. The future of democracy and education and educational opportunities are interrelated. Historically speaking, education is not something that can be taken for granted. Prior to the democratization of Europe, the lack of education was used by the establishment as an instrument for political control. No wonder, the 19th century progressive, labour movements were grounded on the principle of popular education. These democratic social movements, which eventually came to play a role in the democratization and direct governance of their respective countries, pushed for obligatory basic education as a vehicle for enhancing social cohesion and political empowerment of the citizenry. As modern history vividly demonstrates, even economic prosperity depends on education. This is why the creation of quality and accessible education has been a central element of social democratic principles.⁵

Social democrats believe that education rests on a number of key principles. First of all, it should be holistic, not only about skill development, but also about emotional development and human consciousness building -- it is about moulding people's character in a manner that is individually empowering and socially desirable. Equal opportunity is also an essential element of education, where social origins are not a basis for the determination of educational success; individual citizens, from all walks of life and from across the socio-economic spectrum, should have an equal opportunity to pursue their educational objectives and fulfil their aspirations in this regard.

Education is also about the state's indubitable responsibility to monitor quality. It is about the development of concrete indicators and standards to ensure educational institutions are achieving and sustaining quality education for individual and collective success. Moreover, education is about inclusiveness, serving as a platform for social cohesion, integration of diverse individuals into the body politic and encouraging them to play a role in the determination of democratic life, and empowering disadvantaged communities and individuals to have sufficient access to quality education.⁶

III. Socio-Economic Externalities of Education

⁴ See interventions and presentation by Ann Linde, head of the International Unit Party of European Socialists

⁵ See keynote address by MP Edelgard Bulmahn, Vice President of the German Bundestag (Social Democratic Party of Germany).

⁶ Ibid.

In practice, however, many of the principles of education are yet to be fully realized. People from privileged background have greater chance to good education than their poorer counterparts. There is a necessity for targeted promotion of the potentials of all citizens; all children deserve a good start in life, but this philosophy is not supported by everybody. Some contend that formal education is enough. So widening educational opportunities is still a challenge. But education is a civil and human right.

Continuous and sustained state-led efforts at promoting educational opportunities for all citizens are central to promoting participation in the determination of political life in the society. It is incumbent upon the state to encourage people to make the most of their potentials. Every human being should have access to free and quality education. Educational exclusion is a form of injustice, undermining innovation and progress, which is essential to national development.⁷

In the long run, investment in education is central to sustained economic growth. Education is expensive, but lack of it is even more costly to the economic trajectory of nations. Highly-skilled individuals are the backbone of a productive economy. Multiple studies show how poverty and economic competitiveness, on one hand, and lack of education, on the other, are correlated. Thus, investment in education is a cornerstone of social policy. The state should develop an integrated view of education, which appreciates the centrality of educational opportunities to a vibrant economy.⁸

Germany, for instance, only spends up 1% of its GDP on on education, which is below the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) standards. Education is an issue that covers all aspects of governance and policy-making. The African proverb that “It takes a whole village to educate a child” is true. Education allows for self-determination of individuals. Knowledge-acquisition is a universal good. Education also fosters creativity and arts, which underpin civilization and the development of culture, which, in turn, pushes the boundaries of progress.

Online sources offer massive amount of information, but not education, which is about developing methodologies to streamline education and enhance acquisition of knowledge. Education is about developing the discernment of the youth, so that they can make responsible and informed decisions as they find their way in life. Education enhances empathy and good communication skills. It helps individuals appreciate diversity and openness, helping individuals at developing collaborative skills. A stable society is hinged on how education allows citizens to develop tolerance and appreciation of diversity. Education is about transfer of values, after all.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

IV. Policy Interventions⁹

With respect to education, policy-making should not only be confined to the federal/national level, but it should also be coordinated with, applied to, and appreciative of realities on the municipal and local government levels. With respect to vocational training, for instance, the principle under consideration should be: Every individual should be given qualified skills to be able to find meaningful education and careers. This has been central to the success and competitiveness of countries like Germany.

The country's dual system of education, encompassing both academic and vocational tracks, is anchored by a dynamic tripartite partnership among the state, the business sector, and trade unions, which co-exist in an equalitarian relationship. From the perspective of the businesses, state support for vocational training is extremely important, because it safeguards their workers by maintaining and fostering their long term innovative capacities.

Vocational training represents a clear competitive edge for Germany, contributing to its low youth underemployment and labour market dynamism, especially in comparison to many other European countries that have different (more privatized) education models and suffer from double-digit youth unemployment. Germany has been praised for having a good match between its labour markets, on one hand, and training in its educational institutions, on the other. The existence of uniform national quality standards and examination has played a crucial role in this regard.

The German system has helped individuals to develop strong and meaningful occupational identity, helping them to develop creative means of producing value in the society. The German experience shows how those with academic and vocational training are highly committed to their work. The German educational system develops multi-dimensional competencies among the youth, which has facilitated the diversification and dynamism of labour markets.

The constant assessment, revaluation, and amendments of education-related regulations is extremely important to maintaining a competitive, quality education sector, which, in turn, is central to economic buoyancy and sustainable development. Education -- similar to social justice and other public services -- should not be treated as a commodity, but instead as a public good, which is non-negotiable; it can't be bought and sold. The state should guarantee access to this public good.

⁹ This portion is extensively based on discussions and exchanges on policy intervention between MP Bulmahn and participants from across Asia.

From a macro-political perspective, education policy should ensure that the educational system reflects the democratic values of the constitution. The school and university curriculums should reflect the constitutional and democratic values of the society, and not promote segregation, alienation, and antagonism among varying communities.

One of the main problems with market-driven educational systems is their mistaken, atomistic conception of education; according to the neo-liberal argument, if you are going to benefit from your education then you should pay for it yourself. But in reality, education has a public dimension. Moreover, the privatization of education has led to decline in quality. Per Europe's experience, the privatization of education has led to the decline in both quality and democratic character of the overall educational system.

V. Lessons for Asia¹⁰

In many Asian schools, the professional schools should play a major role in vocational training program. There should be a strong state-employer partnership on regulating the quality and standards of training among apprentices. Vocational training should emphasize wide-ranging skills, including administrative skills. The training should be comprehensive in its development of competencies. It is difficult, however, to fully guarantee private schools will reflect democratic values. This is why public education is ideal, and the state should pro-actively monitor the operations and curriculum of private institutions. The state after all has compliance-enforcement mechanisms. It can withdraw allowances and accreditation if they don't follow constitutional values.

A vocational training model should be designed especially for small and medium enterprises, which are common across Asia. Having a massive industrial base like in industrialized countries is not a precondition. These are the lessons that apply also to the services sectors, which are prevalent in the developing world. The strong partnership between the state and the private sector helps fostering societal cohesion, consensus-building and dialogue. Nevertheless, even developed countries, not everyone have the chance for accessing higher education -- vocational or academic.

Another area of concern is "intermediate training", which focuses on preparing the youth for actual high-level training. While many private universities are as competent as public universities in providing needed skills for the success of individuals, as seen across Asia, education should represent something larger: It is about transmitting social values, which enhance democratic politics and inter-cultural communication. Even some big business leaders are worried about the lack of management skills among many who have not

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participated in and received public education. People tend to underestimate human potentials for learning. That is why the state has a political responsibility to correct this.

VI. Structural and Emerging Challenges

Despite all its achievements, many developed countries as in developing ones continue to struggle with long-standing challenges, which undermine the fulfilment of fundamental principles of education like underinvestment. Inclusiveness and equity continue to be a huge concern, with individuals from privileged backgrounds having disproportionately high access to quality, higher education, while many with special disabilities and disadvantaged socio-economic background are still struggling to overcome in-built inequities in the system. So there is an urgent need to redress these gaps to ensure maximum equity within the educational system.

Underfunding has also affected the quality of education, creating technological gaps, especially in the realm of higher-education, which undermine the ability of citizens to ensure full educational competitiveness vis-à-vis other leading industrialized (and Asian) countries that heavily invest in the technological infrastructure of their educational institutions.¹¹

In Asia, it is hard to speak of a singular trend in the realm of education across the continent. As a vast region, composed of varying sub-regions, Asia is home to one of the world's least developed countries, mostly in Central and South Asia, as well as the world's leading economies, mostly in Northeast Asia. As a result, in terms of educational standards there is a huge divergence in terms of indicators and standards vis-à-vis primary, secondary, and tertiary education. Countries such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and China are among the world's most competitive countries in terms of proficiency in math and science and basic education indicators. In contrast, many countries in South and West Asia are below the world average in basic education indicators such as literacy rates, participation rates in varying educational levels, and in terms of proficiency in math and science.

The Asian region also exhibits divergent models of education, with some countries such as Japan successfully combining equity with quality, while other countries have, at best, managed to focus on either equity in access or quality of training, without striking the optimal balance yet. Across many Asian countries, especially booming emerging markets in South and East Asia, the privatization of educational institutions has gone hand in hand with rising inequality in the economic realm.

¹¹ See presentation by Mirko Schadewald, head of division, Education and Science Policy, Social Democratic Party of Germany

Other regions, especially in South and West Asia are still struggling with ensuring gender equity and universal access in education, with low levels of literacy among minorities. As a result, international organizations such as UNESCO have stepped up their efforts to assist these countries to close the gender (and other forms of) gap, which have undermined the ability of many Asian countries to ensure quality, accessible education for the majority of the people.¹²

Given the vast gulf between educational trends and indicators between leading Northeast Asian countries (Japan, South Korea, and Chinese Taipei), on one hand, and other regions of Asia, on the other, any policy intervention and educational advocacy in the context of Asia should be highly tuned to domestic realities on the ground.

Despite their tremendous success, Northeast Asian countries such as South Korea, however, continue to struggle with unique set of challenges in the realm of education. The excessive emphasis on rote memorization, which happens to be crucial to the performance of students ahead of entrance exams for higher education, has deprived many students of a more comprehensive, fulfilling mode of education, which should emphasize creativity, critical thinking, and civic responsibility. As a result, many students in places such as South Korea suffer from fatigue, stress, and depression.¹³

In places such as Japan, disparities among different regions is a source of concern, forcing the Ministry of Education to engage in varying studies to identify the root causes of the existing divergence in educational performance (i.e., the Programme for International Student Assessment) across Japan. While lack of financial support is a culprit for unequal educational performance across Japan's regions, the response of the Ministry of Education, however, is to simply put more pressure on the educators to enhance the performance of the students. Another response from the government was to introduce the National Achievement Test to measure the competency of students in terms of mathematics and Japanese, consuming much of the energy of the local government. These efforts, however, have undermined the ability of educational institutions to engage in hands-on, integrated assessment and enhancement of the students' competencies.¹⁴

The continued commodification of education has reduced educational attainment into a basic standard for market efficiency and value. Among university professors, the constant emphasis on publication and output, which happen to be crucial to faculty promotion, funding, and university rankings, may have also affected the propensity of teachers to more

¹² See presentation by Dr. Gwang-Jo Kim, Director, UNESCO Asia Pacific Regional Bureau

¹³ Professor KIM Ki-Seok, Global Cooperation for Education, National Seoul University South Korea

¹⁴ See presentation by Professor Toshimitsu Tabe, chair of the Department of Education, Faculty of Integrated Arts and Social Sciences, Japan Women's University

fully engage in the comprehensive education of the students. The increasing penetration of market logic and over-emphasis on standardized tests, primarily assessing math and science proficiency, has undermined the value of education as a source of personal empowerment, fulfilment, and “happiness”, which should be at the heart of any desirable and ideal educational system, especially from a social democratic point of view.¹⁵

In Southeast Asia¹⁶, there are concerns over the impact of the impending Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Economic Community -- originally planned to take effect by 2015, but there are growing indications that ongoing negotiations might be extended for few years more -- which will reduce trade and non-trade barriers among Southeast Asian states, potentially leading to a more aggressive privatization of educational institutions across the region and rollback of state services such as education subsidies. Accelerated trade liberalization could pave the way for a more aggressive imposition of market logic upon educational institutions, further eroding the quality of and access to basic and higher education in the region. Many Southeast Asian countries consider education as a basic human right and have constitutional obligations to allocate optimal amounts budget for public education institutions and ensure universal access to education. In reality, however, many governments continue to ignore their obligations, increasingly rely on private education, and use labour market exigencies as basis for determining their educational policy. ¹⁷ Lack of political freedom and state interference in education is another concern. Some Southeast Asian countries also continue to struggle with illiberal, autocratic regimes, which deprive universities, including premiere national universities, of much-needed academic freedom -- a cornerstone of liberal education and empowerment of the young generation.¹⁸

In South Asian countries such as Pakistan, however, there continues to be significant gender and ethnic gap in the educational system, reflecting not only the overall state of development in the country, but also persisting social cleavages, which undermine the provision of an accessible, quality education to all citizens, regardless of socio-economic status, age, gender, sex, religion, and ethnicity. The persistence of security challenges, from extremist-fundamentalist groups to ethnic separatists insurgencies, have undermined the ability of national and local governments to provide a systematic solution to a plethora of

¹⁵ Professor KIM Ki-Seok, Global Cooperation for Education, National Seoul University South Korea

¹⁶ For Southeast Asian perspectives, see presentations by Dr. Chalermchai Phanthalert, Office of the Basic Education Commission of Thailand , and MP Barry Guterrez.

¹⁷ Based on exchanges between Southeast Asian participants.

¹⁸ Ibid.

equity- and quality-related challenges, which prevent many citizens from gaining access to public education.¹⁹

VII. Conclusions

Against the backdrop of high youth unemployment and growing inequality, which has been ravaging much of the world, the issue of education -- as an indispensable public good, underpinning the national economy and fostering societal cohesion -- has gained even more salience.

In today's globalized world, the significance of education is conventionally understood in terms of its pivotal role in enhancing and preserving the productive and innovative capacities of the (national and global) economy. Education is largely seen as an instrument of skill-enhancement and cognitive development, preparing individuals to contribute to the efficient and robust operation of labour markets.

As social democrats, however, we firmly believe that education should be understood and appreciated in a broader sense. We believe that education is an end in itself, a critical element in nurturing human potential and preserving human dignity. We believe that education should not be purely understood through the lens of market value and employability. We should transcend a purely instrumentalist-economistic understanding of education in favour of a view, which, above all, conceptualizes education as a basic human right, a social service, and a tool for national development. Education – above all else – is a tool for personal and social emancipation. The state must not shirk away from its primary responsibility to provide accessible, non-discriminatory and quality public education; thus we oppose persistent trends of increasing privatization of the education sector, and the treatment of education as a commodity. We believe that the state should ensure universal access to education, pro-actively reaching out to indigent sectors, marginalized minorities, as well as people with special disabilities. The state should also ensure quality education, preserving academic freedom and enhancing critical thinking and promoting communitarian values among the citizenry.

But to achieve accessible and quality public education, the state should be committed to a sustained, optimal investment in the physical and intellectual infrastructure of publicly-funded primary and secondary schools, technical-vocational learning centers and universities. We believe that the state should abide by internationally-accepted standards in terms of public spending on education, and with a clear view of unique domestic needs

¹⁹ See presentation by MP Yasmin Lehri, Member Balochistan Assembly National Party, Pakistan

and fiscal constraints. We believe that education should be the top priority in public spending, representing a primary concern of state policy.

We continue to be alarmed by the sustained trend of “brain drain”, where highly-skilled citizens in developing countries have sought economic refuge and employment opportunities abroad, predominantly in the developed world. While we are not opposed to labour mobility and transnational migration, we believe that the state should ensure that educational institutions inculcate a strong sense of civic obligation and dedication to national development among citizens, while establishing special mechanisms to tap into the talents of the diaspora and discourage further migration among the highly-skilled citizens.

Recognizing the growing prevalence of privately-run educational institutions, we believe that the state should (a) ensure that the principles of accessibility and quality are not undermined, and (b) the democratic values of the constitution are reflected in the curricula of all educational institutions. The increasing privatization of educational institutions fosters segmentation in society; the state bears the ultimate responsibility of ensuring societal cohesion, political tolerance, and economic dynamism by pro-actively monitoring, regulating, and/or supporting all educational institutions under its jurisdiction.

Notwithstanding the economic benefits of a vibrant educational sector, and its centrality to comprehensive and sustainable national development, we view education as a vehicle of empowerment, allowing individual citizens to fully participate in the determination of the collective, public life. We believe in the inherent democratic potential of education, and its role in fostering a climate of inter-cultural understanding, upward social mobility, and active citizenship.

Though investment in education is expensive, we believe that the lack of investment in education is considerably costlier, as it undermines social justice and the egalitarian principles of a democratic constitution, which, in turn, could affect political stability and social cohesion. Also, without the full commitment of the state, the lack of access to and quality of education compromises the long-term trajectory of the (national and global) economy.

Beyond ensuring optimal compatibility between the educational institutions and labour markets, the state should ensure the systematic and sustained enhancement of its human capital, which will be central to the development of dynamic, innovative economies in the 21st century. Any forms of discrimination especially on gender, class and ethnicity should be disallowed in the education system.

As education represents a primordial socio-political and policy-making responsibility, we call on governments, political movements, educational institutions and citizens to continue

to push the agenda to establish an education system that is democratic, holistic, inclusive, and that which promotes quality and relevance to ever-evolving challenges of our time.