

Dakar, Senegal, February 3 (Infosplusgabon) - UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Director-General Audrey Azoulay, has commended the pledges announced by over 60 countries at the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Financing Conference in Dakar, Senegal, co-chaired by France and Senegal, and of which UNESCO is a partner.

"In the face of an education emergency, these commitments represent an investment in the future of millions of children and youth, and a crucial contribution in the implementation of inclusive and equitable quality education, the goal for which UNESCO leads global efforts in the framework of the 2030 Agenda," she said.

"Education is the key to development and peace, but we are in a situation of massive under-investment. The consequences are well known. We need collective intelligence in action for a long-term political vision that is coherent and financed."

Ms Azoulay said UNESCO would be fully engaged in this collective effort, through the mandate that has been entrusted to it by our Member States.

UNESCO estimates an annual financing gap of US\$39 billion to achieve universal education from early childhood to secondary level in low and middle-income countries by 2030.

Human rights group, Human Rights Watch, said ahead of the 1-3 February GPE 2018 Replenishment Conference that the slow growth of free secondary education for all was jeopardizing the futures of millions of children globally.

Globally, more than 264 million children are out of primary and secondary school, including 62 million children of lower-secondary school age and 141 million of upper-secondary school age.

The human rights group said in a statement that close to 80 percent of the world's out-of-school children of primary and secondary school age live in the 65 countries associated with the Global Partnership for Education.

It urged all governments attending the conference should make a commitment to support free secondary education, by law and in practice.

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