

Sept. 25th, 2008

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World leaders, FIFA, corporations, faith leaders AND education advocates

JOIN TOGETHER TO LAUNCH "CLASS OF 2015"

Pledge \$ 4.5 billion, to educate 15 million children over the next three years

and call for political will in fight for free, public basic education for all

New York, NY, UNITED NATIONS*—Today, the "Class of 2015: Education for All" launched a new effort to build the political will to achieve education goals and remind world leaders of their promise that every child will get the opportunity of an education by 2015. A remarkable line up of supportive governments, faith groups, NGOs, sports, private sector organizations and education advocates registered their commitment to action on education, announcing pledges of \$4.5 billion towards the achievement of education for all, over the next three years - two-thirds of this for basic education. When delivered, this money will be enough to educate 15 million children, including those struggling to stay in school as well as new entrants.

"I am proud today to help launch the Class of 2015 - uniting governments, faith groups, the private sector, civil society organizations and football as never before," said UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown. "As part of the UK's commitment to spend £8.5 billion on education in the 10 years to 2015, I can announce today a further contribution of £50 million to the Education For All Fast Track Initiative and £5million to match funds raised by Comic Relief with UK schools. Together we can help make education for all a reality for the 75 million children out of school."

Joining together at the United Nations High Level Event on the MDGs, the

"Class of 2015" pledged to provide global leadership in the fight to fully fund and achieve the education goals. In 2000, world leaders pledged to ensure that by 2015, there would be Education for All. Eight years later, the MDG of gender parity in education has already been missed and the world is far off track for making the other education goals a reality. Experts agree that the goals are achievable—but much more needs to be done.

"Children are waiting at the school gates, despite repeated promises from the international community. G8 countries and other donor nations are behind on their commitments and today is a rallying call to work together to address the gaps," said Kailash Satyarthi, President of the Global Campaign for Education. "\$16 billion per year must be committed and mobilized in a predictable way by 2015 to achieve education for all. The pledges made today, if delivered, will make an immediate impact in developing countries and build the political will in donor countries to make good on promises for funding."

Since 2000, increased funding has yielded results with 41 million more children in school, yet 75 million children of primary school age are still not in school, with many of them working in factories, on farms or caring for their sick parents instead. For those fortunate enough to make it to school, millions struggle to learn, as they share teachers with up to 100 other students, have few or no textbooks and receive only a few hours teaching a day. As generations before them also failed to have the chance at school, today 774 million adults are unable to read and write. By working together at key moments and mobilizing people in developed and developing countries, the "Class of 2015" will work to help achieve the education goals and ensure that every child has a chance to go to school.

FIFA announced a new commitment to mobilize support from millions of World Cup fans with its "Football for Hope" movement. "Together we can make universal education in Africa a reality and raise awareness on the challenges and needs of the continent, not only in the lead-up, but long after the final whistle of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa," said Sepp Blatter, President of FIFA. "We call on all governments to be accountable for their promises on education and every sector of society should also join in and concretely contribute."

"Next year on behalf of the school children of the UK, Comic Relief will commit to spending £5 million, including the money raised by the school community, on projects across Africa helping the hardest to reach children get an education, with the British government matching that money for a total of £10 million," said Kevin Cahill, Chief Executive of Comic Relief. "Through its innovative Schools Choose programme, we will help UK school children understand the barriers faced by children across Africa in getting a good education, with the schools that get involved helping determine which particular work they would like their money to contribute to."

Prime Minister Brown, President of the European Commission José Manuel* *Barroso and Satyarthi were joined by President H.E. Ernest Bai Koroma of Sierra Leone, Prime Minister of Norway Jens Stoltenberg, World Bank President Robert Zoellick, Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan, UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura, as well as private sector leaders John Chambers, CEO of CISCO, Intel Chairman Craig Barrett, the Archbishop of York, John Sentamu and representatives and leaders from civil society including Action Aid, Comic Relief, Education International, FAWE, Oxfam, Save the Children and World Vision.

"Teachers are the foundation of Education For All," said Assibi Napoe, Chair of the Global Campaign for Education. "18 million new teachers are needed between now and 2015 to guarantee that each classroom has a qualified teacher and many happy, healthy children."

Education is a critical piece of the development puzzle. For an individual, education can offer a pathway to escaping from poverty, to finding a good job, and to becoming an active and valuable contributor to the social and economic health of our communities. For a country, expanding good quality education for all is a big contributor to economic growth.

"To help meet the serious challenges that remain, the World Bank is projecting a target of \$1.5 billion per year for education through the International Development Association, in 2008 and 2009, subject to country needs," said World Bank President Robert Zoellick. These funds will help governments in over 30 countries achieve quantitative targets such as reducing the number of out of school children globally by at least 3.5

million per year, and improving school quality and learning for over 150 million children each year."