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# Analysis of National Statements of Commitment presented at the Transforming Education Summit

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# Introduction

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**The Transforming Education Summit (TES) took place in September 2022 as the first meeting of heads of state in the “post COVID” period. It presented an important opportunity to initiate true transformation of global education, as country representatives gathered, made commitments and calls to action, and set priorities and targets towards achieving educational transformation in the midst of an educational crisis following the disruptions and impact of Covid-19.**

This report describes the results of a thorough analysis of 131 National Statements of Commitment submitted by the participating countries. The analysis conducted was a mixed method content analysis. It utilised deductive coding to understand commitments made around teachers, digitalisation, the climate, the financing of education and the commitments made regarding Early Childhood Education (ECE), Further and Higher Education and Research (FHER) and Education Support Personnel (ESP). It also utilised inductive coding in order to develop a deeper understanding of commitments made as part of each of the aforementioned categories and an understanding of what commitments were made by each country. The analysis focused on the real commitments made and discarded mentions of certain topics or themes that were merely descriptions and had no intent for action or transformation.

## Commitments regarding the financing of education

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Approximately 62% of countries made commitments related to the public funding of education. Of those, 52 countries made concrete commitments to increase the public expenditure for education as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) and the national budget, while 13 countries committed to ensuring and upholding current levels of public funding for education.

Approximately a third of countries participating in the Transforming Education Summit made real commitments to increase the public expenditure for education as a percentage of the GDP and the national budget. They were:

Bangladesh, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Comoros, Congo (Republic of the), Côte d'Ivoire, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Iraq, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Moldova, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, North Macedonia, the Philippines, Qatar, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Korea, South Sudan, Spain, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam, Yemen.

Furthermore, many countries committed to monitoring and ensuring effective and efficient allocation and equitable distribution of public funding for education. Technical and vocational education and training (TVET), the provision of free secondary education, the

development of educational infrastructure, the procurement of educational materials and school meals, teacher salaries, training and skills development, as well as research and development were identified as areas in need of further investment and as priorities for increased allocation of education funding.

Thirty-three countries made commitments related to education funding from the private sector. Of those, the majority are low and lower-middle income countries (five are low-income countries and fifteen are lower-middle income countries). Ten upper-middle income countries and Antigua and Barbuda, Brunei Darussalam and Kuwait, which are high income countries, have also made commitments related to the participation of the private sector in education funding. Around a quarter of the countries participating in the Transforming Education Summit made commitments related to education financing coming from the private sector. Those countries were:

Albania, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Egypt, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Honduras, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine.

Countries including Antigua and Barbuda, Botswana, Brunei, Cambodia, Egypt, Ghana, Kiribati, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Tanzania,

Turkmenistan and Uganda committed to establishing public private partnerships in order to ensure sufficient funding, particularly in the technical and vocational education and training and tertiary and higher education sectors. Moreover, development projects and education digitalisation were identified as areas where private sector investments are needed. Several countries committed to introducing financial and tax incentives to encourage private investment in education.

Interestingly, while France and Spain committed to increasing their ODA contributions to education and both Switzerland and Liechtenstein commit to ensuring the continuity of their official development assistance (ODA) contributions to education, especially for primary education and TVET sectors and to ensure gender equity

in education, safe schools, and education in emergencies and crises, many more countries committed to strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation in order to ensure additional development aid and, hence, sustainable funding for education.

While financing was an important and highlighted topic of the Transforming Education Summit, and most countries stated that sustainable and adequate financing is of crucial importance to the success of education reforms and development, as many as 48 countries made no real, concrete commitments related to the public funding of education. This is an extremely concerning matter as publicly funded education is crucial to ensuring equity and inclusivity in education.

## Commitments regarding teachers

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Most countries made real and substantial commitments related to teachers. Eighty-one countries committed to improving the initial education and in-service training of teachers and providing more varied and relevant continuous professional development opportunities. Most often, countries highlighted commitments to providing teachers with education, training and professional development on digital and ICT literacy, inclusive education and the inclusion of all children in the learning environment, learner-centred pedagogies, early childhood development and action research. The necessity for alignment and coordination between pre- and in-service training was also emphasised. Moreover, 37 countries committed to skills development and capacity building for teachers. As is

the case with teacher training, over half of those countries prioritised building teachers' digital competencies and developing their ICT capacities and skills around science, technology and digital education. Approximately a quarter of the commitments emphasised the development of cultural competencies and skills to enable teachers to ensure inclusive and equitable classrooms, and a few countries committed to cultivating teachers' creative and innovative capacities.

Moreover, most countries stated that teachers are necessary for successful educational transformation and that high quality teachers are vital for ensuring quality education. Contrarily, only eight countries committed to ensuring teacher quality. In all cases, the quality of teachers was recognised as being

ensured through qualification requirements, extensive teacher education, training and continuous professional development (CPD).

Another theme highlighted across the National Statements of Commitment was the recruitment of teachers. Forty-three countries committed to intervene and make the teaching profession more attractive, encourage more people to become teachers and hire sufficient numbers of qualified teachers, thereby addressing the teacher shortage. The interventions oriented towards the recruitment and retention of teachers included improving the quality of initial teacher education and CPD, developing relevant and requisite systems for supporting teachers, developing and improving pathways for career progression and introducing guidance systems for the teaching career, increasing teachers' salaries and providing them with financial incentives, improving teacher living and working conditions, and improving the status of the teaching profession.

Approximately a third of countries participating in the Transforming Education Summit made commitments aimed at addressing the teacher shortage. These were:

Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Benin, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Comoros, Congo (Republic of the), Côte d'Ivoire, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Georgia, Germany, Guinea, Iceland, Iraq, Israel, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, Mali, Moldova, Mongolia, Nauru, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, the Philippines, Qatar, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Senegal, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Syria, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, Yemen.

Nonetheless, only a minority of countries made meaningful commitments in relation to the implementation of these interventions. Namely, only 29 countries made commitments to increase teacher salaries or provide financial incentives to teachers, and of those only a few give concrete information on the timeline and extent of the increase, whereas only 13 countries committed to introducing policies or measures regarding teacher qualifications and licencing and only a few countries committed to improving the working conditions of teachers.

Approximately one in five countries committed to increasing teacher salaries or providing teachers with substantial financial incentives. These were:

Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Comoros, Croatia, France, Guinea-Bissau, Israel, Jamaica, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Madagascar, Moldova, Mongolia, Nauru, Nigeria, Philippines, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, Sweden, Syria, Uganda, Ukraine.

Furthermore, only four countries made commitments to support teacher autonomy, only nine countries committed to establishing pathways and support mechanisms for career growth and advancement of teachers and education professionals, only 6 countries committed to supporting teacher wellbeing and welfare, only ten countries committed to empowering and supporting teachers through the provision of requisite resources and educational materials which aid the teaching and learning process, and only 31 countries committed to strengthening the professionalism and status of teachers.

**Table 1.** Commitments to teacher autonomy, career growth and progression, teacher wellbeing and the provision of resources and materials for teaching by country.

Country	Autonomy	Career growth	Wellbeing	Resources and materials
Andorra	x			
Australia		x	x	
Brunei Darussalam		x	x	
Cabo Verde				x
Cambodia		x		x
Georgia		x		
Guinea-Bissau		x		
Honduras			x	
Jamaica				x
Madagascar				x
Morocco	x			x
Niger		x		
Nigeria		x	x	
North Macedonia	x			
Philippines		x	x	
Romania	x			
St. Kitts and Nevis		x		x
Singapore			x	
Solomon Islands				x
Spain				x
Saint Kitts and Nevis		x		x
Thailand				x
Yemen				x
Guinea-Bisseau		x		

Only 31 of the countries participating in the Transforming Education Summit committed to improving the status of the teaching profession and strengthening the professionalism of teachers. These were:

Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chile, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Georgia, Ghana, Honduras, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Libya, Madagascar, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Niger, Palestine, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Uganda.

Notably, Argentina and Cuba are the only two countries which acknowledged the importance and value of teacher organisations in education recovery and transformation and made commitments related to teacher and professional organisations and their participation in decision making processes in education.

Remarkably, only 4 countries made commitments regarding education support personnel (ESP). Tajikistan, Kiribati and the Philippines committed to deploying additional ESP and Iceland committed to improve the competencies and training of ESP.

While it is certainly reassuring that almost all countries participating in the Transforming Education Summit recognised and acknowledged the value and importance of teachers for education quality and transformation, the interventions and measures countries actually committed to are insufficient to improve the status of teachers and address the global teacher shortage. Positive examples are set by the Chile and Philippines, and as the countries make clear and meaningful commitments to invest in the teaching profession through strengthening teacher education and training, improving teacher working conditions, increasing their salaries and ensuring their wellbeing.

## Commitments by levels of education

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Although most countries made commitments referring to their education systems as a whole, three education levels were highlighted across the National Statements of Commitment – early childhood education (ECE), technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and further and higher education and research (FHER).

Thirty-two countries made concrete commitments related to the provision of ECE. ECE was highlighted as necessary for ensuring equitable opportunities for all children and as a mechanism for providing psychosocial support and facilitating catching up processes made necessary due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, ECE was acknowledged as important for ensuring literacy and numeracy, cognitive and socioemotional development, setting a solid foundation for future educational and career success, and school readiness. Accordingly,

countries committed to ensuring equitable access to ECE, particularly for children from remote and rural areas, marginalised and disadvantaged groups, and Indigenous communities. The interventions highlighted included subsidising the sector, providing cash transfers, and setting limits on costs to households for ECE, as well as investing in the infrastructure of ECE. Moreover, countries prioritised ensuring the integration and coordination between the ECE sector and primary education, creating standards for ECE and, in the case of Antigua and Barbuda, Canada, Morocco, Egypt, the provision of education, training and capacity building for ECE teachers.

Approximately a third of countries committed to investing in TVET, as well as upgrading, modernising and expanding the sector. TVET is highlighted as being important for the prevention of early school leaving,

ensuring the professional integration of young people, their entrepreneurial skills and competitiveness in the labour market, strengthening the connection between education and the labour market and schools and workplaces, as well as ensuring sustainable and economic development of the countries and meeting the needs of the labour market. Therefore, countries committed to extending the length of internships in TVET and introducing paid internships and the dual model of vocational education. Additionally, countries committed to ensuring the development of employable, sustainable skills and competencies young people need for future life, as well as meeting the economic and development needs of communities through TVET. Notably, only a few countries committed to providing suitable and quality education, pedagogical training and capacity building for TVET teachers, despite qualified, educated and competent professionals being integral for ensuring equity and quality in the sector.

Thirty-two countries made commitments to increase investment in FHER. Most of these commitments focused on providing

equitable and inclusive access to high quality, efficient and productive higher education that serves the needs of the labour market and society by addressing social and economic challenges. Countries also committed to increasing the digital maturity of higher education institutions, strengthening their capacities for innovation, and introducing curriculum reforms. Notably, many countries also committed to introducing and fulfilling accreditation standards based on international criteria for their higher education institutions, thereby enabling international mobility.

Approximately one in five countries participating in the Transforming education Summit made commitments related to investing in further and higher education. These were:

Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bangladesh, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, China, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Egypt, Eswatini, Finland, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, North Macedonia, Norway, Saint Kitts and Nevis, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, United Arab Emirates, Vietnam.

## Commitments by theme

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One hundred and two countries made real commitments to education digitalisation, making it one of the most prevalent themes of the Transforming Education Summit. With regards to education digitalisation, countries most frequently committed to improving and expanding digital infrastructure and providing inclusive and equitable access to a stable internet connection, electricity and energy coverage, technological equipment, resources and devices to all learners and teachers,

particularly those living in remote and rural communities and those from disadvantaged groups or of a lower socioeconomic status, thereby reducing the digital divide. Digitalisation was presented by many as a solution to the provision of education in times of crisis and emergency and a mechanism which would enable the provision of effective distance education in remote areas. Countries also committed to introducing and upgrading digital learning platforms and ensuring the

development of digital and ICT literacy, skills and capacities for learners and teachers necessary for life and development in the digital age and the 4th Industrial revolution through curriculum reform that focuses on digital teaching and learning, utilising ICT in teaching and developing programmes which promote and facilitate the development of digital skills. Moreover, countries committed to introducing relevant legislation on digital education utilising ICT and safeguarding the online privacy and safety of learners and teachers and ensuring cybersecurity and digital ethics.

Another prevalent theme identified in the National Statements of Commitment was equitable and inclusive education. One hundred and twenty-three countries made commitments to provide equitable and inclusive access to quality education for all learners, regardless of their diversities. To that end, countries most frequently committed to investing in educational infrastructure in order to ensure sufficient schooling spaces, providing schools with adequate resources, equipment, furniture and supplies that suit all learners and facilitate their participation in formal education, and providing free ECE, primary and secondary education for all learners. Countries also committed to ensuring that schools are safe spaces and engaging learning environments, safeguarding food security through introducing or expanding school nutrition programs, providing access to basic hygiene and psychosocial support in schools, and ensuring sustainable and accessible forms of school transportation. Notably, some countries committed to ensuring individualised learning for all children and that children coming from minorities and Indigenous communities are provided access to culturally significant

ways of knowing and learning in their mother tongues. Moreover, many countries committed to strengthening intersectoral partnerships and relationships between families and local communities in order to allow for multifocal interventions and ensure all children enjoy meaningful ways of participating in the education system.

Forty-two countries made commitments to invest in ensuring gender equity in education. Of those, many countries committed to guaranteeing the safety and protection of girls in formal education through policies and mechanisms to stop school-related gender-based violence and through developing the infrastructure of school facilities to support girls' participation in education. Niger can be highlighted as championing these policies. Moreover, Ecuador should be noted as the only country which specifically committed to gender-based safety, protection and anti-discrimination not only for learners, but for teachers as well. Several countries committed to ensuring gender balance and the participation of women in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of education policies, strategies and plans.

A well-addressed topic in the National Statements of Commitment was curriculum reform. Sixty-six countries made commitments regarding curriculum reform. The majority of those countries committed to transforming curriculum in order for it to better align with the current and future socioeconomic needs of the country and fulfil the needs of the labour market, ensuring the development of employability and transversal skills and fostering entrepreneurship, developing digital literacy and promoting global citizenship. Furthermore, many countries committed to introducing an interdisciplinary approach

in teaching and learning, connecting the knowledge from different subjects, project-based, student-centred and competency-based learning and fostering intercultural skills and competencies. Moreover, many countries committed to developing critical thinking, literacy and numeracy, and media and information literacy through teaching and learning. Notably, several countries also committed to valuing Indigenous knowledge and setting education contextually, thereby increasing all students' knowledge about Indigenous histories, cultures and perspectives, and providing culturally relevant and meaningful education to children from Indigenous communities. Canada championed the participation of the Indigenous communities in the development of curriculum and decision-making processes in education. Additionally, countries including Uganda, Botswana, Honduras and Ecuador made commitments to introduce violence prevention into the national curriculum through practices of emotional learning and gender-transformative and trauma-informed approaches. Finally, some countries also committed to including climate change and environmental education in the national curriculum.

Nineteen countries made commitments related to climate change. Other than the introduction of curriculum reforms that are set to include climate change education, environmental education, as well as elements of green transition and sustainable development, several countries committed to cultivating values of environmental awareness and protection in formal education and investing in the infrastructure of educational institutions to ensure their safety and appropriateness to face climate change. Notably, South Korea committed to investing

in carbon neutral school infrastructure and Antigua and Barbuda committed to investing in climate smart infrastructure that maximises the use of renewable energy, while Palestine committed to establishing school gardens and producing energy through solar panels on school rooftops.

Significantly, 19 countries made commitments related to the environment and climate change education. These were:

Antigua and Barbuda, Bulgaria, Canada, Finland, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Libya, Mongolia, Palestine, Peru, Romania, South Korea, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom.

Another well addressed topic was early school leaving. Nineteen countries committed to introducing specific measures to reduce the number of early school leavers, increase learner retention rates and reintegrate out-of-school children into the formal education system. Most often, the measures included the introduction of compulsory and free ECE and secondary education, as well as making further investments into TVET sector expansion. Moreover, several countries committed to investing in the provision of specialised activities and services targeting these groups of learners and to introducing flexible and alternative educational pathways for out-of-school children.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on education can still be felt in many participating countries. Accordingly, 49 countries made commitments regarding educational recovery. Most countries committed to researching and measuring the impact of the pandemic and consequential school closures on the learning

process, ensuring all children are back in school, implementing accelerated learning recovery programs, and ensuring the wellbeing and mental health of teachers and learners. While much attention was paid to the recovery of learners and ensuring learning outcomes, it is important to note that, other than Panama, Andorra and Cambodia, no countries made commitments to assist or support teachers in the recovery process.

Furthermore, over 23 countries committed to making their education systems more resilient and responsive to future crises and emergencies. Most countries committed to developing national strategies for the provision

of education in emergencies, strengthening the capacities of online and distance education delivery, developing national online learning platforms and ensuring psychosocial support mechanisms are in place.

Finally, 17 countries committed to introducing and improving upon the quality of data tracking and management mechanisms and systems through which the achievements, targets and benchmarks are monitored, thereby enhancing the quality, accuracy and availability of data which supports evidence-based policy making and planning in education.

## Conclusion

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This analysis shows that there was no topic on which every country made a meaningful commitment at the Transforming Education Summit. In fact, many National Statements of Commitment can be far more accurately characterised as descriptions of the state of the art, rather than statements portraying actual commitments for educational transformation. Furthermore, many of the commitments seem to be “re-commitments” as they do not seem to differ from previous targets set by these countries. Therefore, it seems there is much to be done to mobilise significant action for the transformation of education.