



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**[CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY]**

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European Commissioner for Development

## **Still on time to achieve universal primary education**

The Forum: 2015 Education Countdown: Failure is Not an Option, UNGA  
Ministerial Week

**New York, 23 September 2014**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by saying how happy I am to join the many voices today in support of education.

I would also like to take this opportunity to give my personal thanks to Sarah and Gordon Brown for their efforts to make education a priority in national and global development agendas.

As EU Commissioner for Development I couldn't be prouder of what Europe is doing for children across the world, especially in these testing times.

The European Union has made education a priority. In total, we will be investing around 4.5 billion euro in all levels of education between now and 2020. Our bilateral programmes with partner countries focus on basic education and vocational training. We do not shy away from working in difficult conditions.

More than half of the countries in which we are providing support for education are fragile or conflict-affected, compared with just two-fifths in the previous programming period. Our total support in these countries – Somalia, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic, Myanmar, and many others – is estimated at around 2.5 billion euro.

We have not stopped there. We stepped up our contribution to the Global Partnership for Education at its second replenishment conference, hosted by the European Commission in Brussels in June this year.

Yet despite all this support, far too many children are still deprived of the right to learn, be educated and lead a normal life. That's why I was delighted to see all the pledges being made at the GPE replenishment conference, and in particular those by our developing country partners – because these will help make a real difference to the lives, and the futures, of millions of children across the world.

If the world can muster the political will, it will take us that much closer towards meeting the key Millennium Development Goal of achieving universal primary education by 2015, and of reaching out to millions of marginalised children.

I sincerely believe that if governments take this goal seriously and make education their number one priority in their national programmes, we can still meet it in time.

In conclusion, therefore, let me encourage all of you to make substantial pledges to invest in education in order to ensure that by 2030 every child completes at least basic education and has basic literacy and numeracy skills.

For all children education offers hope. It can truly transform their lives. It can help protect girls and boys, providing safe spaces for learning and psychosocial development. It can provide a sense of normalcy and routine. In short, it can offer them the bright future they deserve.

This is what we have promised. We have to keep that promise.

Thank you.