

Global leaders commit to making schools Safe to Learn

Earlier this week in New York, during the **High-Level Political Forum**, senior leaders from governments, the UN, and international organizations announced significant new commitments to address the global crisis of school violence.

“Children need to be safe, healthy and educated,” said Alice Albright, the CEO of the Global Partnership for Education. “It’s forums like these that enable us to work cross-sectorally to enable this.”

The Safe to Learn Leaders Event on Monday 15 July was co-hosted by Henrietta H. Fore, Executive Director of UNICEF and Board Chair of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, and Martha Delgado, Mexico’s Deputy Minister for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights.

“We need everyone’s voices and everyone’s ideas,” said Ms. Fore. “And importantly, we need everyone’s commitments to take action.”

“Safe to Learn is a targeted, time-bound initiative that can yield concrete results,” said Minister Delgado.

Safe to Learn is a five-year initiative to end violence in schools by 2024. It works by bringing partners from the education, child protection and

violence-prevention communities together, ensuring that these groups connect their efforts – and build on each other’s strengths – to make schools safer. More than one billion children experience violence every year; girls, children with disabilities, and children in conflict or on the move are especially vulnerable. Such violence often has life-long consequences, including lower learning outcomes, poorer health and fewer job opportunities.

“Being protected from all forms of violence is a universal, fundamental right for children,” said Her Highness Dr. Sayyida Muna Bint Fahd Al Said, Sultanate of Oman. “We have an obligation as civil societies and communities to commit to this campaign.”

More than **150 people attended the event**. During the event the **UK Government announced more than \$5 million in funding** for Safe to Learn through the End Violence Fund.

Participants included ministers and leaders from the education and child protection communities. Many made commitments to ending violence in schools within their own countries, or pushing forward efforts to target the issue on a local, regional or global scale.



Safe to Learn commitments



Ghana: Matthew Opoku Prempeh, Ghana's Minister for Education, celebrated Ghana's endorsement of Safe to Learn's Call to Action, along with the country's creation of both a curriculum and new national policy to ensure children's safety within schools.

Mexico: In the context of the Comprehensive Development Plan along with El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, we have the aim of retaining half a million children that are abandoning school, in large part due to violence. The threat to human security is real and the effects on society can be dire.

Republic of Indonesia: Yohana Susana Yembise, Indonesia's Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, spoke of the country's commitment to children's rights and the establishment of 16,800 child-friendly schools, which implement policies to ensure safe learning environments. The Minister also discussed Indonesia's efforts to adopt child-friendly city programs throughout the country.

Sultanate of Oman: Her Highness Dr. Sayyida Muna Bint Fahd Al Said, Sultanate of Oman, discussed Oman's commitment to develop three innovative technology solutions to be applied within the classroom to make schools safer for children, both within Oman and in countries abroad. The country is also hosting the ISPCAN International Congress on Child Protection in September, which will provide a platform to further promote and support the Safe to Learn campaign.

UK Department for International Development (DFID): Matthew Rycroft, the Permanent Secretary of DFID, announced more than \$5 million to the End Violence Fund, which will support country-level projects related to the Safe to Learn campaign.

Civil Society Forum: Anna Henry, Director of the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, spoke on behalf of the 17 members of the Civil Society Forum to End Violence Against Children. The CSO Forum members are committed to using their influence and networks on the ground at the grassroots level to advance Safe to Learn's agenda and mission and work to reduce violence in schools through their programs when possible.

Education Cannot Wait: Yasmine Sherif, Director of Education Cannot Wait, committed to increase the organisation's programming for conflict-affected children in six additional countries, bringing the total countries reached to 35.

Global Partnership for Education: Alice Albright, the CEO of the Global Partnership for Education, announced the group's increased efforts to end violence in and around schools at the local, national and global levels through funding programs, raising awareness, and supporting governments to improve their policies.

UNESCO: Stefania Giannini, UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Education, announced that UNESCO will address violence and bullying in schools within their Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future program, a \$40 million





initiative in 31 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, reaching 20 million children. With support from the End Violence Fund, UNESCO will also undertake a new study on teachers' roles in addressing school violence and bullying and create a world anti-bullying awareness day. Ms. Giannini is the former Education Minister of Italy.

UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children: Dr. Najat Maala M'jid announced her commitment to and support for Safe to Learn, along with her promise to use all opportunities to speak on the importance of safety in schools and children's fundamental right to a safe, quality education.

World Bank: Jaime Saavedra, Global Director, Education, pledged to triple the number of projects they support with specific interventions to ending violence in and around schools. Saavedra is the former Education Minister of Peru.

World Council of Churches: Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, spoke of the Council's commitment to increase awareness of violence against children to schools backed by churches around the globe, along with their plans to hold a conference for all church-based schools to address the issue in 2020.

World Vision: Daniela Buzducea, Partnership Leader, Advocacy and External Engagement of World Vision, announced the organisation's scale-up of their Safe and Nurturing Schools program, which responds to and prevents school-based violence in countries around the world.



Matthew Rycroft, the Permanent Secretary of DFID and Alice Albright, the CEO of the Global Partnership for Education



Henrietta H. Fore, Executive Director of UNICEF and Board Chair of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, and Martha Delgado, Mexico's Deputy Minister for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights



Her Highness Dr. Sayyida Muna Bint F and Henrietta H. Fore, Executive Director of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children

Alice Albright, CEO of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children



Dr. Howard Taylor, Executive Director of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children





About Safe to Learn

Since Safe to Learn began in early 2019, governments, organisations, funders and communities have made numerous commitments. To date, **11 governments have endorsed the five-point Call to Action**, including Cambodia, Georgia, Ghana, Honduras, Mexico, Moldova, Nepal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan and Uganda.

“This is just the beginning,” said Dr. Howard Taylor, Executive Director of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. **“And it will take many more of us. We need to work together, as smartly as we can, over the next days, months and years to make a change.”**

Before, during and after the event, many of our partners came together to make schools #SafeToLearn. It will take all of us – from every part of the world – to end violence for good.

Please join us. Let us know what your organisation is doing to make schools safe for all children. For more information, contact safetolearn@end-violence.org. Spread the word about **#SafeToLearn** on social media, retweet this message, share the posts below, or write your own!



Learn more about [Safe to Learn](#)

Our partners

