

## **First ever breakdown shows over half of G7 aid to education goes to achieving gender equality, but results lag**

Paris, 05 July— In spite of significant progress in parity in access to schools between boys and girls on average globally over the last 20 years, the number of illiterate adult women in low income countries has grown by 20 million since 2000, according to the latest Gender Report produced by UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report team.

The Report "*Building bridges for gender equality*," is published on the occasion of the G7 Development and Education Ministerial Meeting and the G7-UNESCO International conference taking place at the Organization's Headquarters.

It presents the first ever breakdown of G7 aid to education. It shows that 55% of that aid goes to achieving gender equality, with Canada (92%) leading the pack in terms of prioritizing gender equality in its education aid at 92%, followed by France and the UK that tie at 76% of their respective education development aid.

The new Report also highlights important disparities and unequal progress in different regions. One third of countries have not achieved gender parity in primary education. Half the world's nations fail to provide lower secondary education to as many girls as boys, according to the Report, which also points out that only one in four countries have equality in upper secondary education. Sub-Saharan Africa is far behind in all education levels and the Arab States for the first time lag furthest in achieving gender parity in primary education, possibly because of conflict. Central and Southern Asia have made great progress, led by rapid change in India.

"Tackling inequalities head-on is the only way we are going to achieve a quality education for all," said the Director-General of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay. "We welcome the G7 decision to focus on girls' education, a core priority of UNESCO for the next six years. This is a positive development not only for the realization of a fundamental human right for girls and women, but for all who work to achieve sustainable development and peace."

The Report analyzed the 20 countries with the largest gender gaps in education and identified their policies for gender equality. Cash and in-kind rewards for families whose children attend school are the most popular policies, implemented in three out of four national plans. Only one in five countries took measures to reform their curricula and textbooks, ensure girls' participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or provide safe access to schools. Educational plans in Angola, the Central African Republic, Djibouti and Mauritania made scant references to gender inequalities in education, but those of Niger, Guinea and Somalia have strong roadmaps for change.

"We can try and improve education systems as much as we want but real change is unlikely to happen unless we also tackle negative gender norms and attitudes in society," cautioned Manos Antoninis, Director of the Global Education Monitoring Report. "Over a quarter of people still think that it is more important for a boy to go to university than a girl. We have

to empower girls, educate boys and men and identify new role models if we are to challenge the status quo successfully.”

Societal change is all the more necessary to achieve parity, considering the Report’s finding that 117 countries and territories still allow a girl to marry and that four countries in sub-Saharan Africa enforce a total ban against girls returning to school after pregnancy.

Inequality is also present in educational systems where teaching generally remains a female profession with men in charge. In 28 mostly high-income countries, 70% of lower secondary school teachers are female, but only 53% of head teachers are.

Inequality affects girls and women in technical and vocational programmes, which remain male bastions. Just a quarter of those enrolled in engineering and in information and communications technology programmes are women.

Gender inequality continues hampering the development of girls and women to the detriment of societies as a whole. UNESCO calls for greater political commitment to gender equality in the form of laws and policies. On July 5<sup>th</sup>, UNESCO will launch a global initiative *Her Education, Our Future* to galvanise cooperation around three main pillars: better data, better policies and better practices for girls’ and women’s empowerment through education. As part of its advocacy for reform, UNESCO has produced and made available online an interactive map with information on the status of national constitutions, legislation and regulations on gender equality in countries around the world (available as of 5 July <https://en.unesco.org/education/girls-women-rights>).

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Notes to Editors :

G7 donor	Share of direct aid to education targeted at gender equality	Disbursement - Direct aid to education (US\$ millions)
Canada	92%	206
France	76%	524
United Kingdom	76%	916
Germany	64%	941
United States	42%	1556
Italy	40%	100
Japan	6%	559

Source: Global Education Monitoring Report calculations