

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 7, 2016

Contact: Ashley Wilson, 202-765-2268

awilson@gce-us.org

Historic Refugee Summits Must Provide Access to Education for All Displaced Children

The Global Campaign for Education – US, a broad-based coalition of over 80 members¹ dedicated to ensuring universal quality education for all children, urges the United Nations, the U.S. Government and world leaders to accelerate progress towards universal access to education for displaced children.

Today, 75 million children and adolescents aged 3-18 have had their education directly affected by emergencies and protracted crises.² Of the more than 21 million refugees registered with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 3.6 million school-aged children are out of school.³ Only 50 percent of refugees or internally displaced persons are enrolled in primary school, 25 percent in secondary school and very few have access to pre-primary or tertiary education.⁴

For children in crisis situations, education is an absolute necessity. In the midst of destruction, violence, and instability, school is a place of learning and opportunity, a sanctuary for healing and health, and a haven of normalcy and hope for the future. Neglecting a child's right to education undermines not only their future, but also the future of their societies. Lack of education leaves children more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, including recruitment into armed groups, child labor and early marriage.

Later this month, world leaders will gather for the United Nations Summit for Refugees and Migrants (September 19) and U.S. Leaders' Summit on Refugees (September 20) to agree on policies and set forth commitments that can create significant change in the lives of displaced children who are currently out of school. These Summits follow the May 2016 launch of Education Cannot Wait, a new fund for education in emergencies, which provides a concrete platform for action to address the gap in financing in this sector.

As civil society representatives, we call on the UN, the U.S., and world leaders to consider the following recommendations in advance of the September Summits:

- Donor governments must follow-through and deliver the approximately \$90 million in pledges made at the World Humanitarian Summit to the new Education Cannot Wait fund for education in emergencies.

¹ For a list of members of the Global Campaign for Education-US, see <http://gce-us.org/members>

² The Overseas Development Institute (2016). "Education Cannot Wait: Proposing a Fund for Education in Emergencies." <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/10497.pdf>

³ UNHCR (2016). "Global Trends Report." <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2016/6/5763b65a4/global-forced-displacement-hits-record-high.html>

⁴ The Overseas Development Institute (2015). "Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises: Toward a Strengthened Response." <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9714.pdf>

- Donor governments must commit to fully funding the first year of Education Cannot Wait by closing the \$63 million gap needed to launch this critical platform, with an eye towards meeting the Fund's 5-year financing plan of \$3.85 billion.⁵
- Ensure that at least an additional one million refugees gain access to education as a result of the U.S. Leaders' Summit and that previous pledges – including those made at the February 2016 Supporting Syria and the Region Conference – are not double-counted.
- Include education as a priority in humanitarian funding appeals and close the current gap in funding for existing appeals. Only 26 percent of education sector financial needs have been met by international donors this year, resulting in a current gap of \$469 million.
- Advance priorities included in the [July 29 Outcomes Document](#) for the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants, including greater access to early childhood education, tertiary education, skills training and vocational education for the displaced.
- Refugee-hosting governments must make commitments towards integrating refugee students and teachers into national school systems, enacting flexible policies related to enrollment criteria and documentation and providing language support programs, if necessary, without discrimination.
- A public accountability mechanism must be put in place to track Summit commitments, including regular public reporting on progress against commitments.

We applaud Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and President Barack Obama for their leadership in hosting these two important Summits and for taking the initiative in finding concrete solutions to the current refugee crisis. By making specific, measurable commitments and swiftly delivering increased funding for the Education Cannot Wait fund for education in emergencies, we can take significant steps to ensure that all displaced children and youth have access to quality education.

###

⁵ Education Cannot Wait (2016). "Case for Investment." <http://www.educationcannotwait.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/ECW-Investment-Case.pdf>