

Foundational Learning Exchange 2023

Ministerial Communiqué

Freetown, 7 February 2023

We, the Ministers of Education from Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda and Sierra Leone, at the inaugural Foundational Learning Exchange, hosted in Freetown, Sierra Leone on February 6-7 2023, recognise the impact of the multiple crises of COVID-19, climate change and the economy on quality education. We note that the burden of this challenge is even more significantly felt by children in the early years of education.

We welcome the United Nations Secretary General's Vision Statement at the Transforming Education Summit (TES). We agree with the notion that "learning to learn" is one of the key levers for transforming our education systems to reach Sustainable Development Goal 4, thereby transforming our societies to reach all the Sustainable Development Goals.

We endorse the TES [Commitment to Action on Foundational Learning](#) and support the recommendations in the 2022 UNESCO [Born To Learn report](#). We are committed to take action to improve foundational learning outcomes for all children in our countries – all children should learn to read fluently with comprehension, acquire fundamental numeracy competencies, develop resilient socio-emotional skills, and harness digital education tools.

At this first inter-ministerial and inter-governmental summit where we affirm our commitment to improving foundational learning outcomes, our goal is to equip current and future generation of learners with the tools and abilities they need to become nation builders by sharing and exchanging solutions and challenges from our own education systems.

With our collective set of research-backed pedagogical and technological tools and evidence-based policy interventions, we reaffirm our commitments to ensuring children acquire fundamental literacy, numeracy, digital and socio-emotional skills in line with our SDG-4 targets by 2030 in partnership with all stakeholders.

Together we further commit to:

1. Create and finance realistic plans aligned with our Education Sector Plans and Policies that monitor the progress of our learners and our education systems toward SDG-4 benchmarks and Foundational Learning Indicators from TES.
2. Ensure equitable distribution of resources at all levels of our education system including pre-primary and primary levels that enable us to reach our foundational learning and other education goals.
3. Support continuous teacher development in order to accelerate quality learning.
4. Contribute to the global conversation on foundational learning by sharing data and research on what works in our countries and encouraging more collaboration from academic and other non-governmental institutions to identify evidence-backed tools to accelerate progress.

5. Meet annually or biannually in countries leading the charge on improving foundational learning outcomes across our governments. We will share our individual and collective progress toward reaching the targets set in our plans and continue deepening our technical exchange.
6. Collaborate on regional and inter-regional investments to accelerate foundational learning outcomes.
7. Strengthen our data collection tools and systems to ensure we can track learning on a continuous basis and intervene where necessary to ensure evidence-backed policies and strategies.

We remain committed and optimistic about system transformation in our classrooms, schools, communities, countries and the world.