

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 3

SEZMUN III.HRD SYMPOSIUM

AGENDA ITEM: ENSURING EQUAL ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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Dear Delegates of the SOCHUM committee,

Dear Delegates,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM).

In this committee, we will discuss the important issue of **Ensuring Equal Access to Quality Education in Developing Countries**.

Education is a fundamental human right, but millions of children around the world still face difficulties in accessing quality education. Poverty, discrimination, armed conflicts, and a lack of educational resources continue to create serious barriers. As delegates, you will have the opportunity to examine these challenges and discuss possible solutions.

I encourage you to research your country's position, consider the different challenges faced by developing countries, and prepare realistic solutions. Please remember that successful debate is not only about defending your country's interests, but also about listening to others, respecting different opinions, and working together.

I hope this committee will be a valuable opportunity for you to improve your research, public speaking, negotiation, and problem-solving skills.

I look forward to meeting you all and wish you a productive and enjoyable conference.

Sincerely,

Derin Üçok & Beliz Korkmaz

Introduction to the Agenda

Education is a fundamental human right and an important part of social and economic development. It gives people the knowledge and skills they need to improve their lives and contribute to their communities.

However, millions of children and young people in developing countries still cannot access quality education. Poverty, discrimination, armed conflicts, poor school facilities, and a lack of trained teachers are some of the main reasons.

According to UNESCO, approximately 273 million children and young people were out of school worldwide in 2024. This shows that access to education remains a serious global challenge.

The aim of this committee is to discuss how governments and international organizations can reduce these inequalities and provide safe, inclusive, and quality education for everyone.

Definition of Key Terms

Quality Education: Education that provides students with useful knowledge and skills through effective teaching and suitable learning conditions.
Equal Access to Education: Ensuring that every person has the opportunity to attend school, regardless of their gender, income, disability, location, or background.
Developing Countries: Countries that face economic and social challenges, including limited infrastructure, lower income levels, and unequal access to public services.
Literacy: The ability to read and write and understand basic information.
Digital Divide: The gap between people who have access to digital technology and the internet and those who do not.
Inclusive Education: An education system that supports all students, including children with disabilities and those from disadvantaged communities.
Educational Infrastructure: The physical facilities and resources needed for education, such as classrooms, libraries, electricity, clean water, and internet access.

Key Issues

Poverty and Financial Barriers

Many families cannot afford school supplies, transportation, uniforms, or meals. Some children have to work to support their families instead of attending school. These financial difficulties increase school dropout rates.

Lack of Schools and Educational Resources

Rural and remote areas often have fewer schools and limited facilities. Some schools lack classrooms, textbooks, electricity, clean water, and proper sanitation. Long distances to school can also prevent children from attending regularly.

Shortage of Qualified Teachers

Many developing countries do not have enough trained teachers. Overcrowded classrooms and limited teaching materials can reduce the quality of education. Teachers in remote areas may also have fewer opportunities for professional development.

Gender and Social Inequality

Girls, children with disabilities, refugees, and minority groups may face additional barriers. Discrimination, cultural expectations, unsafe school environments, and inaccessible buildings can prevent them from receiving equal opportunities.

Armed Conflicts and Natural Disasters

Wars, political instability, and natural disasters can damage schools and interrupt education. Displaced children and refugees may also struggle to register in new schools or continue their studies.

The Digital Divide

Technology can create new learning opportunities. However, many students do not have computers, tablets, electricity, or reliable internet connections. Therefore, digital education may increase existing inequalities if access is not equal.

Historical Background

The right to education has been recognized through several international agreements and initiatives.

- **1948 – Universal Declaration of Human Rights:** Article 26 recognizes education as a human right and states that elementary education should be free and compulsory.
- **1960 – UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education:** This convention aims to prevent discrimination and promote equal educational opportunities.
- **1989 – Convention on the Rights of the Child:** Article 28 recognizes every child's right to education and encourages free primary education.
- **1990 – Education for All (Jomtien):** Countries agreed to work together to provide basic education for children, young people, and adults.
- **2000 – Dakar Framework for Action:** Governments renewed their commitment to achieving education for all and improving access to learning.
- **2015 – Sustainable Development Goals:** The United Nations adopted SDG 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for everyone.

Despite these international efforts, progress has been uneven. Many developing countries still face financial, social, and political barriers to providing quality education.

Current Situation

Today, access to quality education remains a major challenge in many developing countries. Although school attendance has improved in some regions, millions of children still cannot attend school or receive proper learning opportunities.

Poverty continues to be one of the main barriers. Many families struggle to afford transportation, school supplies, and other educational costs. As a result, some children miss school regularly or leave education early.

Armed conflicts and political instability also have serious effects on education. Schools may be damaged or closed, while displaced children and refugees often struggle to continue their studies in new locations. Natural disasters can create similar problems by destroying school buildings and interrupting education.

The COVID-19 pandemic increased educational inequalities around the world. During school closures, many students had to continue learning online. However, children without computers, electricity, or reliable internet connections could not participate equally. Some students are still experiencing the effects of learning loss caused by these interruptions.

Technology continues to create new educational opportunities, but the digital divide remains a serious problem. Students in remote and low-income communities often have limited access to digital tools and online learning platforms.

Current Situation

Another important concern is that school attendance does not always mean quality education. In some countries, students complete several years of schooling without developing basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills. This shows the need to improve both access to education and the quality of teaching.

Governments and international organizations continue to work on these challenges. However, long-term investment, better educational policies, and international cooperation are still necessary to ensure equal learning opportunities for all.

Main Parties Involved

Developing Countries

Governments are responsible for providing public education, building schools, training teachers, and making education accessible to disadvantaged groups. Countries with large rural populations and limited resources face particular challenges.

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

UNESCO leads international cooperation in education. It supports governments, develops education policies, collects data, and monitors progress towards SDG 4.

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund)

UNICEF works to protect children's rights and improve access to education. It gives special attention to girls, refugees, children with disabilities, and children affected by emergencies.

World Bank

The World Bank supports education projects through financial assistance, research, and policy advice. It helps countries improve school facilities and strengthen their education systems.

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

UNHCR supports refugees and displaced people. It works with governments and other organizations to help refugee children access national education systems.

Main Parties Involved

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

NGOs support local communities through school projects, scholarships, literacy programmes, teacher training, and educational materials.

Local Communities and Governments

Parents, teachers, community leaders, and local organizations play an important role in identifying educational needs and encouraging children to attend school.

Previous Attemts to Solve the Issue

Education for All (1990)

Launched at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, this initiative aimed to provide basic education for children, young people, and adults. It increased international attention towards universal education. However, many of its targets were not fully achieved.

Dakar Framework for Action (2000)

The international community renewed its commitment to education for all in Dakar, Senegal. The framework focused on improving access to primary education, literacy, gender equality, and learning quality.

Millennium Development Goals (2000–2015)

The Millennium Development Goals included achieving universal primary education and reducing gender inequality in education. Although school attendance increased in many countries, many children continued to face barriers.

Sustainable Development Goal 4 (2015–2030)

SDG 4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for everyone by 2030. It focuses on free primary and secondary education, equal opportunities, literacy, teacher training, and safe learning environments.

International Education Programmes

UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, and NGOs have supported scholarships, school meal programmes, teacher training, school construction, and emergency education programmes. These efforts have helped many communities, but access and learning quality remain unequal.

Possible Solutions

Investing in School Infrastructure

Governments should build more schools, especially in rural and disadvantaged areas. Existing schools should have safe classrooms, clean water, electricity, toilets, libraries, and accessible facilities.

Improving Teacher Training

Governments and international organizations should provide teacher training programmes and professional development opportunities. Better working conditions and financial support can also help attract qualified teachers to remote areas.

Providing Financial Support

Scholarships, free school meals, transportation assistance, and free learning materials can reduce the financial pressure on low-income families. These programmes can help prevent children from leaving school early.

Supporting Girls and Vulnerable Groups

Governments should introduce policies that protect girls, children with disabilities, refugees, and minority groups from discrimination. Schools should provide safe environments and equal learning opportunities.

Expanding Digital Education

International cooperation should support affordable internet access and provide computers or tablets to disadvantaged students. Offline educational materials should also be available in areas without reliable internet connections.

Possible Solutions

Protecting Education During Emergencies

Governments and international organizations should establish temporary learning centres in areas affected by conflict or natural disasters. Educational support should also be provided to refugees and displaced children.

Strengthening International Cooperation

Developed countries, international organizations, and developing countries should cooperate through financial assistance, knowledge sharing, and teacher exchange programmes. Support should be based on the needs of each country.

Monitoring Educational Progress

Governments should regularly evaluate school attendance, graduation rates, literacy levels, and learning outcomes. Reliable data can help identify inequalities and ensure that educational funding is used effectively.

Summary

Equal access to quality education is essential for reducing poverty, improving living standards, and creating fairer societies. However, poverty, discrimination, armed conflicts, poor infrastructure, and a lack of qualified teachers continue to prevent millions of children from receiving a proper education.
Although international agreements and programmes have improved access in many regions, further action is needed. Governments, international organizations, NGOs, and local communities must work together to create long-term solutions. Delegates are encouraged to discuss practical, affordable, and inclusive policies that respect the different needs and resources of developing countries. The main goal should not only be to increase school attendance but also to ensure that every student receives a safe and quality education.

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