INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR EDUCATION: Send Ghana Calls on Government To Intensify Support For Education, Focusing On Increasing Access And Quality For Every Ghanaian Child.

On the occasion of the sixth International Day for Education, SEND Ghana stands in solidarity with the global community in recognizing the pivotal role of education as a fundamental human right and a crucial driver of sustainable development. This year’s theme, “Learning for Lasting Peace,” urges us to pause and reflect on things and events that disrupt education for many school-going children around the world.

Despite commendable strides in advancing education in Ghana, it is important to acknowledge and confront the challenges impacting both the access to and quality of education for children in the country. By recognizing these challenges, Ghana can work towards implementing targeted interventions that address the specific needs, contributing to a more inclusive and effective education system in Ghana.

In recent years, there has been a record number of school children who are out of school. According to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, a staggering 1,215,546 children within the school-going age (4 to 17 years) are not currently enrolled in school. Shockingly, nearly one million out of these 1.2 million have never experienced formal education. This situation poses a severe threat to Ghana’s economic development, potentially leading to a loss of human capital and a skilled workforce. Addressing this challenge is of utmost importance to ensure the development of a well-educated and skilled workforce, thereby fostering a more resilient and sustainable economy for Ghana.

We further want to draw the attention of the government to the overconcentration of efforts on senior secondary education at the expense of basic education. We call on the Ministry of Education and the appropriate government agencies to reevaluate educational priorities for a balanced and comprehensive approach across all levels of the education system, guided by the principle of "leaving no one behind."

Basic education forms the crucial groundwork for a student’s academic journey, providing essential skills and knowledge that lay the foundation for advanced learning. The unbalanced focus risks undermining the importance of nurturing a strong educational base.

Additionally, we call on the government to make available resources such as learning materials to enhance the learning experience for children. Currently, basic schools across the nation face challenges such as a lack of reading materials, furniture, and essential infrastructure. Approximately 4,000 primary schools are without Junior High School facilities, and over 5,000 basic schools are sheltered under trees, sheds, and dilapidated structures; thus, exacerbating the educational challenges faced by these young learners. We urge redirecting attention to address the needs of basic education, ensuring resources are allocated equally across all levels, contributing to a more robust and equitable educational system. The government must...
respond to collective calls from Parliament and civil society to address this critical situation by unlocking necessary resources through the expansion and uncapping of the GETFund.

Again, SEND Ghana urges the government to prioritise and invest in improving the learning environment for students. Currently, the budget allocation for the education sector in Ghana falls below recommended standards, with only GHC32.7 billion allocated from the projected government expenditure of GHC226 billion, representing 14.5%. This allocation is lower than the 2023 sub-Saharan African average of 15.5% and falls below the UNESCO member-states commitment to allocate a minimum of 20% to education.

The low budget allocation poses significant challenges in addressing the diverse needs of the education sector, hindering initiatives aimed at enhancing educational quality and accessibility for all. The government of Ghana must take steps to reassess and increase budgetary allocations to education, aligning them with international benchmarks, and ensuring that every child has access to quality education.

As Ghana's economy continues to thrive, education must remain a priority. SEND Ghana is by this statement calling all stakeholders, including the government, civil society, and the private sector, to work collaboratively in addressing the challenges facing our educational system. Let us seize this International Day for Education as an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to providing inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all.

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