

Welcome Remarks from GCE President, Camilla Croso

Honored guests; Dear colleagues, friends and GCE members:

It is a heartfelt joy to share the inauguration of this Open Forum on the Right to Education 2000-2030, which precedes GCE's Fifth World Assembly. It is equally an honour to be doing so in South Africa, home of Nelson Mandela and of so many vibrant people, cultures and social movements; a country which has recently celebrated the end of two decades of institutionalised apartheid and whose struggle for liberation and justice continues to inspire us all.

This is a moment of celebration. I would like to welcome all of you, in particular the 200 delegates of the Global Campaign for Education coming from 100 different countries, as well as academics, representatives from UN Agencies, multilateral organizations and other allies that dedicate themselves to promoting the full implementation of the right to education. A special appreciation and thank you on behalf of our movement goes to our guest speakers, all of whom honor us with their presence. We also thank the Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, the UNESCO Director General, Ms. Irina Bokova, and the President of Global Partnership for Education, Ms. Julia Gillard, for taking the time to make themselves present today with their video messages.

The international education community is assembled this week, with the purpose of deepening the comprehension of the current context, identifying challenges and finding ways forward to respond to these.

This is also moment of cross roads for the global education community in general and for our Global Campaign for Education in particular, which for the past 15 years has advocated, mobilised and advanced the right to education across all continents.

Collectively, we have raised awareness and fought for the recognition of education as a fundamental human right throughout life; for the strengthening of public education, opposing increasing trends of privatization; for the need to ensure inclusive education and non-discrimination; for the valuing of teachers and the teaching profession; for the recognition of students and youth as subjects of rights that must take part in decision making process from the micro to the macro level; for the

need of sufficient internal and external financing; for the right of civil society to actively participate in decision making at all levels; among other key efforts made by our global movement to advance this right in the multiple contexts that characterises our world.

Together and through these tireless efforts, we have contributed to progress in regards to the current six Education for All goals as well as to international and national human rights obligations. The cross road that now impels us towards a new phase in education post 2015 requires us to acknowledge what has been achieved and assert the new challenges ahead, in light of the broader context in which we find ourselves.

This year is a landmark for education: In May, we will have the World Education Forum in the Republic of Korea and in September the UN General Assembly, which will finally adopt an education goal, a set of targets and means of implementation. In this sense, the process of defining education post 2015 and of ensuring the latter is fully taken on board by the post 2015 development agenda, understanding it as a fundamental human right, will allow the education community to place education centre-stage. Not only as a key standalone goal, but also as crucial for the implementation of all other development goals and more broadly, for catalysing the realization of human rights. This is a core challenge ahead of us.

To promote the realization of the right to education is to promote a world of dignity, of justice, of inclusion, of sustainable development, of citizenship and of peace.

In this sense, nothing can make us more proud and happy than seeing last year's recognition of the centrality of education for a better world with the delivery of a Nobel Peace Prize to Malala Yousafzai and Kailash Satyarthi, co-founder of our Global Campaign for Education and here present with us. We celebrate and are proud of his accomplishments and of his continued and active presence within our movement. Please join me in a warm round of applause to Kailash Satyarthi.

And please join me in another warm round of applause to all of you, who are the heart and soul of this movement and of other partner organizations and networks and through whose efforts, stamina and

capacity to imagine other possible horizons, are promoting the needed change.