

Text of opening remarks of Union Minister of Education and Minister of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship during Education Ministers' Session of Voice of Global South Summit

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Excellencies from Barbados, Republic of Costa Rica, Commonwealth of The Bahamas, Republic of Cuba, Republic of the Gambia, Republic of Honduras, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Nauru, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Solomon Islands, Turkmenistan, Oriental Republic of Uruguay, and Republic of Yemen.

Warm greetings from India! Namaste!

It gives me immense pleasure to warmly welcome you all as part of the "Voice of Global South Summit".

Excellencies, India has always encouraged global initiatives that champion the interests and concerns of developing countries. As India has assumed presidency of G20 in 2023, this summit will also serve as a platform to generate ideas and bring voice of the global south to the G20 forum.

Our theme for G-20 summit is 'One Earth. One Family. One Future.', which is based on Indian ethos and values of *Vasudhev Kutumbkam*. In the G20 Education Working Group, we will be discussing issues related to Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, making tech-enabled learning more inclusive, life-long learning in context of future of work and ways to strengthen research and innovation in higher education institutions. We strongly believe that views and perspectives of large number of countries outside the G20, should especially be included in the discussions and outcomes across various verticals.

We are looking forward to hearing your views, and learn from best practices in your respective countries, on human resource development, capacity building, future-ready workforce, digital public goods in education, skilling and vocational education. As our Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modiji said yesterday, that as countries of the global south, we shall find common solutions to similar challenges faced in our respective countries, including human capacity building.

Excellencies, Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential. Investing in education and skill development of our people is imperative to ensure that they have required knowledge and capabilities to succeed in 21st century. India has one of the largest youth populations in the world. With more than 1.5 million schools and around 1000 universities, we have the largest and the most diverse learning system in the world. We have more than 50% population below 30 years. To harness the true potential of our demographic dividend, we are implementing an aspirational "**National Education Policy 2020**" which has brought in sweeping reforms in our educational ecosystem. I had shared the concept note on this Policy with your Excellencies earlier.

For centuries, education system in most of our countries in global south had suffered due to colonization. It is about time that we break out of the mold, and cater to the aspirations of our people. Built on the foundational pillars of **Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability** and **Accountability**, our National Educational Policy aims to create an educational system that is **rooted in Indian ethos as well as aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. It aspires to develop our youth as **Global Citizens** who can find solutions to global problems with values of humility and compassion.

At the level of school education, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is being formalized, a special

drive has been launched to improve **foundational literacy and numeracy** and all support is being provided to differently-abled children. Efforts are being undertaken towards **capacity-building and training of teachers**. Our government is running a range of schemes to improve the health and nutrition of school-going girls. We have also re-designed our curriculum to make it more **student-centric** with special emphasis to teaching and learning in **mother tongue**.

We have brought in reforms to improve the quality of higher education by removing the rigidities of disciplines and promoting **multi-disciplinarity**. We are making our curricula more relevant to changing global requirements and providing **multiple entry-exit options** for students to ensure flexibility in academic programmes across skill and higher education. We are also developing technological infrastructure for seamless integration of school, skill and higher education. Some of these **include a National level Student registry, Academic Bank of Credit and Skill India Digital portal**.

We are reimagining vocational education through an early exposure in middle and secondary school, through creation of Skill Labs and promoting industry-academia linkage. Focus is being given on providing experiential learning and hands-on experience, through industry-relevant internships and apprenticeships, aligned with the needs of the job market. We are aiming to vocationally empower at least 50% of our youth by 2025 and developing a **National Credit Framework** to facilitate a seamless movement across school, skills, and higher education.

We have made great strides in creating **digital public goods in education**, by leveraging the power of technology to make learning more accessible and interactive. Through **multi-modal delivery of education**, we have democratized access to knowledge, reached more people in remote and underserved areas. Through our **PM e-Vidya initiative**, we have effectively employed digital educational platforms and tools such as DIKSHA, e-Pathshala and SwayamPrabha TV with more than 260 educational TV channels. We are also establishing a **National Digital University**, which will transform access to higher education drastically reducing all direct and opportunity costs.

Excellencies, India believes that mutual cooperation and exchange are strong enablers to advance education and human resource development. For this we have entered into Educational Exchange Programs and established Joint Working Groups with many of our partner countries.

An essential aspect of NEP 2020 is **internationalization of education**. NEP2020 endeavors to **promote India as a global study destination providing premium education at affordable cost**. We have brought in regulations to allow our institutions to enter **joint/dual degree and twinning arrangements** with foreign higher educational institutions. Our top institutions such as IITs are also **setting up offshore campuses** abroad. We have also recently brought out draft regulations for allowing top **foreign universities to set up campuses in India** as well. We hope to promote active institutional linkages with our partner countries through this.

Excellencies, India has been sharing its developmental experiences and capacity building expertise with over 160 countries through the **ITEC -Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation programme**. I believe officials from your countries may have already participated in these training courses in India.

India remains committed to partner with the global south in efforts towards achieving the goal of universal education and human resource development in our respective countries for 21st century.

Excellencies, I once again welcome you all and look forward to your valuable ideas and initiatives.

Thank you.



NB/AK

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