

Press release: Foreign Secretary hosts first Platform for Girls' Education meeting

The Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt and the Kenyan Education Minister Amina Mohamed have co-chaired the first meeting of the Platform for Girls' Education.

The body is made up of influential global figures and aims to help secure 12 years of quality education for girls across the world.

Britain is already leading by example, announcing an additional £212 million in UK aid earlier this year to help one million vulnerable girls across the Commonwealth receive 12 years of quality education by 2030.

The Platform will work together during the UK's 2018-2020 term as Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth. It will present a report before the next meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Government to be hosted by Rwanda in 2020, showing progress made and what will need to be done to meet the 2030 goal.

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

Educating girls properly will help make the world a better place, and is one of the best investments in our shared future.

When we educate girls we create stable, prosperous societies.

We must keep up the momentum to ensure that the world's poorest girls get 12 years of quality education.

Kenyan Education Minister Amina Mohamed said:

Education is the single most powerful tool to fight poverty and extreme want.

Collectively, it is our generation's most urgent priority. Global trends have shown that economies with high literacy, numeracy and basic education levels grow faster compared to those with low levels. Inclusivity in education policy is also a vital enabler of resilient, progressive, fair and strong communities.

This Platform, which I am extremely proud to co-chair, gives us an opportunity to positively impact millions of out-of-school girls' lives and to spur sustainable economic growth across the Commonwealth.

The Platform for Girls' Education will galvanise political will to deliver on the commitments to girls' education made at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in April 2018.

Notes to editors

Members of the Platform for Girls' Education are:

- The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP CO-CHAIR, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, United Kingdom
- Ambassador (Dr.) Amina Mohamed CO-CHAIR, Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kenya
- Ms. Audrey Azoulay, Director-General, UNESCO
- Ms. Henrietta Fore, Executive Director, UNICEF
- Ms. Julia Gillard, Chair of the Board of Directors, Global Partnership for Education
- Her Excellency, Paula Mae-Weeks (O.R.T.T.), President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
- His Excellency, Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, * Civil Service and Communications and the Minister responsible for Education, Heritage, Arts and Climate Change, Fiji
- Hon. Louise Mushikiwabo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Republic of Rwanda
- Hon. Shirley Botchwey, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Republic of Ghana
- Ms. Isabelle Hudon, Canadian Ambassador to France and Monaco, Co-chair of the G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council
- Ms. Baela Jamil, CEO, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA), Pakistan
- Mr. Kailash Satyarthi, Founder, Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation, India, Nobel Peace Prize Winner 2014

Biographies of Platform for Girls' members

Amb. (Dr.) Amina C. Mohamed, EGH., CAV

Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Education, Kenya

Amb. (Dr.) Amina C. Mohamed is the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kenya. She was previously the Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Trade from 2013 to 2018. She served as the United Nations Assistant Secretary General and Deputy Executive Director of UNEP from 2011-2013.

Education

She graduated from the University of Kiev, Ukraine with a Bachelors Degree in Law and a Master of Laws (LLM) in International Law. She took the bar examinations at the Kenya School of Law and was admitted as an advocate of the High Court of Kenya. She is a Chevening Alumnus with a Postgraduate Diploma in International Relations from the University of Oxford (1993).

Her dedicated service to the country and the international community has

earned her various national and international awards including: the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun (Government of Japan); Knight of the Order of the Star of Italian Solidarity (Cav. O.S.S.I), Kenya's highest National Award of Elder of the Golden Heart (EGH) and Chief of the Order of the Burning Spear (CBS).

She is fluent in Swahili, English and Russian, and has a working knowledge of French.

Career

Her career spans a wide range of posts and responsibilities within the country, continentally and internationally. She was Kenya's Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs (2008-2011); President of the United Nations Conference on Transnational Crime, Vienna (2010-2011); Director for Europe and Commonwealth Affairs as well as Director for Diaspora Affairs; Chairperson of the Task Force Sub-Committee on strengthening and restructuring of the Department of Foreign Trade and Economic Affairs (2006-2007); Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations and other International Organizations based in Geneva; Chairperson, Coordinator and Spokesperson for the African Group in the WTO, Human Rights Commission (2000-2006). She also served in the Executive Boards and Committees of the WHO, UNHCR, WIPO, ILO, UNCTAD and UNAIDS from 2001-2005 and as Kenya's Legal Advisor in various Missions abroad, including the 6th Committee of the United Nations from 1990-2000.

Ms. Henrietta H. Fore

Executive Director, UNICEF

Biography Henrietta Holsman Fore is the seventh Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). She has worked to champion economic development, education, health, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in a public service, private sector and non-profit leadership career that spans more than four decades.

Education

Ms. Fore has a Bachelor of Arts in History from Wellesley College and a Master of Science in Public Administration from the University of Northern Colorado.

Career

From 2007 to 2009, Ms. Fore served as the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and Director of United States Foreign Assistance. The first woman to serve in these roles, she was responsible for managing \$39.5 billion of U.S. foreign assistance annually, including support to peoples and countries recovering from disaster and building their futures economically, politically and socially. Immediately prior to her appointment with UNICEF, Ms. Fore was Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer

of Holsman International, a manufacturing and investment company. She also served on the boards of a number of domestic and international public corporations, including as Global Co-Chair of the Asia Society, Chair of the Middle East Investment Initiative, and Co-Chair of WomenCorporateDirectors. She also served on the boards of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the Aspen Institute, the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy (CECP) and the Center for Global Development (CGD).

Ms. Julia Gillard

Chair of the Board of Directors, Global Partnership for Education

Biography

Julia Gillard joined the Global Partnership for Education as Chair of the Board of Directors in 2014 after a distinguished public service career in Australia.

Education

Ms. Gillard was educated at the University of Adelaide and University of Melbourne.

Career

Ms. Gillard served as Prime Minister of Australia between 2010 and 2013 and delivered nation-changing policies including reforming Australia's education at every level from early childhood to university education, improving the provision and sustainability of health care, aged care and dental care and commencing Australia's first ever national scheme to care for people with disabilities.

Ms. Gillard is the first woman ever to serve as Australia's Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. In October 2012, Ms Gillard received worldwide attention for her speech in Parliament on the treatment of women in professional and public life.

Prior to becoming Prime Minister, Ms. Gillard was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and Social Inclusion. From 2003 to 2006, Ms. Gillard served as Shadow Minister for Health followed in 2006 by an appointment as Shadow Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Social Inclusion.

Following her passion for education, she was appointed a Commissioner at the International Commission for Global Education Opportunity in 2015 and became Patron of CAMFED, the Campaign for Female Education, in 2016. She is also a Distinguished Fellow at the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution.

Ms. Baela Raza Jamil

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)

Biography

Ms. Baela Raza Jamil is the CEO of Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA), a centre for education and consciousness set up in 2000 with a vision for 'comprehensive education reforms for individual and social transformation'. She is an activist at heart engaged in policy and practice.

Education

Baela was educated at the Convent of Jesus & Mary Lahore (Pakistan), Cobham Hall, Kent (UK), Rosemont College (USA), SOAS (UK), Georgia State University (USA), and Institute of Education – University of London (UK). She participated in professional programmes at the World Bank Institute, Harvard Graduate School of Education, ETS Princeton and the Salzburg Institute.

Career

Baela began her career in Atlanta, Georgia (USA) in a Magnet school in 1985; she established and ran the Hongkong Asia Trust (HAT), fundraising for education / emergency needs in five countries (1988-1991). From 1992-2000, Baela worked with UNICEF Pakistan, Urban Slums Upgradation in Faisalabad, the Task force on Education in Punjab, the Sindh Department of Education & Literacy as an International Community Adviser on Innovative Initiatives, and the Sindh Education Foundation.

From 2000-2004, Baela served as a Technical Advisor to the Federal Ministry of Education spearheading country and sector wide education reform action plans (2001-2004) with innovative programs on Early Childhood Education (ECE), Decentralization, Innovative Financing and the first ever guidelines on public private partnerships (PPPs).

In 2000, she established ITA, embarking on nationwide comprehensive education reforms and transformations reclaiming over 9000 years of civilization of Pakistan. Baela is a Trustee for the Sanjan Nagar Public Education Trust (SNPET) working with disadvantaged communities for a unique, enabling 12 years of education.

Hon. Shirley Ayokor Botchwey

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Ghana

Biography

Shirley Ayokor Botchwey is an MP and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Republic of Ghana.

Education

She holds an MA Public Communication from the University of Westminster and an MBA in Project Management from the University of Ghana.

Career

She previously held the following positions: Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Deputy Minister for Information, and Deputy Minister for Trade and Industry.

Between 2013 and 2017, she was a member of the ECOWAS parliament. Before entering frontline politics, she ran a Marketing Communications Company, and was a consultant for the Ministry of Tourism. She has worked in various organizations such as Worldspace Ghana, Divestiture Implementation Committee, Glaxo Group Research and Hodge Recruitment in the area of administration.

Ms. Audrey Azoulay

Director General, UNESCO

Biography

The 39th session of UNESCO's General Conference elected Audrey Azoulay as Director-General of UNESCO. She took office on 15 November 2017 for a four-year term.

Education

A graduate of the Ecole nationale d'administration (ENA) (1998-2000, "Averroès" graduation), she is also a graduate of the Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po) (1996) and holds a Master of Business Administration (Lancaster University, Great Britain – 1993) obtained under the Erasmus European exchange programme.

In addition to her mother tongue, she is fluent in English and Spanish.

Career

She began her career as Head of the Public Broadcasting Sector Office at the Media Development Directorate, where she worked on the roll-out of Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) in France, the establishment of an international news channel and the reform of public broadcasting. Having worked in the sector of culture since the start of her professional career, Audrey Azoulay has notably focused on the funding of French public broadcasting and on the reform and modernization of France's film support system. She has also served the European Commission providing her expertise on issues concerning culture and communication.

In 2014, as an advisor on culture to the President of the French Republic, she notably initiated the development of a protection plan for heritage in danger, which she was able to implement in 2016 as Minister of Culture and Communication. She has also prioritized improving children's access to culture with the launch of artistic and cultural education school programmes ("Création en cours") and created innovative cultural outreach programmes for people in remote and vulnerable areas ("Microfolies").

Mr. Kailash Satyarthi

Founder, Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation

Biography

Kailash Satyarthi is a human rights activist from India who has been at the forefront of the global movement to end child slavery and exploitation since 1980.

Education

Kailash Satyarthi completed a degree in electrical engineering in Vidisha. He pursued post-graduate studies in high-voltage engineering and later began lecturing at a college in Bhopal.

Career

Kailash Satyarthi has been a tireless global advocate of children's rights for four decades. He left a lucrative career as an Electrical Engineer and started 'Bachpan Bachao Andolan' (Save the Childhood Movement) to rescue children and their families from the shackles of slavery, paving the way for their reintegration into mainstream society.

In 1998, he conceived and led the largest civil society network for the most exploited children – the Global March against Child Labour. This march led to the adoption of ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. He is the architect of the Global Campaign for Education and is credited for establishing the first ever civil society/business coalition Rugmark (now known as Good Weave) – the first of its kind certification and social labelling mechanism for child labour free carpets.

In 2014, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education. He later founded the Laureates and Leaders for Children platform, bringing together Nobel Laureates and Leaders from across the globe to interact with and work for the right of every child to have a free, safe and educated childhood.

In December 2016, he launched the 100 Million for 100 Million Campaign, a global intervention to mobilize 100 million youth for shaping a better and promising future for 100 million not so privileged children. He also founded Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation to work towards a child-friendly world where all children are free, safe, healthy and educated.

Her Excellency Paula-Mae Weekes, Order of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (O.R.T.T.)

President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Biography

Her Excellency (H.E.) Paula-Mae Weekes O.R.T.T., was appointed President of

the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in January 2018.

Education

H.E. Weekes graduated with a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) from the University of the West Indies. She obtained her Legal Education Certificate from the Hugh Wooding Law School in 1982 and was admitted to the practice of law in Trinidad and Tobago, later that year.

Career

H.E. Weekes joined the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions as State Counsel 1 in 1982, and later Senior State Counsel. She resigned in 1993 and entered private practice. She established her own Chambers after a brief period in the Chambers of a distinguished Senior Counsel.

In September 1996, she was appointed as a Puisne Judge, presiding in the trial courts for nine years, almost exclusively in the criminal jurisdiction and was elevated to the Court of Appeal of Trinidad and Tobago in January 2005. She retired from the Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago after two decades of Service.

Upon her retirement, H.E. Weekes was invited to join the Appellate Bench of the Judiciary of the Turks and Caicos Islands. She became the first woman to serve in that capacity. She resigned in January 2018 ahead of her nomination for the Presidency. She was also Executive Director of PMW Criminal Justice Consultancy and Training, providing services geared towards the development of the criminal justice sector. H.E. Weekes is a qualified judicial educator, having been made a Fellow of the Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute in 2000. She was the Course Director of Ethics Rights and Obligations of the Legal Profession at the Hugh Wooding Law School from 2010 to 2016.

From 1997 until her election as President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, she was the Chancellor of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago.

Ambassador Isabelle Hudon

Canadian Ambassador to France and Monaco

Biography

Ms. Isabelle Hudon was appointed ambassador of Canada to France and Monaco by the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, on September 29th, 2017. In 2018, Ms. Hudon was also appointed co-chair of the Gender Equality Advisory Council for Canada's G7 Presidency.

Education

She was enrolled in the corporate governance program at the Collège des administrateurs de sociétés (college of corporate directors), which is affiliated with Université Laval (Laval University), and completed the financial literacy program at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of

Management. Ms Hudon was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from Concordia University in November 2017.

Career

Prior to her appointment as Ambassador, Ms. Hudon was executive chair of Sun Life Financial Quebec, and senior vice-president of client solutions at Sun Life Financial Canada. From 2004 to 2008, she was president and chief executive officer of the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal. She then served as president of Marketel.

In March 2016, Ms. Hudon was awarded the Province of Quebec's Medal of the National Assembly for her commitment to the cause of women's ambition. She also received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her work in raising awareness of the importance of culture in Canada. Ms. Hudon's active dedication to the business community has seen her sit on the boards of a number of organizations. She is the co-founder of L'Effet A, a movement that aims to help women achieve their professional ambitions.

Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum

Attorney-General and the Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service, Communications and the Minister responsible for Education, Heritage and Arts and Climate Change, Fiji

Biography

Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum is the Fijian Attorney-General and the Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service, Communications and the minister responsible for Education, Heritage and Arts and Climate Change.

Education

Mr. Sayed-Khaiyum obtained his Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree at the University of New South Wales, Australia. He completed his Masters of Law at the University of Hong Kong. He also holds a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice from the University of Wollongong in Australia. He attained his Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree from the Australian National University in Canberra, Australia, majoring in political science and development studies.

Career

Since joining the Fijian Government in 2007, Mr. Sayed-Khaiyum has initiated a comprehensive program to modernise Fiji's laws in areas such as domestic violence, corporate governance and criminal code.

As Attorney-General, he oversaw the work to finalise a new Fijian Constitution that provides the legal foundation for a common and equal citizenry while protecting indigenous land ownership and rights. He is currently spearheading a reform of the Fijian civil service, to raise wages and salaries for civil servants and to engrain merit-based recruitment and advancement to raise the quality of Government services.

As the Minister for Education, he is currently leading the Fijian Government's campaign to rebuild Fijian schools to a higher, cyclone-resilient standard following the devastation from Category 5 Cyclone Winston. As the Minister for Communications, he has overseen a massive expansion in access to mobile services, extending coverage to 95 per cent of the country.

Hon. Louise Mushikiwabo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Rwanda

Biography

Hon. Louise Mushikiwabo is the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Rwanda.

Education

Ms. Mushikiwabo holds Languages and Interpretation degrees from the University of Delaware, USA.

Career

Ms. Mushikiwabo previously served as the Minister of Information in the Government of Rwanda. She is an author and public relations executive. She lived in the United States for 22 years, then briefly in Tunisia, before joining the Rwandan Cabinet in March 2008. She is the co-author of *Rwanda Means the Universe* (St. Martin's Press, 2006) – an intergenerational socio-historical memoir; and she has contributed many articles to newspapers and online magazines. She has given numerous televisions and radio talks on Rwandan issues, and collaborated on many award-winning documentary films. She is also the recipient of the 2004 Outstanding Humanitarian Award from American University's School of International Studies.