

**Talking Points for Ms. Joanna Kazana-Wisniowiecki,
UN Resident Coordinator**

Occasion: Symposium "Education for sustainable development for all generations - a social contract" Online session

Date and Time: 2 December 2020, 11:00-13:00

Venue: meeting in Zoom. 5 minutes address

Brief prepared by:

Brief cleared by:

TPs Objective:

ATTACHEMENTS:

I. POINTS TO MAKE/ISSUES TO RAISE

1) Welcome and focus on importance of Education for Sustainable Development.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues and Friends,

It is a great pleasure for me to participate in this symposium on education for sustainable development. It marks the completion of the cycle of events commemorating the 75th anniversary of United Nations and it is very symbolic.

The activities at the occasion of the anniversary are not about the achievements of the past. They are about a more sustainable future for the whole humankind in terms of environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society for present and future generations. Education, like no other activity, charts the way to that future. Education is about lifelong learning and transforming societies for the better.

Education for sustainable development bridges the gaps between different disciplines, addresses such crosscutting issues, as climate change, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction and combines them harmonically in the learning curriculum. It helps empower people of any age to improve themselves and the societies they live in. It facilitates transition to greener economies and equips people with skills for 'green' jobs. It also motivates people to adopt sustainable lifestyles and, in the end, to create a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world.

Talking Points for Ms. Joanna Kazana-Wisniowiecki, UN Resident Coordinator

2) Mention the UN75 commemoration and the global UN survey results in Belarus

Aside from a long history of friendship and cooperation, the importance of education for sustainable development was one of the reasons for UN partnering with the Belarusian State Pedagogical University and the Association of Education for Sustainable Development for the commemoration of the UN 75th anniversary. Together with them, in March, we kicked off a series of events focusing on the global conversation on the international cooperation and the role of UN in building the future that we want for our contemporaries and future generations.

Among other things, we conducted an unprecedented online survey and regional youth meetings to find out the issues that concerned young Belarusians the most. Majority of young men and women who participated in the survey and meetings noted that climate change, environmental issues and health risks would have the biggest effect on the future of our planet. They also expressed confidence that in 25 years of joint efforts the nations of the world would reduce the number of conflicts, improve healthcare and access to education, and secure a clean environment.

In just a few months, going through the COVID-19 pandemic, we can see how farsighted the young people of Belarus turned out to be. Health has become indeed our major collective concern and international cooperation has become the way to curb the pandemic. And it is the education for sustainable development that can prepare us for such challenges down the line and achieve the future we want.

3) Highlight the importance of inclusion in education

We need to remember, though, that in order to secure inclusive and sustainable development, education itself has to be inclusive. Education makes an essential contribution to building inclusive and democratic societies, where differences of opinion can be freely expressed and where the wide range of voices can be heard, in pursuit of social cohesion and in a celebration of diversity. However, education systems are only as inclusive as their creators make them. Disadvantage can be created by these systems and their contexts. It exists where people's needs are not taken into account.

This is why this year's [Global Education Monitoring Report](#) is dedicated to the issue of inclusion. Inclusion in education is about ensuring that every learner feels valued and respected and can enjoy a clear sense of belonging. Yet many

Talking Points for Ms. Joanna Kazana-Wisniowiecki, UN Resident Coordinator

hurdles stand in the way of that ideal. Discrimination, stereotypes, and alienation do exclude many. These mechanisms of exclusion are essentially the same, regardless of gender, location, wealth, disability, ethnicity, language, migration, displacement, sexual orientation, incarceration, religion, and other beliefs and attitudes.

We all know how far Belarus has progressed with ensuring the inclusivity of its education system and achieving universal literacy. Yet a lot still has to be done. Inclusion of people with disabilities in the educational process remains an issue and UN keeps working on it with the government and civil society of Belarus. Exclusion can happen situationally, as we have seen in the case of COVID-19 pandemic disrupting regular academic activities and sidelining many students and teachers. Among the new emerging challenges, we need to work continuously on coming up with innovative solutions such as distance education and keep reinventing ourselves.

4) Focus on future cooperation on sustainable development through the UNSDCF (2021-2025)

In the end, I would like to mention that in 2021 UN in Belarus will start another five-year programming cycle shaped by the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. Inclusion as well as future generations orientation feature prominently in the Framework and various education activities are determined as perspective ways of benefitting the target populations. The framework will be implemented by UN agencies in tight cooperation with line ministries, educational institutions, civil society organizations and local initiatives. It will serve as a sustainable development platform that all of us can both contribute to and benefit from. I invite all of you join our common work and use your immense creativity to shape up our future, your future.

Thank you!