



Republic of Rwanda
Ministry of Education

Opening Remarks for the 13th Policy Dialogue Forum of the International Task Force on Teachers

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Venue: Kigali Marriot Hotel & Online
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- **Honorable Ministers,**
 - **Assistant Director General for Education, UNESCO**
 - **African Union Commissioner Human Resources, Science and Technology**
 - **DDG for the European Union INTPA**
 - **Representatives of United Nations Agencies,**
 - **Representatives of International Organizations,**
 - **Distinguished Panelists and Moderators,**
 - **Distinguished Guests,**
 - **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning!

1. It is a great pleasure and honor to be with you both physically and virtually at the opening of this 13th Policy Dialogue Forum of the International Task Force on Teachers hosted in Kigali from 1st to 3rd December 2021. I am grateful for the leadership of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for having decided to jointly organize this important event in partnership with the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Rwanda. I appreciate all participants who devoted their time and means to participate in this noble activity in support of teachers and the teaching profession.
2. The 13th Policy Dialogue Forum is unique opportunity for considering the questions that are repeatedly asked about teachers and their profession. I am sure everyone here is only too aware of the person who used to work tirelessly, spending many hours to fill the gap of knowledge, skills and attitude we needed to take our place in the World. That person is the teacher to whom we dedicated this Policy Dialogue Forum.

3. If I may recall the overall objectives of the 2021 Policy Dialogue Fora are:
- To advocate for **greater support for teachers** through innovative policy and practices and promote a shared vision and understanding among members of the TTF and key education stakeholders.
 - To generate knowledge and expertise in relation to **innovation for teachers and teaching**, including through best practice and cost-effective interventions, which can help **increase the number of qualified and supported teachers and improve teaching worldwide**.
 - To promote **knowledge sharing, cooperation across diverse geographical contexts** and exchange of experiences and challenges in innovation between TTF members and beyond.
4. Behind these objectives, we are invited to answer major questions that should trigger innovative ideas and solutions in favor of teachers and the teaching profession. Questions such as:
- What kind of support does my government, my organization, my general community offer to improve quality of the teaching profession and teachers' welfare?
 - What are the proper actions to be taken to increase the number of qualified and competent teachers?
 - How can we cooperate to share best practices and solutions that have been used successfully in some countries regarding teachers and teaching?

**Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

5. Any discussion involving the role of teachers needs to also examine the role of school leaders to enhance the quality of the teaching and learning process. Effective school leadership is key to leverage quality of education for better learning and more resilient education systems. Empowering school leaders and developing their capacities are key actions to allow them to establish systems that enable teachers to continuously improve their practice and galvanize the whole community to support students' hopes and dreams.
6. In this regard, the Ministry of Education in Rwanda has made great progress towards institutionalization of effective school leadership in basic education. A dedicated School Leadership and Management unit has been created and through this unit, evidence-based professional standards for effective school leadership have been established, which describe the key roles, responsibilities, and required competencies to be an effective school leader. These standards now serve as a framework for recruitment, assessment, and professional development of school leaders.

7. Responding to the question of teachers requires Governments, International Organizations and civil society members to work in synergy and find adequate solutions for teachers together. In this line, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with partners, is in the process of establishing an African Centre for School Leadership, with the aim of supporting Governments in Africa to build capacity in promoting effective school leadership, for improved quality of teaching, and learning outcomes.

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Ladies and Gentlemen.**

8. The pandemic has had tremendous socio-economic consequences in all countries of the world. While remote learning solutions were easier to implement in developed countries, with the necessary infrastructure in place, school closures and continuous learning have posed a much bigger challenge in African Countries. We need to improve Teacher Development through Digital Skills and Open Learning Opportunities in Africa and enable teachers to have access to digital devices and to enable them to use them for teaching and learning purposes. This is key to enable teachers and learners to adapt to remote and online working as a result of the pandemic.
9. The SDG4 on quality education targets to substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states by 2030. Now it is the right time to assess how ready we are to hit this target being aware of key challenges including those caused by the Covid-19 outbreak. Many countries are struggling with their financial recovery. The ultimate solution will be to strengthen international cooperation to overcome challenges and build together a strong and motivated pool of teaching personnel.

**Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

10. As I conclude my opening remarks, I once again give a vote of thanks to all organizers who have worked hard to ensure the success of this event. I know that this will ensure everything will run smoothly from now until the end of the conferences. I therefore declare the Policy Dialogue Forum of the International Task Force on Teachers officially open in Kigali. I wish you fruitful conferences!

Thank you!