

Global Campaign for Education Applauds Brown's Address to Congress
Education Takes Priority In Light of Global Economic Crisis

Washington, March 4 – In his address to Congress today, Prime Minister Gordon Brown stressed the importance of universal primary education and called on nations to ensure that all children are able to go to school. The Global Campaign for Education, a coalition of charities, teaching unions and education advocates, welcomes his championing of the education cause in this all-important political arena. They also praised President Obama's reiteration of his pledge to global education in his recent budget request.

“Prime Minister Brown is right to point out that the 75 million children around the world who are out of school today are critical to the global economic recovery,” said Kailash Satyarthi, GCE’s President. “The UK, US and other nations must work together to ensure that our commitment to basic education is met and to improve global security and the economy. These important statements lay the groundwork for a major upscaling of effort on education.”

Increasing access to education has significant economic, health and security benefits. Education is an investment that reaps economic benefits for communities in the short and long-term and is crucial to ending poverty. According to the Center for Foreign Relations and World Bank, a person’s earnings increase by 10% for each year of schooling they receive, translating to a 1% annual increase in GDP if good quality education is offered to the entire population.

“Leaders around the world are focused on turning around the financial markets and their economies,” said Owain James, Global Campaign for Education’s coordinator. “Any global ‘new deal’ to restore economic stability and equitable growth will be well-served by a major boost to global education.”

Education has benefits in other areas of development such as global health. For example, studies by the World Bank have shown that teenage girls who attend school are 70% less likely to become infected with HIV and educated mothers are 50% more likely to have their children immunized.

Education also helps to stabilize weak states and promotes inclusive, democratic societies. It must be a central component of developed nations’ efforts to promote global security.

“Prime Minister Brown has been one of the leaders in supporting education for all children and we are glad President Obama is joining in this effort.” said GCE Board Member, David Archer “Of course it's crucial that such warm words are matched by delivery of hard cash.”

President Obama has pledged to establish a global fund for education to ensure that every child has the opportunity to go to school, capitalized with a \$2 billion U.S. contribution, and recently committed in his budget outline 'to embark on several new initiatives that will give children in the poorest countries access to education.' This U.S. contribution and support from other nations could propel an effective multilateral, multi-donor fund to provide quality education for all children, building on the existing efforts of the Education For All Fast Track Initiative. This goal can be met if the resources and policies are forthcoming.

The President and Prime Minister are not the only ones talking about global education. Last year, 8.8 million people around the world took part in GCE's Action Week to advocate for improved access to quality education. Next year there will be a huge campaign around the 2010 FIFA World Cup to bring attention to education and the millions of children who have never seen the inside of a classroom.

Contact:

Meighan Stone, meighanstone@gmail.com, 202.538.9143

Taylor Royle, taylorroyle@gmail.com, 202.215.2003

Alex Kent, alex@campaignforeducation.org +27 76 428 5390

Editors Notes:

The **Global Campaign for Education**, founded in 1999, brings together major nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and teachers' unions in **more than 120 countries**. GCE promotes access to education as a basic human right and raises public awareness to create the political will for governments and other leaders in the international community to fulfill their promises to provide at least a free, public basic education for all children. Every April GCE organizes a week of campaigning on education called Global Action Week.

GCE's Action Week is taking place 20th – 26th April 2009 when 10 million people are expected to take part in *the Big Read*. They will be reading stories from lead figures including Nelson Mandela, Paulo Coelho, Alice Walker and many others before writing their name in demand that everyone has the chance to learn to read and write.

www.campaignforeducation.org