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PRESIDENT BEJI CAID ESSEBSI OF TUNISIA RECEIVES HIGH-LEVEL EDUCATION COMMISSION DELEGATION LED BY FORMER PRESIDENT OF TANZANIA JAKAYA KIKWETE

President Essebsi expresses support for “The Learning Generation” agenda and an International Financing Facility for education

His Excellency President Beji Caid Essebsi of Tunisia met with His Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, the former President of Tanzania and member of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity (The Education Commission) at the Palace of the Republic in Carthage, Tunisia on Friday. Leading the Education Commission’s delegation, President Kikwete and fellow Education Commissioner Her Excellency Dr. Amel Karboul, former Minister of Tourism for Tunisia, shared the Commission’s *Learning Generation report* findings as well as country-specific data on the potential for education reform and results in Tunisia. These findings make clear that Tunisia can achieve universal levels of secondary completion and learning outcomes on a par with high income countries within a generation should it move to mobilize public, private and international resources to increase total education spending from 7 percent of GDP today to 9 percent in 2030. Friday’s meeting was preceded by a launch of *The Learning Generation* report at the Ministry of Education in Tunis, hosted by Tunisian Minister of Education, His Excellency Néji Jallou.

During the United Nations General Assembly last September, the Education Commission released its report highlighting that on current trends, by 2030, more than 800 million children in low and middle income countries – half of the world’s 1.6 billion children – will not be on track to secure basic secondary-level skills to equip them for the labor market of tomorrow. Of these 800 million, 228 million children will not even be in school and 400 million will leave school without even the most basic primary level qualifications. The Commission set out an ambitious but achievable plan, called ‘The Learning Generation’, through which the 1.3 billion children in low and middle-income countries can, within a generation, attain the same level of basic skills achieved by children in high-income countries today. The work of the Commission is being closely watched around the world as it seeks to turn messages into action.

Commenting on the visit, President Essebsi said: “Tunisia has been steadily marching toward a future of universal quality primary and secondary education for our children – one of the Sustainable Development Goals. We are excited by the prospects of the Pioneer Country Initiative, and supportive of the Commission’s International Financing Facility for education which can release additional – and much needed – funds for countries across the African continent. Tunisians have long been proud to call ourselves ‘Education Champions,’ and today is no exception. I look forward to seeing what can be achieved with the Commission as we work together in common cause.”

President Kikwete also provided the following statement: “I thank President Essebsi for his genuine commitment to education reform and for receiving our delegation and the *Learning Generation* report. Initial discussions leave me both hopeful and confident that stakeholders in Tunisia can prove what is possible when educational reform is accelerated and the funds to match are in place.”

How to Achieve The Learning Generation

The delegation visit to Tunisia comes amid two initiatives presently led by the Commission. First, the Commission is working with multilateral development banks (MDB) and other international donors on a proposal to harness the potential of MDBs to finance education. The proposed International Financing Facility would coordinate financing instruments and practices, increase MDB financing for education up to 15 percent of total lending and leverage additional multilateral funds for education. The Commission estimates that establishing such a facility could potentially mobilize USD\$10 to \$20 billion annually by 2020 from MDBs for education – up from USD\$3.5 billion today.

Second, “Pioneer Countries” play a special role in this broader financing initiative. Tunisia is the latest country to receive a high-level delegation to meet with Presidents and Prime Ministers to discuss Commission recommendations, review domestic education reforms and financing. As part of the Pioneer Country Initiative, countries will be encouraged to make education a domestic policy priority, enact reforms for greater effectiveness and efficiency, and increase domestic financing. In return for these commitments, the Commission will work to bridge partnerships with the international community to marshal additional financial and technical support. Countries electing to participate in this effort will be prioritized for consideration for any new investment mechanisms or innovations.

During the visit, Tunisia was asked to become a “Pioneer Country” by demonstrating support for the Commission’s efforts to generate new international financing for education. President Essebsi expressed his belief that Tunisia already demonstrates a commitment to education and backed the

Commission's proposed International Financing Facility to provide additional financial support to countries willing to make education reforms and greater investments.

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ABOUT THE EDUCATION COMMISSION

The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity (the Education Commission) is a major global initiative engaging world leaders, policy makers and researchers to develop a renewed and compelling investment case and financing pathway for achieving equal educational opportunity for children and young people. The Education Commission is bringing together the best research and policy analysis on the actions necessary to increase investment in concrete, relevant learning outcomes that have a positive impact on economic and social development.

EDITOR'S NOTES:

The Education Commission report, *The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world*, has put forward an action plan for the largest expansion of educational opportunity in history.

In order to build 'The Learning Generation', the Commission calls upon the world's leaders to commit to four education transformations:

Strengthening performance – put in place the building blocks of delivery to strengthen the performance of the education system, maximize efficiency and put results first.

Fostering innovation – harness new technology and develop creative approaches to organizing and delivering learning.

Prioritizing inclusion – ensure that education reaches everyone, taking additional steps to include those at greatest risk of not learning.

Increasing finance – mobilizing new domestic resources and increasing international support and leadership, prioritizing investment in countries that demonstrate commitment to invest and reform education systems

Bringing these four transformations together, the Commission proposes a **Financing Compact for the Learning Generation**, bringing low- and middle-income countries together with their partners in the international community to increase education financing from \$1.2 trillion to \$3 trillion by 2030, and



deliver comprehensive reform in the efficiency and effectiveness of how each dollar is spent. The Compact will aim to incentivize new action by all partners, hold all countries to account for their responsibilities for education, and ensure that countries committed to getting all children learning are given the support they need.

A full copy of the report *The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world* (including French and Arabic versions) can be found at: report.educationcommission.org

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