

## **STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE COUNTRIES LISTED BELOW DELIVERED AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION**

This statement is on behalf of the following Countries: Albania, Andorra, Australia, Canada, Georgia, Guatemala, Iceland, Japan, Republic of North Macedonia, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

And the European Union: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Spain, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden

The purpose of this World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education has been/is to reaffirm the right of every young child to education and the vital importance of receiving quality care supporting wellbeing, development and learning from birth. The period from birth to eight years old is one of remarkable brain development: longitudinal studies demonstrate a predictive relationship between childhood cognitive capacities and adult physical and cognitive capacities and life expectancy. Early Childhood Care and Education is, therefore, a crucial window of development that must be protected.

Russia's war of aggression has devastating consequences for children in Ukraine, including their access to care and education. As of 25 October 2022, Russian bombing and shelling has damaged 847 preschool education institutions across Ukraine, and destroyed a further 94 ([Source](#)). Since Russia's war of aggression began, only 59.4% of preschool age children have been able to access education ([Source](#)), with many of these facing disruption and displacement ([Source](#)). Two-thirds of children in Ukraine have been forced to flee their homes since February: Save the Children report that a child from Ukraine has become a refugee every single second of the war. ([Source](#)). Between the start of Russia's invasion and 15 November, 431 children have died, and 834 have been wounded ([Source](#)).

Children are among the most vulnerable in any society, and we commit to work for their safety and the rights of the child across the globe. Through this war of choice, Russia is breaching its commitments at UNESCO and to the Sustainable Development Goals ([Source](#)), particularly Target 4.2 calling for quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education for all children.

We reiterate our calls for Russia to stop exposing the children of Ukraine to harm, to withdraw its forces beyond Ukraine's internationally recognised borders, to cease military action in Ukrainian territory and to stop undermining SDG4 at a time of crisis in education worldwide.