



Nobel Laureate Calls for Universal Access to Education for Sustainable Development

New Delhi; 01 December 2015: “Education should no longer be a powerful tool in the hands of a few, but the fundamental right for each one of us. When a girl picks up a pencil and starts writing, millions of guns are weakened. When a child writes the first alphabet, the script of writing a better world begins. When one wall of a classroom is built, millions of walls that divide humanity collapse”, said Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi delivering the UN Public Lecture on Sustainable Development Begins with Education on December 1, 2015 in New Delhi.

Calling for fulfilling the fundamental right to education of every person, and stepping up efforts to end child labour and exploitation, Mr. Satyarthi said education is the first step towards sustainable development. “If one out of seven people are not able to read and write, how would they even understand the debates and goals on sustainability and development? Education, therefore, is the fundamental pre-requisite to sustainability”, he said.

In 2014, Kailash Satyarthi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for the struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education. He has also been a prominent voice for the inclusion of child protection and welfare-related goals in the Sustainable Development Goals at the United Nations General Assembly this year.

At the UN Public Lecture this evening, the Nobel Peace Laureate said that the Sustainable Development Agenda is a historic achievement. “Through the Sustainable Development Goals, for the first time in history, groundbreaking specific language has been included demanding the end to modern slavery, child trafficking and forced labour and violence. Poverty, illiteracy, child labour and health are inter-related problems and cannot be addressed in silos,” he said.

“Education is the most powerful tool for sustainable development”, said Yuri Afanasiev, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Representative India. Applauding India for her achievements, Mr Afanasiev noted that it is important to also focus on the quality of education. “India has already achieved near universal enrollment in primary school, and is putting in place ambitious initiatives to empower women and skill young people. The country is instrumental to the global achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.”

Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi, Director and UNESCO Representative, said, “UNESCO for long has been working with the Nobel Laureate, Mr. Kailash Satyarthi who is a close friend of UNESCO and has been at the forefront of the global movement to end child slavery and exploitative child labour since the 1980s. As founding president of the Global March Against Child Labour and one of the leaders of the Global Campaign for

Education, he has been campaigning for the implementation of Dakar goals and has worked with passion and courage to fulfill every child's right to education. “

Watch the video of the lecture at in.one.un.org

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The United Nations in India includes 27 organisations that have the privilege to serve in India. The UN in India is committed to support the Government of India's national development priorities and the achievement of internationally agreed goals including the Sustainable Development Goals.

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About GEFI

The United Nations Secretary-General launched the five-year Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in September 2012 to accelerate progress towards the Education for All goals.

The Initiative focuses on three priorities: Putting every child in school; improving the quality of learning; and fostering global citizenship.

Visit: www.globaleducationfirst.org

About the Sustainable Development Goals

193 UN member countries adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2015. The SDGs succeed the Millennium Development Goals, and are an ambitious global agenda of 17 goals that aim to end poverty, fight hunger and tackle climate change by 2030.

Visit: sustainabledevelopment.un.org