



For immediate release

France commits to act against commercialisation of education in international cooperation

Paris, March 27th, 2017

The French Minister of State for Development and Francophonie, **Jean-Marie le Guen**, declared yesterday that ***'France will act against any attempts at commercialisation of education'*** in international cooperation. He added that France considers that ***'education is a public service'*** and ***'a common good that cannot be profited from'***.

Mr Le Guen made this declaration during the [launch](#) of the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) annual Human Development Report. This stance constitutes a major commitment from France in a **context of [massive privatisation and commercialisation of primary and secondary education throughout the world](#)**, particularly in poor countries. It notably differs from Great Britain's stance on the matter, which promotes the development of private schools through its development cooperation aid, by financing in particular multinational corporations with British investments, such as [Bridge International Academies](#).

Hélène Ferrer, coordinator of [Coalition Education](#), responded: *'We welcome the unambiguous position expressed by Mr Le Guen against commercialisation of education. This strengthens the efforts undertaken by France to promote education systems respectful of human rights. We will now work with the ministry and our partners throughout the world to insure effectiveness of this commitment.'*

In November 2016, more than 300 civil society organisations from 38 countries presented the [Francophone civil society call against commercialisation of education](#). This [Call](#) convinced Heads of States and Governments of the Francophonie countries to ask the International Organisation of La Francophonie (IOF), in the [Antananarivo Declaration](#), to 'take measures to promote efficient institutional mechanisms for the regulation of private actors in education, in order to ensure quality and equity of education services'.

Carole Coupez, delegate for education and citizenship at [Solidarité Laïque](#), added: *'We are very pleased that France responded to the demands of organisations throughout the Francophone world, which witness daily the progression and impact of the current commercialisation of education. This trend challenges the fulfilment of the right to education in many countries, and France has a very important role to play in promoting another model of development.'*

Mr Le Guen's declaration confirms the position of [France's external action strategy 2017-2021 for education, vocational training, integration and health](#) published on the 24th of March, in which France commits to **'strengthening the regulatory role of the State [...] notably for the supervision of the private sector and to preventing the risks of commercialisation of education.'**

Jean-Hervé Cohen, president of the [Francophone Union Committee on Education and Training](#), added: *'We now await robust implementation of these stances. France must now, through all its cooperation bodies, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the French Development Agency (AFD), including its private arm, Proparco, refrain from any support to private commercial schools, and undertake concrete actions to promote quality public education systems.'*

END

Signatories :

- Coalition Education
- Comité Syndical Francophone de l'Éducation et de la Formation
- Fédération Internationale des CEMEA
- Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Right to Education Project
- Solidarité Laïque

Documents :

- Francophone civil society call against commercialisation of education [in French]: <http://bit.ly/2fNfJD>
- Information on the Call in English: <http://bit.ly/2fRVYWd>
- Antanarivo Declaration [in French]: <http://bit.ly/2n2jkQe>
- Information on the declaration in English: <http://bit.ly/2gaodDu>
- France's external action strategy 2017-2021 for education, vocational training, integration and health: <http://bit.ly/2nQmKa5>

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