Education Justice for All

20 February 2025

World Day of Social Justice Statement by Education Cannot Wait Director Yasmine Sherif

The central theme of this year's World Day of Social Justice is to "strengthen a just transition for a sustainable future." Education is the very foundation for achieving social justice. Without an education we cannot end extreme poverty and advance economic growth. Without an education we cannot empower young girls to become teachers, doctors, nurses, lawyers, engineers, let alone financially self-reliant. Without an education we cannot achieve good governance, the rule of law and peaceful co-existence.

Social justice in all its forms requires education, be it formal education through grade 12, onto tertiary education, or vocational skills training. There is simply no other way. Education is the path to social justice. As a global community, we are all interconnected and it is thus in our interest to ensure that children worldwide benefit from an education. However, nearly a **quarter of a billion children** living on the frontlines of the world's most devastating humanitarian crises do not access a quality education. This will not bode well for them, nor for us.

This global education crisis will have vast impacts on our global society, and our quest for social justice. I think of the brave women of the Afghan Girls Robotics Team, including our own ECW Global Champion Somaya Faruqi, who broke gender norms on their quest to learn more about science, technology, engineering

and math. Coming out next month, their story will be told in the inspiring movie **Rule Breakers**. But, much more needs to be done. Social justice does not exist for the women and girls of Afghanistan today, nor in many other parts of the world torn apart by brutal conflicts, forced displacement, climate change or oppressive societal norms.

Since ECW was founded just a few years ago, this global fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises, together with all our strategic donor partners and implementing partners, have reached a total of 11.4 million children with quality education. With increased funding support, we can provide millions more with access to quality education, and contribute to social justice.

The provision of a quality education fit for the 21st Century is the single best investment we can make to empower children and youth, create stronger economies, and ensure a peaceful co-existence in the world. There is no other promise, and no other pathway that can substitute education as the safest road to social justice.