

## EI Africa Statement on Resisting Privatisation and Defending Quality Public Education for All, April 2022

**We, representatives of Education International Member Organisations in Africa**, meeting virtually this day of 6 April 2022 to share the findings of the study on trends, forms, and magnitude of privatisation in Africa; reflect on the achievements, strengths and weaknesses of the current Global Response to privatisation and commercialisation of/in education programme, with a view to achieving more impact in the next campaign phase; and, reaffirm education unions' commitment to defend and promote the right to quality public education.

### **Recalling that:**

1. Free quality education for all is a fundamental human right, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention against Discrimination in Education, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights;
2. Agenda 2063 of the African Union envisions quality education as an indispensable catalyst for the development of the continent and turning the potential of the African people into 'The Africa We Want';

### **Concerned that:**

3. Far too many governments are retreating from their obligation as guarantors and providers of quality public education for all as evidenced by reduction in education budgets and increased privatisation and commercialisation of education;
4. Poverty, marginalisation and the recent impact of COVID-19 has left millions of school-going children out of education;
5. Education businesses (Edu business) and education technology companies (EdTech) are exploiting the COVID-19 crisis and long existing digital divide in Africa to expand their business opportunities and privatise education;
6. Privatisation of education is mainly as a result of inadequate financing and funding of public education;
7. There is increased and rapid growth of 'low-cost' for-profit private schools, often disregarding national curricula, employing unqualified teachers with little pay, while undermining the right to union representation and association as a means of achieving decent salaries and working conditions;

### **Reasserting that:**

8. Education is a basic human right and a public good and that all children have the right to free, inclusive and equitable quality public education regardless of their personal characteristics, circumstances or geographical location;

9. Privatisation and commercialisation of education is a threat to public education systems, equity, inclusion and social justice;
10. El's Congress Resolutions in defense of public education and against privatisation and commercialisation of education necessitates continued effort, strategy and resources to intensify the campaign against privatisation;

**Call upon African governments to:**

11. Take immediate policy, legislative and budgetary measures to ensure universal access to free quality public early childhood, primary and secondary education, as well as make tertiary education progressively free, in line with the United Nations's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on quality education commitments;
12. Regulate the activities of private education providers, ensuring that they guarantee educators' rights, including freedom of association, the right to organise and collectively bargain;

**Request Education International and Member Organisations to:**

13. Revitalise and intensify the campaign against privatisation and commercialisation of education to ensure the provision of quality public education for all;
14. Build the capacity of Member Organisations to engage in evidence-based advocacy, lobbying and campaigning; and,
15. Put pressure on governments to allocate at least 6% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or at least 20% of the national budget to education. Developed country partners should meet their commitment to allocate at least 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) to development aid and ensure that at least 10% of all Official Development Assistance (ODA) is allocated to education.