



CoNGO president, and three other NGO leaders, join in a statement on the International Day of Education 2021

New York City, 24 January 2021 (CoNGO InfoNews) — Education is a human right. Inclusion and equity are crucial for transformative education. Education as common public good requires public funding. Education at primary and secondary levels is universal and adult education primordial. Online education has blessings and perils. Safety and wellbeing is crucial at education venues. Education must be portable across borders. Global citizenship education is critical to multilateral collaboration. Educate to increase hope and decrease fear.

These are the thematic headings of a 26-point statement issued on the occasion of the International Day of Education 2021 by Liberato C. Bautista, president of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations ([CoNGO](#)), Liberato C. Bautista, and joined by Maria Helen Dabu, secretary general of the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education ([ASPBAE](#)), Franklin Shaffer, president and chief executive officer of [CGFNS International](#), and Montse Rafel, director general of [Dianova International](#).

The statement reaffirmed education as a human right, a public good and a public responsibility, and must be publicly funded.

The leaders recognized the blessings and perils of online education, naming the digital divide exacerbated by the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the same vein, they recognized the importance of education especially for health and allied professions and their portability across borders, given the high demand but shortage of health workers at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Education must foster civic engagement, democratic participation and social innovation,” the statement said. “Now is the time to develop global civic consciousness and innovate on a global civics education that fosters global citizenship and multilateral collaboration. Each of our countries, our people and the planet will be better for it.”

The leaders spoke of basic and adult education in a time of intersecting pandemics. They called for “education to increase hope and decrease fear.”

“Education must expose fear brought about by threats to and violations against the dignity and human rights of persons, such as those brought about by increasing racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance that alienate and divide people and communities from one another. These, on top of fears and anxieties brought about by intersecting crises of pandemic proportions—health crisis, racial crisis, climate crisis, migration crisis, economic crisis, violence, and more.”

The statement closed with an urgent call for “advocacy and partnerships for education among civil society organizations, and between NGOs, the UN System, and States.”

Read the full statement [here](#).

This article appeared on the [CoNGO website](#).