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THE PRIME MINISTER

Thank you for this opportunity to send a message to the World Innovation Summit on Education, a unique and ambitious global event.

Any country which lags behind in education will lag behind in economic recovery. So, for me, there is no greater priority than raising educational standards and making sure every child in the world can have a basic education.

The discussions you will be having in Doha, therefore, are particularly crucial at this time.

In the United Kingdom, we are determined to remain at the forefront of innovation in our teaching, schools, colleges and universities.

And we are proud to say that by embracing groundbreaking policies, standards have risen sharply since this Government came to power in 1997.

Participation rates of our 16 to 18 year olds in education and training are now at record levels, the number of underperforming schools has fallen dramatically, and exam results are improving every year.

But these achievements – and others - have not happened by chance.

They are the results of radical reform, record investment, cutting edge innovation and strong partnerships working across the whole system.

And we are determined to push standards ever higher by continuing to adopt pioneering measures.

Importantly, this approach is not only helping to drive up overall standards but also narrow the gap between children from poorer families and the rest – highly significant for future social mobility.

Internationally, we want to make 2010 a breakthrough year for increasing access to education across the world. It is a travesty that, globally, there are 75 million children out of school – that's more than the number of primary school children in all of Europe and the U.S. combined.

At the World Cup in South Africa next year, there will be a unique opportunity for the world to focus on this issue through the 1Goal campaign.

And from 2010, the UK will provide £1 billion a year for global education. So I urge this Summit to seek ways not just to enhance education for the rich, but to also help provide education for all.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the work of Her Highness Sheikha Mozah to promote the values of education throughout the Middle East and beyond.

In her roles as Chairperson of the Qatar Foundation and UNESCO Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education, her determination on the need to deliver Education for All sets an example for us to follow.

I look forward to reading reports of your debates in Doha, because I'm confident there's much going on elsewhere from which we can learn.

My very best wishes for a successful and interesting Summit.

Amr Bawa

November 2009