Dear [Country Leader],

We, the youth of [country] have an urgent request of the highest importance!

We know that education is the best investment a country can make. But COVID-19 has created the biggest disruption to education that the world has ever seen and exacerbated a pre-existing learning crisis. The pandemic has deeply impacted access to education, particularly for girls. The combined effects of school closures and economic pressures threaten to entrench educational inequality and roll back two decades of progress on learning. Due to the pandemic, the number of out-of-school children and youth could grow substantially for the first time in decades.

President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya is leading a global call to action to countries to prioritize, protect and increase domestic financing towards the 20% global benchmark, to set policies that leave no child behind, and ensure the efficient use of resources.

In times of crisis leaders step up**. So, we are calling on you to heed President Kenyatta’s call and to make bold and ambitious commitments to protect domestic financing for education to pre-COVID-19 levels and towards the 20% global benchmark, and to make policy commitments that ensure no child is left behind.** You can make these commitments at GPE’s Global Education Summit on July 28th and 29th.

We remind you of five reasons why education should be a priority investment:

1. Access to safe and inclusive education for all girls and marginalized genders **increases gender equality**.
2. A gender-responsive curriculum and trained teachers of all genders **prepares us for the realities of our world**.
3. Education has become virtual in every aspect, but we are lacking access to these digital tools. Digital skills are critical for education and the**jobs of the future**.
4. Without your funding, inequalities remain part of our daily lives. **We want to feel and see structural and sustained change.**
5. **Education is a human right**. We should all have access to education. No matter our class, gender identity, sexuality, ability and whether we live in conflict-affected or rural areas.

The stakes have never been higher! We’ve lost far too much already in the pandemic and at least 20 million girls are expected to not return to school. Education is the key to solving many of the challenges our country, our region and our world face by preparing the next generation of doctors, teachers, thinkers, entrepreneurs, and innovators. Financing education will unlock the future of millions of children and youth and contribute to long-term recovery from the pandemic. Commit to our future!

If you don’t protect education today by investing in times of crisis, we may be looking at a tomorrow of ever more challenges and not enough people to solve them.