



**Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations**

685 3rd Ave., Suite 1108, New York, NY 10017 • Tel: (212) 599-0950 • Fax: (212) 599-1020 •

svgmission@gmail.com | <http://svg-un.org>

Statement

by

H.E. Dr. Halimah DeShong

Deputy Permanent Representative of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the
United Nations

**High Level Security Council Arria Formula Meeting
“Access to education in conflict and post conflict contexts: Role of digital
Technology and Connectivity”**

United Nations Security Council
02 October 2020
New York

Please check against delivery

Thank you Ambassador Abarry,

We commend Niger for organizing this event and welcome the thoughtful briefings from our distinguished panel.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines affirms that a child's right to quality education must be universally prioritized and safeguarded. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 crisis has deepened existing disparities in access to education, with the worse effects experienced by children in countries and regions affected by conflict and climate change.

As we reimagine and realign education in response to COVID-19 mitigation measures, it is our moral responsibility to ensure no child is left behind. This means amplifying our efforts to make quality education accessible; with keen focus on displaced children, children in reintegration programmes, girls and children with disabilities. We must tackle the gender, class, racial and geographic inequalities that continue to maintain the digital divide, if we are to harness technology and connectivity in support of quality education.

The COVID-19 crisis places into sharper focus, the need for clear solidarity actions by the entire multilateral system, regional bodies, national governments, civil society and the private sector.

We highlight the following actions in support of democratizing technology and connectivity for quality education, globally:

- The implementation of actions outlined in the September 2020 Presidential Statement, urging us to support distance and digital technology in conflict affected countries;
- The need to track and scale-up existing, innovative strategies and actions, such as those outlined by our distinguished Ministers, Executive Director Fore and Director Bogdan-Martin. We also commend groups like the Lebanese Alternative Learning (LAL) Foundation (as part of a public/private partnership) for their commitment to providing digital support programmes to children in rural areas and for their insistence that technology function as an equalizing force in education. Placing their digital library in a small box, and making it available to multiple users offline, has improved access to education for children in rural areas.
- There is urgent need to initiate, enhance, streamline, cost and fund action and operational plans at the national and regional levels; and in collaboration with civil society and international partners. These should prioritise tech support and connectivity for diverse children affected by conflict.
- State, regional, and multilateral public-private partnerships to fund quality education with the requisite tech and connectivity support, is crucial in this regard.
- We also call for capacity building in the use of technology for teachers, parents, families and communities to ensure that a sense of community is built around students in support of teaching and learning;
- Strategies for assessing and addressing learning gaps, as a result of the multiple shocks experienced by children in conflict affected countries, must be pursued; and finally
- Actions to make education accessibility must be connected to broader security and socio-economic development strategies.