

Statement of solidarity and support



The Asia Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC) strongly supports the School Education & Literacy Department (SELD) of the Government of Sindh for organizing the conference on *'ECCE and Foundational Learning in Emergencies* in Pakistan on July 11-12, 2023.

ARNEC stands in solidarity with you in ensuring that our young children thrive in safe and secure environments, and where they face multiple crises on account of extreme weather events, environmental degradation, climate risks, and public health emergencies, especially in Pakistan and elsewhere in the region and beyond, that the policy, investment, and services are in place to keep our young children safe, protected, and learning at all times.

The Asia Pacific is one of the most exposed regions to the impacts of climate emergencies, disasters, and environmental degradation. Pakistan is among the climate hotspots in the region accounting for less than 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions but considered the 8th most vulnerable country in the world based on the Global Climate Risk Index. Moreover, Pakistani children are considered 'extremely high risk', ranking 14th out of 163 in the UNICEF Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI).

For example, the devastating flood in 2022 exacerbated the pandemic-induced risks borne by children in Pakistan, which disrupted not only opportunities for learning and development, but also widened disparities in the conditions and experiences of children. ARNEC and partners believe that climate change should not be seen as a single-sector issue; for example, only from the lens of the education sector, but

one that cuts across the nurturing care components and requires multisectoral support for the well-being and development of young children.

Despite contributing the least amount of emissions, young children continue to bear the worst consequences. This injustice we cannot tolerate. The least we can do now is to keep the foundations of ECCE in place, reinforced by adequate and predictable investment in the early years and our collective commitment to work together for early childhood development to address multiple crises young children face.

Against fierce and persistent climate and public health emergencies, we support young children and families through ECCE across the five nurturing care components—good health, adequate nutrition, opportunities for learning, safety and security, and responsive care of young children to survive and thrive.

Please accept ARNEC's best wishes for your conference. We count on you to advance efforts placing young children at the heart of environmental and climate actions. After all, our most vulnerable young children are also our most valuable stewards to a more resilient and sustainable future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Evelyn D. Santiago', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

EVELYN D. SANTIAGO

Executive Director, ARNEC