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INFORMATION NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council
Subject:	Aid to Ukraine in the education sector - <i>Information from the Swedish delegation</i>

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Swedish delegation on the above subject, which has been put on the agenda under ‘Any other business’ for the next Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting on 23 November 2023.

Aid to Ukraine in the education sector*Information note from the Swedish delegation*

Ukraine's soldiers are fighting not only for Ukraine's survival, but also for our security and for the respect for territorial integrity. Russia is violating international law and the Ukrainian people have suffered from attacks against schools, hospitals, and civilian infrastructure. Over 3 000 education institutions have been damaged, and out of those 360 have been destroyed. This accounts for approximately 10% of all education institutions in Ukraine. The estimated cost of the reconstruction of the damaged education institutions is USD 7.8 billion.

Since the beginning of the new school year, only 45% of pupils are studying in face-to-face mode. Due to the war preceded by the COVID-19 pandemic, widespread learning loss has been observed among Ukraine's children. To facilitate a safe return to face-to-face education, school shelters are essential. During the war shelters ensure that in-person learning continues, promoting children's access to interaction, new relationships and learning without distractions, improving social skills, and strengthening their emotional well-being.

UNESCO has been well established in Ukraine for a long time and cooperates closely with the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science as well as other UN agencies active in the country. UNESCO carries out efforts to strengthen access to education for children in Ukraine in many ways. One way is through distance and hybrid education where UNESCO has delivered 50,000 laptops, donated by Google, to teachers in Ukraine and assisted with training efforts for teachers in digital pedagogy. A second way is through supporting Ukraine's National Program for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), which involves a transformation of the education sector's mental health and psychosocial support system.

Flexible funding plays a key role in supporting UNESCO to respond swiftly to emerging needs on the ground. Sweden is therefore granting 75 million SEK in flexible funding to UNESCO's Multi-donor special account for Ukraine. With this contribution UNESCO will among other important work, some mentioned above, support the renovation and rebuilding of damaged and destroyed shelters in schools and kindergartens in Ukraine.

UNESCO has set a financial target of 20 million USD for the educational sector in Ukraine. Sweden encourages other EU Member States to join in and to continue to contribute to UNESCO's cause as the Ukrainian needs exceed what Sweden can contribute with.
