Thank You Mister President,

VIDES on behalf of this NGO coalition commends the constructive participation of Ireland in its 3rd UPR.

We welcome the acceptance of recommendations 157.173 and 157.176 aiming to prioritise equal access to quality education at all levels and to continue to work to ensure equal access to digital technologies being mindful of children’s mental health. However, we are concerned about the ongoing inequity in relation to access to digital technologies and the disparity in the levels of digital literacy among children from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds when compared to the general child population. Moreover, we are deeply concerned with the high number of suicides, self-harm, substance abuse and high prevalence rates of mental health illnesses among adolescents. The Covid 19 pandemic has only exacerbated the situation; with children from disadvantaged backgrounds, suffering greater ‘learning loss’ and experiencing more mental health challenges.

We call on Ireland to:


1. *Strengthen its efforts to tackle educational inequalities at all levels, through the adequate resourcing of early childhood education, the continued expansion of the DEIS⁴ school programme, the expansion of the school meals programme and the introduction of free schoolbooks scheme.*

2. *Support digital inclusion by targeting disadvantaged students and their communities through the provision of reliable, affordable internet access, through the delivery of digital literacy programmes and through adequately resourcing the provision of internet enabled devices.*

Thank You

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