Your Excellency,

By agreeing on a set of time-bound and measurable Millennium Development Goals in 2000, world leaders undertook to do their utmost to significantly reduce poverty in the world by year 2015. One of the goals was that all children would go to primary school by 2015 but this goal will not be achieved, despite the progress made. It is, therefore, vital that the new development framework includes a stand-alone goal on quality education for all.

The Nordic Teachers’ Council, NLS, which represents over 600 000 teachers in 18 teacher organisations throughout the Nordic countries, is working together with our global federation, Education International (EI), to ensure that education remains a priority beyond 2015.

We follow the post-2015 process with great interest and concern. Quality education is a fundamental human right and must, thus, be at the center of any development agenda. The quality of education is closely linked to the availability of qualified teachers, which is also a precondition for equitable and inclusive education and lifelong learning for all. At the same time, quality education forms the basis for achieving all other sustainable development goals.

NLS welcomes the proposal of the UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG) and in particular goal 4 on Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Lifelong Learning Opportunities for all. We have also appreciated the inclusive nature of the OWG process.

We hope that the post-2015 process will remain open to dialogue with and input from Nordic teacher organisations. We look forward to sharing our expertise and to contributing to the formulation of a global sustainable development agenda. Our aim is to ensure that quality education for all remains a stand-alone goal in the post-2015 development agenda.

As teachers, we know that the lack of qualified and well-trained teachers is a serious barrier for many countries to ensure the right to quality education for all. For universal primary education to be possible by 2015, another 3.7 million teachers have to be recruited and trained to replace those who will retire or leave the profession, and an additional 1.6 million posts have to be created in order to secure a reasonable pupil-teacher ratio.

NLS is concerned about this not being adequately addressed in the OWG proposal and underline the following as the negotiations on a final set of goals and targets commence:

In order to secure quality education for all by 2030, teacher training must be urgently improved and expanded.
In order to guarantee that all children are taught by qualified, well-trained, motivated and well-supported teachers by 2030, the education goal must include a robust teacher target that goes beyond the OWG proposal and its emphasis on international cooperation.

We further believe that the education goal and targets have to be accompanied by a financing target. Each country is responsible for its implementation of goals and targets but also have a responsibility to support those countries that still struggle to mobilize sufficient domestic resources.

The Nordic teachers consider the post-2015 process a priority and we look forward to contributing to the process of crafting a new global development framework, with a commitment to teachers and quality education for all at the center.

Helsinki, 1.10.2014
The Nordic Teachers’ Council

Olli Luukkainen President Nordic Teachers’ Council
Opetusalan ammattijärjestö OAJ, Finland

Henning Pedersen President Børne- og Ungdomspædagogernes Landsforbund, Denmark

Anders Bondo Christensen President Danmarks Lærerforening, Denmark

Christoffer Jørgensen President Handelsskolernes Lærerforening, Denmark

Annette Nordstrøm Hansen President Gymnasieskolernes Lærerforening, Denmark

Hanne Pontoppidan President Uddannelsesforbundet, Denmark

Uffe Rostrup President Frie Skolers Lærerforening, Denmark

Christer Holmlund President Finlands Svenska Lärarförbund, Finland

Maud Wang Hansen President Føroya Pedagogfelag, Faroe Islands

Herálvur Jacobsen President Føroya Lærarafelag, Faroe Islands

Kári Jespersen President YF - Yrkisfelagid miðnám, Faroe Islands

Kaaliina Skifte President N.P.K. - Nunatsinni Perorsaasut Kattuffiat, Greenland

Sivso Dorph President Illinniartsisut Meeqqat Atuarfiannersut Kattuffiat, Greenland

Thordur Hjaltested President Kannarasamband Islands, Iceland

Ragnhild Lied President Utdanningsforbundet, Norway

Anne Finborud President Skolenes Landsforbund, Norway

Bo Jansson President Lärarnas Riksförbund, Sweden

Eva-Lis Sirén President Lärarförbundet, Sweden