



**ROYAL NORWEGIAN  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

*Minister of Foreign Affairs*

To all UN member states

Oslo, 23 April 2015

**Invitation to the Oslo Conference on Safe Schools: Protecting Education from Attack**

I am pleased to invite two representatives of your Government to the Oslo Conference on Safe Schools: Protecting Education from Attack, which will be held in Oslo on 28–29 May. There will be a public meeting on the afternoon of Thursday 28 May. The formal part of the conference will start with a dinner the same evening, followed by a morning session on 29 May.

Education is increasingly coming under attack in conflict settings, and there is evidence that the use of educational facilities for military purposes can have devastating consequences for children, young people and their teachers. Although there is increasing awareness of the importance and benefits of education, combined with massive investments from governments and donors, progress is being halted and sometimes even reversed in conflict areas by targeted attacks on pupils, teachers and education and the destruction of places of learning. There is a need for stronger political commitment and practical tools to reverse this trend.

The purpose of the Conference is for governments, represented at senior official level, to endorse a Safe Schools Declaration. The Declaration will set out a political commitment by states to protect education from attack, including the use of the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict*. The *Guidelines* have been through a series of consultations with different stakeholders and the finalised version was presented to all states in December 2014. The *Guidelines* present a range of practical tools for parties to armed conflict to use to improve practice on the ground, as well as considerations they should take into account.

The Safe Schools Declaration, which will be the political mechanism for endorsing the *Guidelines*, is currently the subject of consultations among states in Geneva. I appreciate the constructive engagement by states, the UN and civil society groups,

which underlines the importance of this issue. Relevant organisations will be invited to the Conference. A finalised version of the Declaration will be circulated prior to the Conference, once these consultations have been completed.

Participants at the Oslo Conference on Safe Schools should register using the following link: [www.safeschools.no](http://www.safeschools.no)

Here, you will find information about accommodation, visa arrangements, travel, and contact details. You may also contact [safeschools@gyro.no](mailto:safeschools@gyro.no) for additional practical information or any questions regarding your registration for the Conference or hotel booking.

If you need a visa, you should start the application process as soon as possible. More information about visa requirements can be found by following the link above.

There will be a sponsorship programme to facilitate the participation of one representative from each ODA-eligible country. You can find more information about this programme by following the link above.

Please confirm your attendance by 15 May, using the above link.

For more information on the substance of the Conference, please contact [andreas@ilpi.org](mailto:andreas@ilpi.org) and [mtg@mfa.no](mailto:mtg@mfa.no).

Registered participants will receive the final agenda, the finalised Safe Schools Declaration and other relevant documentation prior to the Conference.

I look forward to welcoming a broad group of state representatives to this important event.

Yours sincerely



Børge Brende