United Nations creates education fund for refugee children

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UnitedÂ Nations: Former British Prime Minster Gordon Brown on Monday announced the creation of the United Nationsâ€™ first humanitarian fund for the education of refugee children.

Acting in his role as UN special envoy for global education, Brown said the fund hopes to reach many of the estimated 20 million school-age refugees and displaced persons around the globe who are being denied an education as part of â€œthe largest population of displaced girls and boy since 1945.â€•

Brown said the number of children who are missing out on schooling due to displacement is becoming a global crisis that will haunt the world for generations.

Â Â Â **â€œWhen we ask ourselves what breaks the lives of once thriving young children, itâ€™s not just the Mediterranean wave that submerges the life vest and itâ€™s not just the food convoy that does not arrive in Syria, itâ€™s also the absence of hope - the soul crushing certainty that there is nothing to plan or prepare for, not even a place in school,â€• Brown said, speaking by telephone to reporters at the UN.**

The initiative, entitled â€œEducation Cannot Wait,â€• will be formally launched at next weekâ€™s World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul and seeks to raise $3.85 billion from some 100 donors in the public and private sectors over the next five years.

The initiative, which has been in the works for three years, was inspired by the refugee crisis in Syria, but funds will be available for refugees around the globe.

Brown said that the vast majority of people fleeing the war in Syria remain in the region and if parents believed their children could get an education there, they would be more likely to stay in place, rather than undertake the risky passage to Europe.

â€œWe must meet our responsibilities to those people who are in Europe, who are refugees and asylum seekers, but we must at the same time recognize the biggest problem and the biggest number of people who need help, particularly children who need help, are in the region themselves.

And if we do not act they will become victims of child labour, child trafficking and child marriage and they will be a discontented generation of young people, a lost generation,â€• Brown said.

- AP