In order to guarantee equitable and non-discriminatory quality education, governments must:

- Qualified teachers with necessary teaching and learning tools and materials are the foundation for quality and effective education
- Life skills of students are reinforced with quality teaching and appropriate learning tools and materials
- Appropriate and adequate teaching and learning tools and materials are needed for the effective provision/delivery of quality education.

1. Teaching and learning tools and materials are important

A skilful carpenter cannot build a house without the necessary tools and materials. Much more so, a qualified teacher cannot mould the hearts and minds of the learners or develop their social and professional skills and abilities without the necessary tools and materials. Otherwise concepts will remain abstract without the tangible, real-life situation and learning processes inside and outside of the classroom. Science, technology and geography are examples of subjects where learners can make use all the senses to capture the essence of the learning processes, guided by appropriate tools. Life skills acquisition is predicated on the fact that, apart from cognitive capabilities, the affective (values) and manipulative /psychomotor skills must also be given primary consideration in a holistic teaching-learning process. This is the anti-thesis of the ‘teach to test’ neo-liberal education policy. As such, the traditional chalk and blackboard teaching tools would not suffice. Adequate and relevant teaching and learning materials, including text books and other reading materials, laboratory equipment, tools for practical subjects, computers and other teaching and learning aids must be provided in every school.

With the advent of ICT, audio-visual teaching and learning tools have been enhanced greatly. Studies show that sustained interest of the learners can be achieved through the more colourful, animated and real-life examples utilized in the learning environment.
1. ICT-based teaching and learning tools

Most of the proven modern effective teaching and learning methods and tools are attributed to ICT: computers, animation, social networking and interactive learning processes, to name a few. The computer and internet technology should be embraced and they should be part and parcel of the teaching and learning processes and able to adapt to the changes in the whole society as well. Even developing countries must strive to integrate the modern teaching and learning tools in schools to reduce the digital divide between the North and South. This requires, among other things, very important efforts in relevant teacher training, significant investments in school infrastructure and equipment and energy equipment, among others. ICT must not be used as a replacement for a teacher or to reduce investment in education.

3. Way forward

Studies show that the teacher factor generates maximum learning and interest of the learners excited to be in school hungry for knowledge, to acquire and develop skills and values in life. The effectiveness of qualified and trained professional teachers could be further enhanced by equipping them with the necessary tools inside and outside of the classroom. Governments and employers in the education sector must invest more in infrastructure and tools to effectively make education a national priority without which equal opportunity for all citizens remains a mirage.