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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Video message from Ms Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

**on the occasion of the 2014 *Global Action Week on
Education for All***

4 May 2014

Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNESCO welcomes that the 2014 Global Action Week, led by the Global Campaign for Education, is focusing on education and disability.

Twenty years ago, UNESCO broke ground with the *World Conference on Special Needs Education*, which called for more inclusive education policies.

This was taken further in 2008 with the *International Conference on Inclusive Education*, which reaffirmed the importance of inclusive quality education for human development.

We have seen great progress, but exclusion in education remains an alarming challenge today.

Over one billion people live with some form of disability.

They are more likely to experience poverty and less likely to have access to social services.

In most countries, they are segregated from mainstream education and lifelong learning opportunities.

Children with disabilities are less likely to complete primary school – for many, access to education is simply denied.

During this *Global Action Week*, we raise the flag for education as a universal human right -- no one must be denied access because of disability.

This is a UNESCO priority, and we are acting across the world to break down barriers for people with disabilities, to empower them as agents of change.

This means transforming schools and learning centres.

It means adapting teaching practices to cater for all.

This is why I urge all Governments and development partners, all teachers, parents and private sector providers, to remove the barriers *to* and *in* learning, to realize the full and equal participation of all persons with disabilities in society.

This is our message for *Global Action Week*, to build inclusive knowledge societies, where no one is left out.

Irina Bokova