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Организация
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

International Seminar on Girls' and Women's Education

Opening Ceremony

Beijing, 1st September 2015

Address by

H.E. Dr Hao Ping

President of the General Conference
Vice-Minister of Education
of the People's Republic of China

Mr Dong Qi, President of Beijing Normal University,

Mr Chen Wenli, Vice-chairman of the Board of Hainan Airline Group,

Ms Eunice Smith, Acting Director of UNESCO Beijing Office

Dear participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning!

It's a great pleasure for me to attend this important seminar on girls' and women's education. Please allow me to welcome all the participants from Asia and Africa to Beijing !

I would like to thank the Beijing Normal University for hosting the event. I also wish to extend my congratulations to the UNESCO-Hainan Airline Partnership for launching its first activity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Education is a fundamental human right for both women and men. Girls' and women's education is particularly important to promote the right to education for all and to achieve the post-2015 development goals, because gender equality is the foundation for the creation of sustainable and peaceful societies.

UNESCO has been committed to promoting gender equality as a global priority through and in education systems. Significant progress has been made in expanding access to education for girls and women over the last decade. Girls' enrolment rate in primary education has been increased to 88% at global level, and steady improvements in enrolment in secondary education have been achieved.

Despite such progress, women still have less access to education, and therefore to decent job and quality life. Especially in developing countries and in rural areas, girls continue to make up the majority of out-of-school children, and women still represent two thirds of the adult population who lacks basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to emphasize that gender inequality in education is not only a concern of girls and women, nor of developing countries. It is of global significance and of everyone's business. This May, ministers and senior officials of education from over 130 countries gathered in Incheon, Korea, at the 2015 World Forum for Education, and made commitment to ensuring that all people, especially girls and women, have access to equitable and quality education and are provided with lifelong learning and training opportunities by 2030.

At that Conference, as the vice-minister of education of China, I had the honor to share with all participants that China has achieved the EFA goals in 2011, with realization of gender parity in primary and secondary education. As you know, there are 260 million students in 514 thousands schools and institutions in China. In ensuring education for such a population of students, 15 million Chinese teachers have made invaluable contributions with love and dedication.

Dear participants,

The respect for teachers is traditionally rooted in the Chinese culture. China also has a long-standing partnership with other developing countries in Asia and Africa in supporting educational development by teachers' exchange and training. The UNESCO-HNA partnership for girls and women's education, formed last year, aims to set up and finance projects in your countries to accelerate the progress in achieving gender equality in education, as a way to cultivate human resources and to shape the societies for tomorrow.

The Chinese government attaches an important attention to the seminar, which serves as a platform of dialogue for future cooperation. I've noticed that you all come from countries of the projects of Hainan Fund-in-Trust (HIFT) and China Fund-in-Trust (CIFT) where they have been and will be implemented. Madam Professor PENG Liyuan, the First Lady of China and Special Envoy for Girls and Women's Education of UNESCO, and Madam Irene Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, will meet with you in 3 days. I'm confident that our joint efforts will contribute to building good examples of South-South cooperation for promoting gender equality, education for all and sustainable development.

To conclude, I wish the seminar a great success and I wish all participants a good stay in Beijing!