



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

**Address by Irina Bokova,  
Director-General of UNESCO  
on the occasion of High-Level GEFI Event  
UNGA 2015**

**UNHQ, New York, 26 September 2015**

Professor Peng Liyuan,

Gordon Brown,

Ms Ban Soon-taek,

Malala, our hero for girls' education,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to be here at the United Nations General Assembly, just after the adoption of the sustainable development goals.

Four years ago, the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-moon, launched the *Global Education First Initiative* as a call to action.

To put human rights and dignity first.

To make sure every girl and boy gets to school, learns what they need, including new forms of global citizenship.

The *Global Education First Initiative* has led great strides.

I thank Champion Countries for their leadership and all partners for their engagement, notably Her Highness Sheikha Moza who has accompanied us all the way along in this quest.

We have champions here today who have brought education to the centre of development — H.E. Ms. Park Geun-Hye, President of Republic of Korea, whose country hosted the World Education Forum in Incheon, H.E. First Lady Professor Peng Liyuan, *UNESCO Special Envoy for the Advancement of Girls and Women's Education*, two Nobel Peace Laureates.

The *Global Education First Initiative* has helped shape a new vision of education...

... as a human right essential to dignity and empowerment.

... as a transformational force for inclusion, gender equality, poverty eradication.

This *Initiative* has widened the lens away from access to the quality of education, to lifelong learning, to skills, to teaching and content, to education for sustainable development, to global citizenship education.

Education stands at the heart of the *2030 Agenda*, as a comprehensive stand-alone goal, vital to the sustainability of all development -- and this reflects the championship of the *Global Education First Initiative*.

The same idea inspires the *Incheon Declaration*, adopted by 160 Member States at the *World Education Forum*, hosted by the Republic of Korea in May, with the United Nations family. Allow me to reiterate my deep gratitude to President Park for her personal commitment to making the World Education Forum a success.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

L'initiative du Secrétaire Général l'Education avant tout a permis de hisser l'éducation au sommet des priorités politiques.

Aujourd'hui, nous voulons lancer un nouvel appel à la mobilisation, pour assurer que chaque enfant, fille ou garçon, ait les compétences pour vivre dans la dignité et la paix.

Pour cela, il nous faut davantage de pays champions.

Davantage d'engagement politique.

Davantage d'engagement financier, pour la mise en œuvre du *Programme d'Action d'Addis Abeba*.

Permettez-moi de remercier la Norvège pour le lancement de la *Commission Internationale sur le financement des Opportunités Educatives*, ainsi que Gordon Brown pour l'énergie avec laquelle il a entamé son travail avant la première réunion ici la semaine prochaine.

L'éducation passe avant tout – elle est ce par quoi les sociétés se développent et se construisent ensemble un avenir commun.

Par la *coopération*, par les *partenariats*, par *l'innovation*, nous pouvons mettre l'éducation à la place qui lui revient – la toute première.

Je vous remercie.