



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
at the Islamabad College for Girls**

Islamabad, 6 February 2014

Excellency Minister of Education, Mr Baligh Ur Rehman

Excellency Mr Faridullah Khan, Secretary of the Capital Administration and
Development Division,

Ms Ghazala Kaleem, Principal of the *Islamabad College for Girls*,

Dear Teachers,

Dear Students,

It is a true pleasure to visit this school – which is a model school in so many ways.

I wish to thank the Ministry of Education and especially all of the teachers and
students present for their commitment to education for sustainable development.

For me, this school brings together two pillars for this country's future – empowering
girls and education for sustainable development.

They are key to the future of all countries, for a more sustainable and just world.

Technological and economic solutions are not enough to craft sustainability.

Nor is Government action sufficient.

The Constitution of UNESCO opens with striking words:

Since wars start in the minds of men, it is the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.

This is where we must start – in the minds of women and men, in *your* minds...

For sustainability and poverty eradication, for healthy, inclusive development -- we need to craft new ways of thinking and acting, and this must start on the benches of schools like this one.

Education is the most powerful way to shape the values, skills and knowledge we need to build resilient societies able to adapt to change.

This is the idea underpinning the *United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development*, which UNESCO is leading globally and which closes this year.

Education for sustainable development is essential for achieving all of our goals – from protecting biodiversity and responding to risks, to managing scarce resources for the benefit of all.

And, as each of you knows, attaining these goals is vital for the future of this country, to our future.

The *United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development* will culminate this year with the *UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development* to be held this November in Nagoya, Japan.

This will be an opportunity to see where we stand and to define a new path forward.

A lot has been achieved over the last decade.

More and more countries are integrating education for sustainable development into their curricula, to train a new generation of citizens and leaders.

I am pleased UNESCO is working with the *Islamabad College for Girls* on a number of initiatives.

I know we have engaged students with making artistic paper products using recycled paper – this highlights the transformative and creative power of sustainability, for which I congratulate you.

I know the UNESCO Office in Islamabad – I see our Director, Ms Kozue Kay Nagata, with us and thank her -- has supported a publication on education for sustainable development, as well as the design and construction of a rain water harvesting system, including a new Rain Harvesting Tank.

This embodies in action the new thinking we need for sustainability – working locally to tackle global issues.

I know also that fifteen computers and other IT devices have been made available to students, to manage the solar energy system.

For me, these initiatives express the essential goals of all our work to promote education for sustainable development.

Our goal is to empower you, as students, as girls, as citizens, to take the future into your hands, to shape it for the good of all – and this is *precisely* what you are doing.

Standing before you today gives me tremendous hope and energy to continue our work.

So I have come today to thank each of you, for your commitment, for your spirit.

Each of you is engaged in building a better world.

Each of you is already an actor and a leader.

I hope your experience can serve a reference for other schools, in Pakistan and beyond.

Let me thank also Ms Ghazala Kaleem, Principal of the *Islamabad College for Girls*, and all of the teachers, for their dedication and support.

This school stands at the frontline of our work to craft a more just, peaceful and sustainable future for all.

There is nothing more important.

In this spirit, I look forward now to inaugurating the new equipment with you.