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Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
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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 the High Level Political Forum “SDG 4 – Education
2030: What policies and data to ensure that no one is left behind?”**

ECOSOC, New York, 19 July 2016

Your Excellency Prime Minister Erna Solberg,

Your Excellency Ambassador Oh Joon, President of ECOSOC,

Excellencies Ministers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for coming this morning.

This High Level Political Forum is an important milestone, bringing together Member States for the first time to review progress on the 2030 Agenda.

Over the last six months, we have all seen how this Agenda has been taken on board and integrated into national policies everywhere.

On education, I believe we have made an especially strong start.

This was the case at the G7 Meeting of Education Ministers in Kurashiki – the first of its kind in a decade – that recognized the significance of SDG4.

This is the case in Nepal where the SDGs are the thread guiding national programming and reconstruction.

This is the case in China that has the ambition to lift 55 million people out of poverty by 2030.

We see some donor countries setting strong examples.

This is the case of Norway, under the leadership of Prime Minister Solberg, who we are honoured to have with us today.

Her government has put education at the forefront of development policy, making the commitment to double aid for education.

The Republic of Korea has launched bold programmes, like the Better Life for Girls Initiative.

This is proof the new agenda is a universal one.

This is an agenda to leave no one behind.

The stakes are high.

Today, we are publishing new data out of school children.

For the first time, the figures include upper-secondary.

In total, 263 million children and youth, aged between 6 and 17 years old, are not in school – most are girls.

If current trends continue, 25 million children, between 6 and 11, will never set foot in school.

Poorest children are four times more likely to be out of school, and five times more likely not to complete primary education, than the richest.

As we highlighted at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, children in conflict-affected countries are hit hardest -- 50 percent of refugees have no access to secondary education.

We need political commitment, coordinated action and resources to match the magnitude of this task.

I believe we have strong foundations to build on, at every level.

A majority of Member States have initiated SDG consultations and put in place mechanisms to coordinate national action.

SDG4 benefits from a solid Framework for Action, adopted immediately after the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit.

The Steering Committee held its first meeting on 25-26 May in Paris, and this provides a forward-looking global forum to make the education agenda work.

There have other strong signals.

I am thinking of the Education Cannot Wait Fund, launched at the World Humanitarian Summit – this is a breakthrough that spotlights underfunding and the urgent need to bridge the humanitarian-development divide.

We must stay the course to leave no one behind.

First, by continuing to make the case for education as a global priority.

I am confident the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity -- of which Prime Minister Solberg and myself are among the co-conveners -- will put forward cogent recommendations.

UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report, to be launched on 6 September, will highlight the compelling connections between education and the achievement of the 2030 agenda.

Second, we need good data to identify the children who have been consistently excluded.

Data empowers us to monitor inequalities and target them, through well-designed policies.

This means encouraging countries to strengthen education statistics, with support from international partners to develop standards and methodologies to monitor equity.

In this spirit, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics recently launched the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning that will develop a first set of internationally-comparable data, to track and improve the learning outcomes of all children and youth.

Third, we need a bold financing compact to bridge the \$39 billion external funding gap, including through new approaches.

Finally, we need new, innovative and inclusive partnerships, to make the best of all respective strengths.

I am pleased UNICEF is co-organizing today's event and grateful to the Republic of Korea, Morocco and Norway for sponsoring it.

Partnership is the spirit of the Joint Programme launched with UN Women and UNFPA for the empowerment of adolescent girls through education – supported by KOICA in Nepal, Mali and Tanzania.

I am looking forward to this discussion on measures taken to make education equitable and inclusive.

UNESCO remains as committed as ever, to ensure inclusive leadership on SDG4 – this is the bedrock of human dignity.

Thank you.