



United Nations
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Organización
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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 closing of the 2015 NGO Forum

Incheon, Korea, 19 May 2015

Dear Mr Satyarthi,

Dear Civil Society Leaders,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to be with you today, at the closing of one and a half days of intensive and productive consultations on education post-2015.

Thank you for coming in such numbers.

I am honoured, because I know I am addressing now those who are on the frontlines of education.

You are the voices of students, teachers, families, communities, in villages, in urban slums, in conflict zones, representing some 300 national, regional and international member organizations from around the world, of which over half are here today. I wish to thank also the Open Society Foundation for their support that has allowed youth from some 50 NGOs in Africa and Europe to participate today.

Let me express special thanks to the nine members of the *Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education for All* coordination group.

Thanks to your collective voice, you have influenced legislative change, you have held governments to account, you have made education a national and global cause.

Many of you have been active in the Secretary-General's *Global Education First Initiative*.

You have been influential in advocating for a stand-alone education goal in the post-2015 agenda, for a rights-based framework, for greater resolve to finish unfinished business.

In short -- you have made Education for All a global movement.

I wish to pay credit to your courage and determination, as well as your creativity — as advocates, as campaigners, you have successfully competed for attention in the public space and pushed our common agenda forward.

I remember joining the launch of the *1 Goal Campaign* for Latin America and the Caribbean, at Maracanã Stadium in Rio de Janeiro.

I remember being with the *Global Campaign for Education* at the Goal 1 events during the World Cup, with President Zuma – what a brilliant opportunity to seize the attention of world leaders!

Civil society has always been an integral partner of UNESCO.

This year, as we celebrate UNESCO's 70th anniversary, we can look back on seven decades of partnership and mutual support with civil society organizations, across all our areas of competence.

This is why it has been so important for UNESCO, as lead coordinator of Education for All, to ensure civil society has a prominent place at the table, alongside with Governments and other stakeholders.

The *Collective Consultation of NGOs* has been instrumental in shaping global and regional debates on education, and it is a key player in the EFA mechanism – I wish to thank Camilla Croso, President of the *Global Campaign for Education*, and Maria Khan, Secretary-General of the *Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education*, for their active contribution through the EFA Steering Committee.

The *Dakar Framework for Action* underlined the importance of civil society as one of its 12 strategies to achieve Education for All – in terms of formulation, implementation and monitoring.

Last year, the Nobel Peace Prize recognized the formidable and courageous role of civil society by awarding the prize jointly to Malala Yousafzai and to Kailash Satyarthi.

They stand several generations apart, but both are driven by the same unshakeable conviction in education as a fundamental human right that should be enjoyed by every child, regardless of their circumstances.

I see this as the meaning of human dignity.

In your Nobel speech, Mr Satyarthi, I recall that you said you “*refused to accept.*”

You told us that on your first day of school you met a cobbler boy, sitting at the school gate polishing shoes. Your teachers couldn’t answer your question about why he wasn’t in school with you, and this made you angry, and it still does – but, as always, your anger is overcome with compassion, vision and determination.

You refused then and you refuse now to accept the status quo.

This is precisely how all civil society groups represented here today have made such an impact. You do not accept that education is low quality, that governments are not accountable to all families, that children in refugee camps are excluded from school, and more.

The *Global Action Week*, organized annually by the *Global Campaign for Education*, stands out.

Over the past 14 years, it has mobilized millions of education stakeholders -- teachers, students, parents, public officials and the media – raising awareness about the right to education with millions more, and I have myself participated in events like the *Big Lesson*.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

La plus grande leçon, la voici : le plaidoyer le plus efficace est celui qui s'appuie sur des données irréfutables.

En Inde, ce plaidoyer a permis d'inscrire le droit à l'éducation dans la Constitution.

Au Brésil, il a conduit à ce que 75% des redevances perçues par le Gouvernement pour le forage pétrolier soient allouées à l'éducation et à la réforme du recrutement des enseignants.

Au Sénégal, c'est aussi le plaidoyer des ONG qui a conduit à renforcer les mesures de formation des enseignants et à supprimer un système de recrutement à deux vitesses.

Les ONG ont aidé les gouvernements à prendre leurs responsabilités, à prendre des engagements ambitieux lors de la Conférence des donateurs du *Partenariat mondial pour l'éducation* en 2014.

Votre participation dans les débats sur l'agenda post-2015 de l'éducation aux niveaux local, national, régional et international - a permis de faire valoir une vision moderne de l'éducation, holistique et fondée sur les droits.

Je voudrais rendre hommage à ces réussites, et faire appel à votre énergie pour amplifier ce mouvement dans la dernière ligne droite de l'agenda post 2015, pour adopter un agenda encore plus unifié, encore plus cohérent, et contribuer à sa mise en œuvre.

Je suis consciente de parler à des convertis – vous savez mieux que quiconque que l'éducation est le facteur le plus influent pour supprimer la pauvreté, promouvoir la tolérance, soutenir le développement durable.

Pour réussir, nous avons besoin de plus d'enseignants qualifiés, les écoles, les environnements sensibles au genre, le plein soutien des leaders locaux, et de plus encore.

Nous avons besoin de financement.

Voilà pourquoi nous devons forger des alliances nouvelles pour l'éducation, avec les ministères en charge du monde du travail, de la santé et des affaires sociales, avec les entreprises privées.

Tout au long du Forum mondial sur l'éducation, je sais que vous allez faire entendre la voix des élèves, des parents, des enseignants et des communautés qui sont loin de l'école.

Je compte sur votre soutien dans la défense de cette vision globale, généreuse et ambitieuse de l'éducation – cette vision doit nous guider pour les 15 prochaines années, et fixer un cap universel vers lequel nous devons tendre, pour que le droit de chacun à l'éducation de qualité devienne une réalité pour tous.

Je vous remercie.