



United Nations  
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Organisation  
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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 the launch of the 2016 Global Education Monitoring  
Report**

**London, 6 September 2016**

Ms Kemi Williams, Head of Education and Youth, DFID

Chief Mundiya Kepanga,

Ms Helle Thorning-Schmidt, Chief Executive of *Save the Children International*,  
former Prime Minister of Denmark,

Ms Sakena Yacoobi, Chief Executive Officer of the *Afghan Institute of Learning*,

Mr Charles Hopkins, *UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Teacher Education*, York  
University,

Mr Tarald Brautaset, Special Representative of the Government of Norway's  
*Education Initiative*,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for coming to the launch of the *2016 Global Education Monitoring Report*.

I thank DFID and all those who support this Report and its team hosted by UNESCO.  
It is a publication producing such important research for peace, sustainable  
development and human dignity.

This launch starts in London, and continues today in Kigali, Rwanda, in Jakarta,  
Indonesia, in Medellin, Colombia.

This is the first report following agreement on the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable  
Development* and the *Paris Climate Agreement*.

I see these as a single, global agenda for human rights and dignity, for peace and the planet.

Education stands at the heart of this agenda.

Education is a basic human right – it is also a force for transformation.

The power of education is our core message today...

... education fosters tolerance, tackles discrimination and hatred, deepens political participation.

... education saves lives – achieving the global education commitments by 2030 could prevent 3.5 million child deaths from 2040-2050 in sub-Saharan Africa alone.

... education is *the* path to sustainability -- we need green citizens for greener societies, and this starts on the benches of schools.

... education gives women and men skills to make the most of change – the Report shows if low income countries achieve the target of universal secondary education by 2030, per capita incomes will increase by 75%.

The new agenda ranges from early childhood to lifelong learning, from equity and access to technical and vocational education and training, from quality learning to teacher support, from school facilities to financing.

The agenda is ambitious, and this is only right.

Because challenges are steep.

263 million children are out of school today.

Children in conflict zones are a third of these, and attacks against schools are increasing.

Inequalities run deep -- children from the poorest homes are five times less likely to complete school than those from the richest.

Girls and women carry the heaviest burden.

32 million girls are out of primary school — the number of excluded adolescent girls is even higher.

Only 1 percent of the world's poorest rural women complete upper secondary education.

758 million adults are illiterate -- two thirds are women.

At the same time, education suffers chronic under-funding – to cover the US\$39 billion annual financing gap would require a six-fold aid increase.

The Report shows only 70 percent of low income countries will on current trends meet the primary school goals by 2030.

The most disadvantaged girls in sub-Saharan Africa will only make it to school in 2086 if we continue as now.

The conclusion is clear.

Business-as-usual is unacceptable.

We need to act in new ways, to put education first.

We need new support and training for teachers, to shape education in tune with people and the planet.

We need new content, for global solidarity, for new forms of global citizenship, for education for sustainable development.

We need a radical break, especially in low and middle income countries, to mobilise domestic resources, to build on education across the board, to tackle challenges urgently and holistically.

People do not live their lives in silos -- their education is not separate from their health, environment, jobs, sense of security.

This requires far greater innovation, far stronger partnerships – the Report is full of examples, and we are fortunate to have on this panel leading pioneers of change through education, for which I am grateful.

We need education to be at every table, in peace-building, in urban planning, in healthcare.

This guides all UNESCO's action to lead implementation with partners of Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Take the example of empowering girls and women.

Focusing on access is essential, but not enough.

Focusing on formal schooling is vital, but insufficient.

We need to understand the factors holding girls and young women back and leading them to drop out, from intersecting economic, socio-cultural, health and political constraints.

We must promote education in a holistic manner, throughout life, to ensure girls and young women make informed decisions about sexual and reproductive health, to support them in successful transitions to adulthood and the labour market.

For this, we must work beyond education ministries, with ministries for health, labour, technology, family, finance, with civil society and non-governmental actors.

We must act across the board, to strengthen the nexus between education, gender equality and empowerment.

This idea underpins the *Joint Programme for the Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women through Education* we launched last year with UN Women, the United Nations Population Fund and the World Bank, in Mali, Tanzania, Nepal.

We need new momentum, to include everyone, to ‘reach the unreached,’ including through mother tongue and minority languages.

We are working to harness the power of information and communication technologies, to enhance learning, to empower teachers.

We see similar new momentum in providing education in emergency situations.

I was with Mr Børge Brende, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway and the Special Envoy for Education Gordon Brown at the *World Humanitarian Summit* in Istanbul last May, and I have thrown all UNESCO’s weight behind the *Education Cannot Wait Fund*, for which I am one of the Global Champions.

The Fund seeks to raise \$3.85 billion over the next five years, to reach 13.6 million children whose education has been disrupted by conflict and other humanitarian emergencies.

I am convinced we need precisely such innovation, partnership and ambition today – this is the case we are making also with the *International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity* that will be launched this month, and for which I am one of co-conveners.

These are a few examples – we need far more, at every level.

The *2016 Global Education Monitoring Report*, mandated by the *2015 Incheon Declaration*, shows where we stand and shines light on ways forward, highlighting what works, why it works and who is missing.

Monitoring is essential to the 2030 Agenda, to raise awareness and sharpen policy, and I wish to thank all partners for their support.

Seventy-one years ago, UNESCO’s constituent conference was held here in London, presided over by Ms Ellen Wilkinson, Secretary for Education.

Our Constitution opens with words that were first read out by Ellen Wilkinson, that I never tire in repeating:

*“Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.”*

This is UNESCO's vision -- to build peace in the minds of women and men, there is no stronger foundation than education.

Thank you.