



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 the launch of the Report of the “The International
Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity”**

UNGA 2016

New York, 18 September 2016

Prime Minister Erna Solberg of Norway,

President Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika of Malawi,

Mr Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary General,

Mr Gordon Brown, *United Nations Special Envoy for Global education, Chair of the
Education Commission,*

Excellencies, Commissioners, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Education saves lives.

Education carries hope.

Education builds dignity.

Education prevents extremism.

Education brings about social inclusion and fosters social mobility.

Education brings sustainability to all development.

This was what I learned again last May in Kabul, from young Afghan women
participating in UNESCO's *Enhancement of Literacy in Afghanistan Programme*.

They never went to school, they were never given the opportunity to learn.

Through the classes, these young women acquired new hope and ambition to lead better and more dignified lives. They want learning for hygiene, they want skills for jobs, they want new choices. This is what this Report is all about. It is for these young women that we are here today as well as for the millions of girls, including adolescents.

As UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report shows, at the current pace, girls in the poorest rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa will only go to school in 2086. This is simply unacceptable. We need investment – and investment in the right policies.

One year ago, I was honoured to participate in the inaugural meeting of this Commission, announced by Prime Minister Erna Solberg at the 2015 *Oslo Summit on Education for Development*.

The Commission has held its promise, and comes out today with a hard-hitting and forward-looking Report that must be enacted to achieve all the Global Goals – I say *all*, because education is a development multiplier.

I thank Prime Minister Solberg and the Government of Norway for championing education, and Gordon Brown for his passionate leadership.

I thank all Commissioners, for sharing their time and expertise.

The International Commission is inspired by a single conviction.

We must put education first, to build a world without poverty, violence, hunger or disease – we must equip youth with skills to build greener, inclusive societies.

Wherever I travel, women and men always say education is their first priority – Governments and the world need to listen.

We know why, and the Report makes the case, as does UNESCO's new *Global Education Monitoring Report*.

The *2030 Agenda* is ambitious, and this is only right.

You are all familiar with the figures – on exclusion and inequality, on discrimination against girls, on illiteracy, on the impact of conflict.

This is why I welcome the Report's focus on creating a "*Learning Generation*."

I welcome the notion of "*progressive universalism*" – to expand quality education for all, while prioritizing the poor and disadvantaged.

I welcome the focus on transformations around performance, innovation, inclusion and financing.

I welcome the call for increased financing, from traditional and new channels.

We need a radical break to mobilise domestic resources, to build on education across the board.

Everyone must step up.

The international community -- governments -- the education sector, the private sector, civil society.

As the lead coordinator of SDG4, UNESCO will pull all its weight, working with all constituencies.

The 2030 Agenda promises to leave no one behind – this must begin on the benches of schools...

Thank you.