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联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Address by Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

on the occasion of Meeting of the Working Group on the Digital Gender

Divide

Broadband Commission

UNHQ, New York, 17 September 2016

Mr Mats Granryd, Director-General of GSMA,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Colleagues,

I wish to thank you all for attending this meeting of the *Broadband Commission Working Group on the Digital Gender Divide*.

I believe it is a strong symbol we meet at UN Women today – I am deeply grateful to Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka for the engagement of UN Women with the Broadband Commission, including the 2013 Report – *Doubling Digital Opportunities* – of the first Working Group on Broadband and Gender.

At our meeting in Dubai, I proposed the Broadband Commission renew and sharpen its focus on bridging the digital gender divide, and I wish to thank GSMA -- and specifically Mr Mats Granryd, Director-General -- for its leadership in taking up this idea.

We are living a digital revolution that is changing the face of societies.

But we know also that to be truly transformative the digital revolution must be a development revolution.

This must be a revolution for human rights and dignity – it must be a revolution for inclusion.

This is not yet the case.

The World Bank's *World Development Report 2016: Digital Dividends* makes it clear.

Digital adoption is not enough.

In the words of the Report:

To get the most of the digital revolution, countries also need to work on the analog complements.

'Analog complements' include skills, competences, applications, services and content – these must cross divides and not deepen them.

New opportunities must be available to all, to empower all, for the benefit of all.

...especially girls and women...

The trends are clear, and they are worrying.

Worldwide, there is a gender gap of 11 percent in male and female access to the Internet.

This rises to almost 29 percent in Least Developed Countries.

There are some 200 million *fewer* women than men owning a mobile phone, the most prevalent means of access to the Internet in developing countries.

To overcome these obstacles, we need greater investment in access – but this must be joined with stronger investment in quality education, in digital skills, in media literacy.

The foundations of knowledge societies are not technical – they lie with the human rights and dignity of every woman and man, they lie in empowering every girl and woman with the opportunities and the abilities to create and share knowledge.

This is the spirit of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* – specifically the Sustainable Development Goal 5 on promoting gender equality, and Target 9c on advancing universal access to information and communication technologies.

This requires action across the board – to build digital literacy skills into education systems, to overcome inequalities in access, to integrate gender perspectives into all strategies and plans, to collect sharper data, to craft targeted policies for relevant services, applications and content.

The goals of this Working Group are clear – to prepare the ground for a series of recommendations to bridge the digital gender divide.

These recommendations must be inspiring and clear -- they must be an ambitious and a realistic call to action, by all actors.

This is the importance of this meeting today, in which I wished to participate personally, with a view to submitting powerful recommendations to the Broadband Commission meeting in March.

In this spirit, I thank all Commissioners and participants once again for their commitment – I look forward to our discussions.

Thank you.