



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 soon-to-be-published Manual

“Empowering the Poor through Human Rights Litigation”

Session in Parliament

Jakarta, 25 November 2011

Honourable Dr Marzuki Alie, Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a real honour to be at the House of Representatives for this Special Session.

I wish to thank the Honourable Speaker of the House as well as the Millennium Development Goals Task Force for this initiative.

This session confirms the leading role played by Members of Parliament in taking global priorities forward at the national level.

Poverty eradication is a Millennium Development Goal – but it is also the essence of all of the Goals, which together embody a great humanist agenda for the 21st century.

I say ‘humanistic,’ because eradicating poverty is not only about development and growth.

It is an issue of human rights – it is about the dignity of every woman and man.

We have been saying it for some time and we should not tire -- people are the real wealth of nations.

In the 21st century, the ultimate renewable energy is human ingenuity – I mean by this, the capacity of every woman and man to imagine a better world and shape reality in this direction.

Poverty is an obstacle to this ingenuity.

It is a source of deprivation and marginalisation, an ally to discrimination.

The global economic crisis is affecting societies in different ways, but one point emerges clearly across the world – cutting public expenditures in social inclusion, education and health are *false* economies.

Development cannot be disconnected from dignity.

Every member of society must have the right and the ability to live to their full potential and enjoy equal opportunities to start in life.

Governments should work to empower the most vulnerable and marginalized groups of society – by opening access to job opportunities, basic health care and education and training.

Poverty cannot be boiled down to a single indicator.

Eradicating poverty must encompass a wide range of policies -- including education, gender equality, and measures for social inclusion.

These ideas are developed in our new publication, *Empowering the Poor through Human Rights Litigation: Strategies for Poverty Reduction* -- whose goal is to support policies for social inclusion by integrating human rights into poverty strategies at the national level.

As Minister Nuh mentioned, poverty eradication starts with quality education for all.

The evidence is clear: societies that make education their top priority are more resilient, prosperous, just and peaceful.

Education represents opportunity. It empowers people with the knowledge and confidence they need to shape a better future.

Studies show that an additional year of schooling can increase an individual's earnings by 10%.

They show that doubling primary education attendance rates in rural populations can substantially reduce levels of food insecurity.

I wish to take this opportunity to welcome Indonesia's strategies to reach the poor and disadvantaged groups.

These programmes include a nine-year compulsory basic education programme without expenses, scholarships for students from economically disadvantaged family backgrounds, scholarships for Open Junior Secondary School students, and the Package A, B, and C Equivalency Education programmes.

These efforts have produced significant progress towards Education for All.

UNESCO has been working with countries in the Asia and Pacific since 2005 to 'reach the unreached' through Education for All.

We support government efforts to integrate education into national economic and social strategies.

We are focussing on non-formal education as an indispensable component for poverty eradication strategies.

We are leading globally in Education for Sustainable Development, to help societies mitigate the impact of climate change and adapt to its consequences, namely through focused science education.

Our position is clear: education brings sustainability to all development and is a force for poverty eradication.

Let me turn to another priority: Gender equality.

Women represent an estimated 70 percent of the world's poor.

Globally, girls are more likely to never enter primary school than boys. Women are two-thirds of the world's 793 million illiterate people.

Empowering girls and women is the most powerful way to reach the Millennium Development Goals and to eradicate poverty.

Study after study demonstrates the positive impact of girls' education on child and maternal health, on fertility rates, on poverty reduction and on economic growth.

This is why I launched earlier this year a new *Global partnership on Girls' and Women's Education*, with the United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon and the U.S. Secretary of States, Ms. Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Mobilizing major private sector companies, this focuses on girls' secondary education and women's literacy.

Education and gender equality are major drivers for poverty eradication.

Culture is another.

UNESCO is the lead agency of the Culture and Development Thematic Window of the MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F), which finances projects in 18 countries harnessing culture as a force for development, for poverty reduction, and for social cohesion and peace.

We know well that World Heritage can be a powerful stimulus to economic growth and poverty eradication -- through tourism and tourism-related activities and the full engagement of local communities.

We are very proud that Saman dance has been added onto the List of Intangible Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding during the Intergovernmental Committee meeting in Bali.

We must do more to harness the power of culture for poverty reduction.

Let me give one example: Australia's 17 World Heritage properties together generate \$12 billion annually and sustain more than 120,000 jobs nationally.

UNESCO's International Fund for Cultural Diversity, created by the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, promotes sustainable development and poverty reduction in developing countries through projects that support a dynamic cultural sector.

Our Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity seeks to create private-public partnerships to strengthen local cultural industries.

All of this underpins UNESCO's advocacy today to integrate culture more systematically into the global development agenda.

Culture is not a Millennium Development Goal but a condition for reaching them, through more effective and relevant strategies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These are just a few examples of the work undertaken by UNESCO in poverty eradication, many of which are developed our new publication, *Empowering the Poor through Human Rights Litigation: Strategies for Poverty Reduction*.

I thank the House of Representatives and the Honourable Speaker, Dr Marzuki Alie, once again for this initiative. I wish to thank all other parliamentarians in our Asia-Pacific network for Education for All for the efforts they make to mobilize commitment.

This is parliamentary leadership where it is needed most.

This is especially timely, I know, as the House passed a new law on poverty alleviation in July 2011, whose implementation will include a new definition of "poverty" as well as regular data collection.

I take this opportunity to pledge UNESCO's full support to the Government and the House of Representatives in moving forward.

Thank you for listening.