



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Organisation
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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 Broadband Commission

Working Group on Education

Hong Kong, 16 March 2017

Mr John Galvin, Vice President of Intel,

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the *Broadband Commission Working Group on Education*.

I thank you all for joining this Working Group to share insights and experience.

Let me start by thanking Mr John Galvin, Vice President of Intel, for his co-leadership, for which I am deeply grateful.

We decided to relaunch this working group last September, guided by a single, clear idea.

This is that new technologies can be essential motors to advance the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* – specifically Sustainable Development Goal 4 ... to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning by 2030.

The stakes are clear.

The world is more connected than ever ... but not entirely ... and not for everyone.

Today, 3.9 billion people -- more than half of the world's population -- do not have access to Internet.

This is unacceptable, because it exacerbates existing divides and creates new ones ... within societies, with marginalised populations, with girls and women.

The digital revolution must be a development revolution for all.

This means widening access to ICTs and broadband – it means also ensuring every girl and boy, every woman and man, has the *skills* to make the most of new technologies.

Our goal is to transform potential into skills.

It is to transform ideas into concrete projects.

It is to build inclusive knowledge societies, where all participate, all voices are heard.

People speak of a new generation of ‘digital natives’ emerging.

I believe we need a new generation of ‘digital citizens,’ with the right skills to engage in society, in the economy, in public and private affairs.

For this, education is vital – for this, we need sharper action, greater investments, smarter campaigns.

This means reaching the ‘unreached’, especially girls and women -- this means training teachers – it means producing relevant curricula and content, reflecting cultural and linguistic diversity, adapted to contexts and needs.

I believe our starting point is clear -- education is a human right that is essential for dignity and empowerment and a transformational force for societies and economies.

There is often the assumption ‘digital natives’ naturally master the digital skills.

This is not true.

This is not so even in developed countries – according to the European Union, some 45 percent of the European Union population can be considered insufficiently

equipped with the basic level of digital skills to be fully functional in today's information society.

Our next steps are clear.

They are, first, to identify which digital skills and competencies are relevant for societies and economies, both today and tomorrow.

This is the mapping part of the Working Group's work – to review emerging trends, to highlight skills for digital citizenship, for digital literacy.

Next, we must clarify how public policies can best advance this agenda -- through new education strategies and curricula, through new approaches across the education sector, through new partnerships, to define and develop the skills needed for the century ahead.

Partnerships, indeed, are essential to this exercise – between Governments, international organisations, the private sector, civil society and educators.

In this spirit, I believe the Compendium Document we are preparing will open new doors not just for education but for societies as a whole.

Thank you again for your support.