

International Symposium on  
**“Education, inclusion and solidarity”**  
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Message from Kishore Singh  
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Today, one of the biggest challenges facing the Governments is how to overcome growing inequalities and disparities in education, and to put an end to educational deprivation. The right to education is a fundamental human right. As an internationally recognized right, it does not admit of discrimination or exclusion. The right to education is matter of entitlement to education in terms of universal access. This is an essential prerequisite for the exercise of the right to education. At the same time, inextricably linked with entitlement, the right to education is a matter of empowerment by imparting knowledge, values and skills, with a holistic approach to quality education. All those who remain deprived of education must be given opportunities of enjoying their right to education, both as entitlement and as empowerment.

The political commitments made by the international community to education goal in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Summit in September 2015, are clear: “By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.” The focus on equity-based approach is commendable.

The Incheon Declaration adopted at the World Education Forum (May 2015) elaborates the education goal in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda. It embodies political commitments by the Ministers of Education from all over the world and their determination to effectively implement the education agenda. The concept of education as a public good enshrined in the Declaration is laudable. So is the strong focus on the right to education as a driver for human development.

We must also recall the responsibility undertaken by Governments under the United Nations General Assembly resolution, “the Future We Want” (adopted in 2012) which underlines the importance of the “right to quality education” and expresses resolve of the international community to work for a “world that is just, equitable and inclusive.”

Education, of which both the individual and the society are beneficiaries, is an essential public function of governments; it is also a social responsibly and social interest in education must be fully recognized. Communities, parents, teachers and all those valuing education as a public good and a social cause must be encouraged by an ‘enabling environment’ to complement efforts of government and contribute to development of education.

The theme being addressed at the International Symposium: “Education, inclusion and solidarity” is opportune in the context of on-going discussion with a view to giving shape to the Incheon Declaration and I would like to compliment the organizers for taking up this cause. The theme of the Symposium is also significant in view of the need for bringing about equality of opportunity in education which is the fundamental principle, common to various international human rights treaties.

We must always bear in mind that full development of human personality is essential objective of education, laid down in international human rights conventions. Education can create a better world by enabling children and adults to develop attitudes and behavior patterns so that they are enthused with the spirit of mutual respect and solidarity and become respectful of one another's ways and culture.

Universally recognized human values and ideals must inspire education systems, making them a unifying force. Education must foster common human values so much needed today to give human face to globalization. Preserving education as a public good as well as its humanistic mission is of paramount importance today, in face of pursuit of materialistic values to the detriment of humanistic mission of education and common well-being. The noble cause of education must be fostered by national and international solidarity for building a better world tomorrow.

I hope that the International Symposium will contribute to building an inclusive education system, which is a main thrust of the future development agenda. I also hope that it will be inspired by fundamental principles of social justice and equity which as the key pillars of the United Nations system are invaluable in guiding our action.

I wish the International Symposium all success.