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Organización
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Организация
Объединенных Наций по
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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 Gender Report of the
*Broadband Commission for Digital Development***

UNGA 2015

UNHQ, New York, 24 September 2015

Baroness Beeban Kidron,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, and Ms Helen Clark, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, for their leading contribution to the *Broadband Commission for Sustainable Digital Development*.

Let me say a word about the Commission.

The Broadband Commission is co-chaired by His Excellency Mr Paul Kagame and Mr Carlos Slim Helú, with the support of Mr Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General of the *International Telecommunication Union*, and myself.

Launched in response to the call by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to step up efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals, the Commission brings together leaders in Government, the United Nations system, the private sector, guided by the same conviction...the conviction we must harness every accelerator to eradicate poverty, strengthen inclusion, advance sustainable development.

This goes beyond mere advocacy for broadband networks and services.

This is about opening new paths to create and share knowledge, to enhance freedom of expression, to widen learning opportunities.

This vision guides the work of the Commission – including this new report on *Cyber Violence against Women and Girls: A Worldwide Wake-Up Call*.

Thomas Friedman, author of *The World Is Flat*, wrote:

“What can be done, will be done.”

Then he asked the key question:

“Will it be done by you, or to you?”

These are the stakes of cyber-violence.

Technology alone is not enough to empower -- it is what people do with technology that empowers... or not.

This is why human rights and dignity must be the principles guiding all action.

This is why we must empower women and men, to ensure change is done by them ...

...especially women...

We know there is a digital divide in access to the Internet.

With this Report, we know more about the violence girls and women face once they are online...through trolling, hate speech, hacking, harassment, spamming, malicious sharing...

This violence is pernicious, because it plays on core features of the Internet – the ubiquity of devices, the mobility and quasi-permanence of online data, the anonymity of abusers.

This creates a climate where abuse goes unreported, violence is not halted...

This is part of the wider violence facing girls and women in the real world, one of the most pervasive violations of human rights today, occurring in all countries, across all socio-economic groups.

This is an affront to individual dignity, a violation of human rights, and a barrier to development.

Cyber violence against girls and women is complex -- our action must be equally multi-dimensional.

The bottom line is cyber violence is cyber-crime and must be tackled as such.

The Report gives strong examples of action across the world, led by Governments, civil society, the private sector.

We need precisely this wide angle of action, because this is about changing attitudes, this is, fundamentally, about culture change.

Two years ago, the Secretary-General's *UNiTE to End Violence against Women* campaign was launched to highlight the need to end violence against women and girls, including online, and the empowerment potential of new technologies.

All efforts must start with ensuring quality education for girls and boys, with a focus on media and information literacy, especially for girls and women – to make the Internet a power for human rights and peace.

This is the spirit of UNESCO's new publication -- *Mobile Phones and Literacy, Empowerment in Women's Hands* – and all our work to empower girls and men through mobile learning.

We need new efforts to strengthen national laws and regulations to craft stronger safeguards and terms of reference with industry.

Overall, we must raise the profile of women in the tech sector, to nurture new role models.

Most of all, we need to stand up against violence, to support girls and women facing abuse.

UNESCO is working across the board, through support to research on violence against girls and women, through our *Global Alliance on Media and Gender in Media*, through work to advance media and information literacy for girls and women, through action to ensure access to quality education for girls across the world.

In all this, we must never lose sight of the big picture.

Stopping violence is about human rights and justice – it is about transforming societies, for sustainable development, for lasting peace.

Thank you.