

**U N I T E D N A T I O N S N A T I O N S U N I E S**

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD**

**11 October 2013**

Empowering girls, ensuring their human rights and addressing the discrimination and violence they face are essential to progress for the whole human family. One of the best ways to achieve all of these goals is to provide girls with the education they deserve.

Yet too many girls in too many countries are held back simply because of their gender. Those whose mother was also deprived of an education, who live in a poor community, or who have a disability face an even steeper climb. Among girls who do make it to school, many face discrimination and violence.

I launched the Global Education First Initiative to accelerate progress in getting every child into school, especially girls. We are aiming to teach more than reading and counting; we are striving to raise global citizens who can rise to the complex challenges of the 21st century.

To achieve meaningful results, we need fresh solutions to girls’ education challenges and we must heed the voices of young people.

I have heard from girls around the world participating in the consultations for the new Girl Declaration. I resolve to ensure that Global Education First mobilizes all partners to respond to their powerful call for empowerment.

More broadly, our campaign to reach the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and shape a vision beyond that date must address the concerns and potential of the world’s girls.

On this International Day of the Girl Child, let us work together to invest in education so that girls can advance in their personal development and contribute to our common future.