



February 17, 2010

To: Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO

From: Cynthia B. Lloyd, Population Council<sup>1</sup>

Ruth Levine, Vice President, Center for Global Development, Washington D.C.<sup>2</sup>

Miriam Temin, Center for Global Development<sup>3</sup>

**RE: Making 2010 a watershed year for adolescent girls' education**

**The Opportunity:** In your acceptance speech on October 23, you boldly suggested that UNESCO launch an international campaign to increase budget allocations for secondary education for girls in all regions. We applaud this initiative because it recognizes that education investments in adolescent girls can fundamentally transform societies, with attendant improvements in health, civic participation, productivity, environmental sustainability, and poverty reduction.

Major steps toward mobilizing more attention and resources for girls' secondary education are possible at two upcoming events: the Ninth Education For All (EFA) High-Level Group meeting in Addis Ababa and the September MDG Review Summit. These events offer a chance to demonstrate your leadership in venues where you will have a unique opportunity as part of the EFA Convening Group to center policymakers' attention on the potential of investing in adolescent girls' education.

**The Action:** Strategic and targeted investments in the education of girls will expedite the achievement of all six EFA goals, as well as of all the MDGs (Goals 2 and 3 directly and all others indirectly). We therefore urge you to call forcefully for global and national action, with a focus on marginalized and vulnerable populations, to increase the commitment, funding, and evidence to support adolescent girls' chances of attending and completing school and converting their education into long-term economic betterment for themselves and their families.

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<sup>1</sup> Lloyd is author of *New Lessons, The Power of Educating Adolescent Girls* and coauthor of *Girls Count: A Global Investment and Action Agenda*.

<sup>2</sup> Levine is coauthor of *Girls Count: A Global Investment and Action Agenda* and *Start with a Girl: A New Agenda for Global Health*.

<sup>3</sup> Temin is coauthor of *Start with a Girl: A New Agenda for Global Health*.

We respectfully offer recommendations for follow-up actions to support accelerated progress for girls over the next five years (through 2015):

- Commence your leadership for adolescent girls at the Ninth EFA High-Level Group meeting by centering your welcoming address and opening remarks on the immediate and long-term benefits of adolescent girls' education and the challenges that remain, as they relate to the two themes of the recently released EFA report: marginalization and the financial crisis. Should you so wish, we stand ready to support you in drafting.
- Launch a major campaign with the EFA Convening Group at the September MDG Review Summit, involving government, UN agencies, NGOs, and independent experts, to increase donor and national budget allocations for adolescent girls' education.
- Complement calls for increased financing with your commitment of technical and financial resources to develop case studies on successful investments in adolescent girls' education, emphasizing where countries have expanded and sustained activities as part of long-term education reforms.
- Make adolescent girls a major focus of the next EFA Global Monitoring report on the theme of skills by emphasizing the expanded benefits of educating girls, especially on their employability, income, and health, and on the education, employability, and health of the next generation. Include in that report estimates of the level and type of donor financing and technical support for expanding access to high-quality education for girls.