



—Global Network For Rights And Development—
الشبكة الدولية لحقوق والتنمية



Institut International pour la Paix la Justice et les Droits de l'Homme
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Firstly, the Global Network for Rights and Development would like to thank the OHCHR for organizing this discussion on the rights of women and girls to access education.

It's scarcely believable that access to education for all is still an issue requiring debate. But there can be no stronger symbol of the challenges we face on this issue than the abduction in April of more than 270 young Nigerian girls from their school dormitory in the middle of the night by Boko Haram militants.

For let us be under no illusion, the militants' aim was not only to seize these unfortunate girls, but also to send an uncompromising message: to intimidate a whole nation into blocking access to education for its young people, and particularly for girls and women.

The case of these young girls is an extreme one. But all over the world, girls and young women see their life chances limited by being excluded from learning. We must stand firm and defend the right of girls and women to be educated.

Girls make up the majority of the 60 million out of school children globally, limiting their future choices and exposing them to discrimination and even gender violence. Educated girls and women make life saving decisions: females with post-primary education are 5 times more likely than illiterate women to be aware of HIV/AIDS prevention, for example.

The education of young girls and women is not only a human rights issue for those involved. It is also a question of development and one that concerns the whole of society: women and girls yes, but men and boys too.

Societies that have greater gender equality and access to decent education for all its citizens are wealthier, happier and healthier than those that discriminate and limit access to knowledge.

There are too many challenges in the world to cast aside the skills and talents of people based on their gender. We need doctors, teachers, engineers and scientists, female and male. States that harness the skills of all their people will be most successful in the 21st century.

Article 26 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has a right to education. The divergence between aspiration and practice is too wide in too many parts of the world.

Let us hope that women and girls of future generations will be allowed access to education wherever they live, that they can fulfill their potential and dreams and contribute to building stronger, fairer and more just societies.

Thank you.
