



**Draft statement by H.E. Ambassador Inga Rhonda King
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VI BAKU INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN FORUM

*Shaping a New World and a New Humanity:
Creativity and Human Development*

**Baku, Azerbaijan
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**1st Plenary Session:
Education and Science in the Context of Human Capital Development**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be with you today.

I thank the Government of Azerbaijan for hosting this important forum. We are gathering as the world continues to be affected by serious humanitarian crises resulting from man-made conflict or natural disasters. Climate change, population growth, global health threats, weak political institutions and economic shocks increasingly affect countries and communities across the world. As we speak, an estimated 134 million people need humanitarian assistance and protection – this is more than three times the number of people in need just over ten years ago.

The inherent dignity and worth of the human person, equality between women and men and the economic and social development of all peoples are at the core of the United Nations Charter. As the Secretary-General stressed in its Agenda for Development, to protect and

alleviate human suffering, to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human person are “the most important humanitarian principles”. This vision is also embodied in the people-centred 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Turning to the theme of this session, ‘*Shaping a New World and a New Humanity: Creativity and Human Development*’, I would like to recall that through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations has rooted human development at the centre of the international sustainable development agenda.

The 2030 Agenda is an elaborate plan of action for people, planet and prosperity.

It is the broadest framework for advancing sustainable development. It includes 17 universal, inclusive and transformational Sustainable Development Goals to change our world.

As the goals are interconnected and interlinked, they challenge all of us to embrace integrated thinking, to go beyond specific areas of expertise or advocacy, and to find solutions that connect sectors, stakeholders and resources.

To leave no one behind, it is important that we achieve each Goal by 2030.

Distinguished Guests,

Education is not only a basic human right but also the foundation on which to propel all of development.

The 2030 Agenda reflects the vision of the importance of quality education.

Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education is explicitly formulated as a stand-alone goal – Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Education is both a goal and a means for attaining all the other Sustainable Development Goals. Numerous education-related targets and indicators are also contained within other Goals. It is not only an integral part of sustainable development, but also a key enabler for it.

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals requires that people everywhere get the knowledge and skills they need to be empowered to be agents for sustainable development.

Yet, we are all keenly aware that 260 million children are not going to primary school. And on current trends, by 2030, more than 800 million young people – half the world’s children – will not be on track to have even the most basic skills needed for the workforce. Many of those are boys and girls who are unable to go to school because, due to conflict, their schools might have been destroyed or occupied by armed groups or because, in such circumstances, walking to school is a risk no parents could afford their children to take.

We must encourage governments to strengthen the enabling environment and institutional architecture that will enable human development initiatives to bring benefits and enable us to fulfil our collective responsibility to ensure quality education for all.

Education, training and skills development, which are at the core of human resource development, need to be adapted to current and anticipated changes in the world of work.

Success will be measured in how well we live up to the commitment to leave no one behind, starting from the furthest behind. We need to ensure that education and skills development is provided to the most marginalized, vulnerable and excluded communities and individuals, including people displaced by wars and natural disasters.

The notion of quality education may be context specific. But everywhere, quality education should also be measured by whether it feeds and supports creativity. We need the best ideas of our children and students to improve the lives of people and shape a better world. We need to give more thought to how education can support creativity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

New avenues to advance human development are offered by the creativity and innovation that go into new technologies, which serve as drivers of economic growth and are increasingly considered central to reducing poverty.

When used strategically, new and frontier technologies can overcome important physical, infrastructural and cultural barriers to the way people communicate, access services, and leverage resources.

They can thus provide new ways to address long-standing development challenges and facilitate investment in human development.

The deployment of frontier technologies to enable marginalized groups to access education, healthcare and markets can change the parameters of social exclusion.

To realize this, we must also build human capacities to understand how science, technology and creativity can interface with human development.

New and frontier technologies offer problem-solvers a new dimension, allowing them to find direct, action-oriented solutions and connect the new frontier to everyday problems.

Successful policies in this area are those that lead to a sustained stream of creativity, innovations and advances.

The 2030 Agenda called on businesses to “apply their creativity and innovation to solving sustainable development challenges”. We need to mobilize our best minds and most daring ideas to mobilize technology for the global good.

Excellencies,

The year 2019 will be a significant year for advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council and the High Level Political Forum under its auspices will focus on empowerment, inclusiveness and equality.

The year-long cycle of the Economic and Social Council – or ‘ECOSOC’ – includes several different forums and segments that will advance this focus from different perspectives and engage stakeholders.

The high-level political forum – or ‘HLPF’ – is the apex platform for following up and reviewing progress, with a view to advance and accelerate implementation.

In 2019, the HLPF will meet in July under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and at the Summit level in September under the auspices of the General Assembly.

In July, 51 countries will conduct Voluntary National Reviews at the HLPF, presenting their national reviews of progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

I would like to highlight that Azerbaijan will present a Voluntary National Review in 2019. This will be the second time for Azerbaijan, after having conducted a Voluntary National Review previously in 2017.

I wish to thank and commend the Government of Azerbaijan for its efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda at the national level and for its continued participation and engagement at the high-level political forum at the global level.

In addition to reviewing its theme relating to empowerment, inclusiveness and equality, the high-level political forum in July will also review implementation of six individual Sustainable Development Goals including quality education (SDG4) and peaceful societies (SDG16).

In September 2019, the summit-level HLPF will review overall progress on the 2030 Agenda and all 17 SDGs. It will identify progress and persisting and emerging challenges, provide political guidance on implementation, and mobilize further action to accelerate implementation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the pursuit of sustainable development, we must refocus on the primordial importance of equipping people, institutions and countries through human development.

To create a more sustainable world and to pursue the Sustainable Development Goals, individuals require the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to innovate and to contribute to sustainable development.

We all bear a common responsibility to work together towards a more inclusive, equitable and empowered society.

I look forward to the outcomes of your reflections during this Forum.

I am eager to hear about your ideas to unlock human potential.

Thank you.