

31 March 2010

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Dear Fellow Education Leaders,

On the seventeenth day of November 2004, UNESCO and Microsoft entered a global Cooperation Agreement, through which both parties formally forged a partnership to collaborate on joint initiatives. The Education Leaders Forum (ELF) is an initiative underpinned by the vision and objectives laid down in the Memorandum of Understanding signed on the aforementioned date. This year, the ELF will mark a step forward in reinforcing this strategic partnership and the furtherance of enhancing the quality of higher education. We hold a shared belief that access to information and communication technologies will enable countries to build equitable, inclusive and participatory knowledge societies.

UNESCO's global mission is to extend the benefits of Education for All, at all levels of education including Post-Secondary Education. With a theme of *"Engaging Student Creativity and Innovation: Key to Global Success"* and exploring the potential of Information and Communication Technologies and the power of Students Imagination and Capabilities to benefit local economies and societies, I believe this is a vital discussion for all Education Leaders in furthering the agenda of Education for All.

The Education Leaders Forum will align with the Imagine Cup World Finals, bringing together over 500 of the most talented students globally from the 250,000 who participated worldwide to demonstrate how they have used their technology skills to address challenges in supporting the Millennium Development Goals.

I encourage you to consider attending this event, to share your thinking with other Education Leaders, and join dialogue and collaboration to help improve the quality of education for all students in your country.

Yours sincerely,

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Tarek Shawki

Director of UNESCO-Microsoft Partnership