The rights of girls and women are guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, by the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Discrimination in Education and the Beijing Platform for Action.

Since the adoption of the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action to ensure that by 2015, all children, particularly girls, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality, much progress has been made in terms of increasing access to primary education, and reducing gender gaps in primary school enrolments in many countries.

However, major challenges remain: nearly 61 million children of primary school age and 71 million young people of lower secondary school age are not in school, more than half of whom are girls. Poor quality of education, lack of gender-aware teachers, extreme poverty, discriminatory gendered norms and practices, structural inequality and violence against girls continue to jeopardize the achievement of the education and gender goals of the Education for All and Millennium Development Goals.

In the light of the current discussions on debating the education goals for the post-2015 development agenda, UNGEI reaffirms that:

**Gender equality remains at the centre of transformative quality education.** Attention to the physical, social and academic aspects of multiple learning environments is necessary to enhance opportunities, especially for adolescent girls, and to support them to transition beyond basic education and ensure increased learning. Recognition of teachers as professionals, as leaders, supported by gender-sensitive curricula and teacher training as well as by gender-responsive school management is key to ensuring gender equality within education.

Powerless and poor girls make up the most disadvantaged group in education. Because poverty is both structural and multidimensional, and has differential impacts on girls and women, interventions to accelerate girls’ education must go beyond education. **Education policies, strategies, plans and budgets must all be gender-responsive to address both demand and supply constraints that limit girls’ participation in education.**
Gender-based violence remains an obstacle to the full achievement of girls’ rights to education. **Effective strategies, including the enforcement of legislation and policies, should be put in place to ensure safe and secure learning environments for girls.** Protective and innovative learning opportunities must also be created for children and young women affected by HIV and AIDS and for those in conflict affected and fragile states and emergencies.

Achieving equity in education will entail putting in place a rights-based empowerment framework to transform existing power hierarchies in learning spaces, communities and policy structures to ensure that the voices of the poor and vulnerable girls are heard and their right to quality education is realized, with all girls in school and learning through secondary education.

As an input into the debate, UNGEI calls for ensuring that the recommendations for education goals/targets in the post-2015 development agenda are informed by the following:

- The commitment to gender equality in education is central to the education goal(s) in the post-2015 development agenda;
- Proposed goals and targets include equal access of both boys and girls to quality education and chances for completion of education at each level of the education system with appropriate learning outcomes.
- All girls and boys are empowered through inclusive and relevant education to realize their full potential and contribute to transforming their societies, so that gender equality becomes a reality. A strong and explicit focus on gender equality is evident in the new global framework, with priority given to reaching the poorest women and girls through mainstreaming gender in targets and indicators across the board, as well as a standalone goal for gender equality.