

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

--

**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL
11 October 2021**

The strength, health and empowerment of the world's girls is a matter for every single day of the year. The International Day of the Girl is an opportunity to recommit to this global imperative.

Today's girls are part of a digital generation. It is our responsibility to join with them in all their diversity, amplify their power and solutions as digital change-makers, and address the obstacles they face in the digital space.

The path to girls' digital equality is steep. A massive gap in internet use spanning geographies and generations has grown from 11 per cent in 2013 to 17 per cent six years later. In more than two thirds of all countries, girls make up only 15 percent of graduates in STEM subjects – science, technology, engineering and math.

Girls have equal ability and immense potential in these fields, and when we empower them, everyone benefits. I saw this long before I began my political career, when I was a teacher in Lisbon and witnessed the power of education to uplift individuals and communities. That experience has guided my vision for gender equality in education ever since.

Investments in closing the digital gender divide yield huge dividends for all. The United Nations is committed to working with girls so that this generation, whoever they are and whatever their circumstances, can fulfil their potential. The Generation Equality Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation is our new platform, where governments, civil society, the private sector and young leaders are coming together around collective initiatives and investments to support girls' digital access, skills and creativity.

Together, let us ensure that girls play their full part in the digital generation to design and secure our common future.