



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Message from Mr Koïchiro Matsuura

Director-General of UNESCO

**on the occasion of the designation of Ms Zheng Jie
as the third official UNESCO Promoter of Gender Equality**

Beijing, 17 September 2007

I am very happy to announce today the designation of Ms Zheng Jie as UNESCO Promoter of Gender Equality for the UNESCO-Sony Ericsson WTA Tour Partnership for Gender Equality. Ms Jie joins two great athletes, Ms Venus Williams and Ms Tatiana Golovin, as the third UNESCO Promoter of Gender Equality.

Ms Jie is a truly remarkable young player. She has risen to the top of the national and international ranks through hard work, dedication, and, I might add, her formidable double-handed back swing. I am especially pleased that UNESCO now counts a Promoter of Gender Equality from Asia, and I am convinced that Zheng Jie will be an outstanding leader and role model for young girls in China, the region, and indeed around the world.

The world needs strong female role models like Zheng Jie who can help lead the struggle for gender equality in sports and in other walks of life. The full participation of women in social, cultural and economic development at all levels is a moral imperative, a matter of social justice, and a political exigency of the highest order. In the 2005 World Summit outcome document, adopted by the United Nations, world leaders recognized that, without the achievement of gender equality, the world could not hope to achieve peace and sustainable development, let alone fulfil internationally agreed development objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.

This is why UNESCO wholeheartedly promotes this global partnership with the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour. As you may know, the tour partnership is aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in every region of the world and across all of UNESCO's domains of action – education, science, culture and

communication. The Partnership will help raise funds to implement concrete programmes aimed at enhancing women's capacity to fully partake in all forms of societal development. It is also committed to providing fellowships and scholarships to young women, encouraging them to take up sports-related careers such as sports journalism, medicine, physical education, teaching, training, management and business administration so that they can improve their own lives, as well as those of their families and the communities and countries in which they live.

The Partnership is fortunate that world renowned tennis players like Venus Williams, Tatiana Golovin, and now Zheng Jie, are part of the Promoters of Gender Equality programme. To be sure, they bring far more than just their high profile and visibility to our work. They will help to draw attention to the need for greater engagement in women's empowerment, both within the sports community and beyond. But most importantly, they serve as role models for young women and girls everywhere, sending out a singularly important message: gender equality is not an impossible dream, but a goal that can and indeed must be realized in order for us to achieve peace and sustainable development. Our future depends on gender equality, and I hope that gender equality is our future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Matsuura', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Koïchiro Matsuura