On behalf of the World Bank, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 15th UNESCO-APEID Conference on Inspiring Education.

Albert Einstein once said “Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand.”

Role of Creativity

- We live in a knowledge society. Whoever knows more, has more. Whoever knows it first, wins.
- So what role does creativity play? – Spark that initiates transformation in society.
  - Whoever thought of producing sliced bread changed the way we eat.
  - Whoever thought of the first wheel changed the way we move.
  - Whoever thought of the first handheld music player changed the way we entertain ourselves.
  - And we all know what the people who brought us computers and touch technology did to our lives!
- Creativity is the catalyst that revolutionizes society.
- But does society allow and encourage creativity? The very society that benefits from creativity is often guilty of resisting change.

Creativity in Education

- Mark Twain famously said “I’ve never let my school interfere with my education.”
  - So, does the formal education system get in the way of real learning?
  - In the name of curriculum, do teachers silence ‘unrelated’ questions from students?
  - In the name of decorum, do we constantly force our children to ‘toe the line’?
  - Are we just imparting knowledge, or are we teaching children the skills to find and create their own knowledge?
  - What really are the consequences of global standardization of education?
  - Have schools just become factories that churn out products of a certain minimum quality?
  - Was that our aim? And ask yourselves, is that enough?

Creativity and Jobs

- Any talk of education logically leads to talk of employment, and unemployment.
  - Schools are attempting to produce graduates who would be capable of getting and keeping jobs.
  - Not enough formal jobs for graduates. So graduates must look for other opportunities. They have to create jobs.
  - So, what about creativity in the job world? Do all jobs that could exist, already exist? “Certainly NOT.”
10 years ago, which of you had heard of job titles such as “Blogger”, “Community Manager”, “Green Funeral Director”, “Patient Advocate”, “Senior Move Manager”, “Social Media Strategist”, “User Experience Analyst” or “Video Journalist”?

Schools were as unaware as were were about the requirements of these new jobs.

We have the responsibility of ensuring that children are ready for jobs that aren’t even clearly defined or even jobs that don’t exist yet.

Conclude:

- 15th UNESCO-APEID Conference on Inspiring Educaiton, hosted jointly by UNESCO, the Ministry of Education and Culture and the World Bank comes at a crucial time
- Variety of presenters from many walks of life. Rich content and diversity.
- Hope that it will prove to be a forum for genuine exchange of ideas, dialogues, to address the obvious gaps I mentioned earlier.
- Make education relevant.
- Thank you for being here.