

RANIA AL ABDULLAH

May 27, 2010

Dear Friends,

Hello and welcome to Karlstad, Sweden, for the World Summit on Media for Children and Youth. I'm sorry I could not be with you, the very brightest of the media world, for what I'm sure will be a fun and fruitful event.

We all know what it's like to be a child. Curious and questioning, we absorb information about our world faster than at any other time in our lives. Whatever we're exposed to stays with us, informs us, guides us; it becomes a part of who we are, whether good or bad.

That's why media for children has to be treated with care and respect; that's why most of you have entered the industry – so we can expose our children to the *best* the world has to offer. Because the *best* inspires hope, optimism, and altruism.

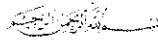
But we're in the middle of a media revolution. Print, radio, and television have been joined by online media. The fundamental change is that now the consumer is also the creator.

This has sparked debate about how iconic broadcasters and broadsheets can survive, while remaining true to their public service ideals. It's prompted ethical, social, and educational questions about the impact of a more ubiquitous media on our youth.

You're here to try and provide some answers, to show how online media *doesn't* have to endanger old media or our children's childhoods; in fact, it can enrich them. With your creativity, you can build new bridges between producers and customers. With your imagination, you can conjure up new programs that entertain and enlighten us.

But you're also here because online media is revolutionary in more than one way.

Today, the Internet has opened up channels for cross-cultural dialogue, exposing us to the richness of human diversity and talent. It is breaking down barriers, and lifting up lives. With over 1,000 of you from over 70 countries here today, sharing ideas across conference tables and cultural borders, you embody this new media reality.



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But this new reality also serves to educate. As a tool for schools, new media is expanding the educational experience *for* children as well as *to* children: specifically, 72 million children out of school because of poverty and conflict.

With technology and new media, we can reach out and provide them with a basic education. Online media could help give them the knowledge to work their way into a better life and the tools to live a life of dignity.

In short, your work here at this Summit is a crucial part of this sweeping change. As you innovate and integrate new ideas for the media industry, let's make sure you, the very brightest, give our children the very best.

Warm wishes,

Rania Al Abdullah

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