



DANA REIZNIECE-OZOLA

**Deputy Chair of FIDE Management Board,
FIDE Managing Director**

Dear Mr. President, Mr. Lputian, honorable guests,

I have a great pleasure to welcome all of you to this first online international conference dedicated to chess in education that is organized by the FIDE Educational Commission in strong Cooperation with the Armenian Chess Scientific Research Institute.

International sports organizations, and FIDE in this case, are not working only for professional sports, but more for its benefits for society, for education and opportunity to enhance careers, develop talents and give ground for a better future. And that is the reason for chess in education to be a significant topic for us. It was quite a successful year. The Education Commission has carried out various important activities, such as the development of Certification of Lecturers (CEL) and Preparation of Teachers (PoT) training programs to be able to support the countries that try to develop chess in education. We have also started working on preschool and university chess activities and programs development. The other major project of the year was the global survey carried out jointly with The European Chess Union. The survey found out the numbers: - How many kids are involved in chess-related activities? (Survey shows that more than 25 million). - How many teachers and what qualification systems are there? But the purpose is to reveal the whole picture on how chess is used to educate the kids, what are the best practices, what are the support systems in place, etc.... so we can facilitate the dissemination of the best examples and moreover ensure the role of FIDE. And we clearly reconfirm the idea that FIDE should act as a facilitator to enhance the awareness about the importance of chess in education and this conference is one of those facilitation activities. To promote or facilitate chess in education we need to be comprehensive. So, we mean not only the examples of the countries (e.g. Armenia) where chess has been introduced as a school subject or the transversal opportunities of chess to be used for successful acquiring in other subjects. By being comprehensive we emphasize all the

ages of education, not only the kids but also the youth and I believe in the nearest future we should expand to the life-long learning, also including the grownups. This resembled today's conference agenda, where you can find all the major education levels covered and we are more than happy to see the best practices on each of those. I genuinely believe chess is a promising aspect of education. Recently I came across the World Economic Forum Future Jobs report, which states the most vital skills youth need to acquire to be competitive in the future: the competencies of problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence were among them. And honestly, I cannot imagine any better subject or tool to develop these skills in kids rather than using chess. I also believe that chess gives a necessary answer to international organizations, to governments that are now looking for new ways of delivering education. The dynamic changes in the world force the education systems to comply with new needs and challenges. There are three global trends or perspectives to change the education systems: 1. the challenge of usage of digital tools and all its capacities, 2. the risk of diminution of the schools as physical institutions and their importance, 3. as experts mentioned, the perspective of gamification. And again, chess has the potential to succeed in all three aspects: we have more than enough digital tools; we are easily accessible and still, chess is a game. So, there is an enormous potential, and you are the best experts to reconfirm it. I hope these two days will be very fulfilling for you. Wish you have innovative ideas to take with you and enjoy sharing your own experiences. I exhort you to keep in mind that we prepare persons for the future, and we prepare them to shape that future. So, let us do it through chess!