



## **Govt according high priority to promotion of education: President**



ISLAMABAD, Nov 9 (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari said the government was according high priority to promotion of education in the country especially in militancy hit areas as a long term tool to fight militant mindset. The President was talking to Gordon Brown, Special Envoy of United Nations Secretary General on Global Education and former prime minister United Kingdom here on Friday. The President reiterated commitment of the government to meet the goal of Global Initiative on Education and sought enhanced

support and cooperation of UN and international community in education sector and achieving Accelerated Millennium Development Goals (AMDGs).

Those who were present during the meeting included among others Timo Pakkala, UNRC, Dan Rohrmann, representative for UNICEF, Pakistan, Dr. Kozue Kay Nagata, representative UNESCO and Jean Luc Sibiot, Country Representative, WFP.

From Pakistan side, the meeting was attended among others by Senator Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, Minister for Finance, Chairperson Benazir Income Support Program Farzana Raja, Minister for Education & Training Sheikh Waqas Akram, MOS for Foreign Affairs Nawabzada Malik Amad Khan, Secretary General to the President M. Salman Faruqui and Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Social Sector Begum Shahnaz Wazir Ali and Spokesperson to the President Senator Farhatullah Babar.

Spokesperson to the President Senator Farhatullah Babar said that matters related to promotion of education in Pakistan, UN global initiative to promote education, BISP's Waseela-e-Taleem initiative, UK's assistance to the country in the education sector and the ways and means to promote education sector came under discussion during the meeting. The Spokesperson said the President while highlighting importance of education said that the need for education was never felt as great as it was being felt today as the education holds the key to counter extremism and militancy besides ensuring socio-economic uplift of the people by bringing them out from the vicious circle of poverty.

"Militant mindset was our biggest collective enemy," the President said.

The President said that the control and management of education sector has been devolved to the provinces, adding that the National Education Policy 2009, evolved in consultation with all the provinces aimed at achieving Education for All and Universal Primary Education. The President during the meeting said that Pakistan would greatly welcome UN and donors' technical and financial support in Technical and Vocational Education, use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), and skill-based training of youth besides

improving the curricula to enrich skills and competencies.

Gordon Brown briefed the President about the objectives of UN initiative "Education First" that aims at helping the member countries in promoting education and said that his mission in Pakistan was aimed at ensuring greater enrollment, provision of quality education, training of the teachers and promotion of education technology in Pakistan.

The President appreciated the UN initiative and Gordon Brown's role in promoting education and said that his visit would help in promoting education in Pakistan besides further cementing cooperation of the country with the international community in the education sector.

Meanwhile, the President signed one-million signatures' petition presented by Gordon Brown. The petition is carrying one million signatures of the people across the world to show solidarity with Ms. Malala Yousafzai.

The meeting with Gordon Brown was followed by a briefing by the management of BISP on Waseela-e-Taleem initiative of BISP which was also attended among others by Dr. Ishrat Hussain, Shaukat Tareen and Ijaz Nabi.

The Spokesperson said during the briefing former Finance Minister Shoukat Tareen praised BISP saying that its credibility and effectiveness has been verified by the World Bank and International donors. He said it was an effective mechanism to provide targeted subsidies to the poorest of the poor.

Former Governor State Bank of Pakistan Dr. Ishrat Hussain remarked that BISP was a great opportunity to reach out to the poorest in a state that was dominated by elitist considerations.

Ijaz Nabi, Professor of Economic in LUMS, said that the programme's credibility within the country would create fiscal space for the continued operation of the programme.