National Seminar on Right to Education – Article 25-A:

Pakistan has committed to achieve Six Education For All Goals envisaged in the Dakar Framework of Action, unanimously resolved by 166 counties and international community during April 2000. Provision of free and compulsory primary education to all children is one of the six goals of Education For All. Commitment of Pakistan towards Education For All has been reflected and reaffirmed in all its policy documents, including National Education Policy of 2009.

During April 2010, through 18th Amendment to the Constitution, the Parliament of Pakistan recognized access of all children of age 5 to 16 years to free and compulsory education as their Fundamental Right. A new Article titled “Right to Education (Article 25-A)” has now been inserted in the first Chapter of the Constitution which enlists fundamental rights of all citizens of Pakistan. However, implementation of this Article 25-A is linked with further legislation by the provincial assemblies/provincial parliaments to elaborate procedures of its enforcement and roles and responsibilities of various organs of the state. So far none of the provinces have passed any legislation on this subject, except passage of a Bill by the Senate of Pakistan, for which UNESCO extended technical assistance and support. This Bill passed by the Senate on 9th July 2012 is yet to be endorsed by the National Assembly of Pakistan, before it is enacted.

In order to review the progress towards legislation and implementation of Right to Education (Article 25-A), at the federal, provincial/Areas, National Seminar was organized by UNESCO and UNICEF in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Trainings and Standards in Higher Education, Islamabad.

The seminar was inaugurated by the Secretary Ministry of Education, Trainings and Standards in Higher Education, Islamabad. UNESCO Director, Dr. Kozue Kay Nagata welcomed the delegates. Expressing full confidence in the determination and sincerity of the Provincial and Area governments to implement Article 25-A in their respective areas, she added that today’s deliberations would provide an opportunity to learn about thinking, vision, and plans of various Provinces and Areas. UNICEF Representative, Mr. Don Rohrmann also welcomed the delegates by expressing satisfaction at the commitment of the Federal and Provincial governments in recognizing the significance of legislation on right to education. He said it was heartening to see that some of the provincial governments have taken the lead in recognizing the right to education. Addressing the delegates, UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Timo Pakala said that he joins his UN colleagues in congratulating the federal and provincial Ministries. He said that increasing the primary school enrolment in the next 3 years was a major challenge and Article 25-A was an important tool in this process.

Chief Guest of the event, Minister of State for Education, Trainings and Standards in Higher Education – Mr. M. Baleegh-ur-Rehman, said that it is our religious, ethical, moral and constitutional duty to impart
education and given Article 25-A, no federal or provincial
government can absolve education itself from its duty to
educate every child of age 5-16 years.

In conclusion, Additional Secretary of the Education,
Trainings and Standards in Higher Education thanked all
the participants for their contribution and deliberations in
the seminar. In particular he thanked the Minister of State
of Education Ministry for devoting his full day to the
seminar which reflected his commitment to the Article 25-
A (Right to Education).

The participants included federal and provincial Education Ministers, Secretaries, Additional Secretaries
of Education Departments, members of civil society and media.