



## Press Release

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### **Investing in quality education and teachers crucial to progress and a better society**

**Islamabad:** UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO and WFP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan organized a conference here in Islamabad to mark World Teacher's Day 2014. This year's theme for the Day is "Invest in the future, invest in teachers." In relation to the importance of this observance, the Pakistan Education for All (EFA) Review Report 2015 was also launched during the conference.

Celebrated annually by countries around the world on 5 October, World Teachers' Day gives recognition to the invaluable role of teachers in providing quality education which is crucial for the future of the country.

Officials of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MFE & PT), Provincial Area/Education Departments, representative of USAID and donor agencies, UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP, ILO, civil society, teachers and students participated in the event.

In his inaugural address, Abdul Hameed A. Hakeem, Officer in charge, UNESCO Islamabad, gave a detailed presentation that highlighted the historical background of World Teacher's Day and its observance by UNESCO and ILO since 1994, as a result of the UNESCO/ILO Special Inter-governmental Conference on the Status of Teachers in 1966. He said that investment in teachers and quality teaching required well trained teachers and a conducive learning and encouraging environment, as well as efficient use of teachers particularly in disadvantaged areas, by offering incentives. These were the foundations that could be built upon through recruitment, preparation, professional development, evaluation systems, equitable teaching and learning conditions and adequate funding. All of this would be a crucial investment in today's young generation and the best investment in the future. He emphasized that to get the best results, there was an urgent need to overcome the key challenges such as making teaching an attractive profession and getting young people interested in teaching, recruiting teachers based on merit and improving low level subject knowledge, deficiency of structured promotion mechanisms and overall shortage of teachers where they are most needed.

Secretary Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Muhammad Ahsan Raja extended his gratitude to all the participants and lauded the efforts of millions of teachers all over the world who devoted their lives to their mission, teaching of children, youth and adults.

He launched the Pakistan Education for All (EFA) Review Report 2015 that aimed to ensure systematic monitoring of the progress towards achieving Education for All goals. The task to generate data for all the indicators of six EFA Goals was accomplished by the Education Management Information System (NEMIS) at the Academy of Educational Planning and Management (AEPAM). He said the National EFA Review Report was an important tool for systematic and objective analysis of the achievements and challenges faced in pursuing the EFA Goals. He said that Pakistan was fully cognizant of the importance of education and the report would be instrumental to building upon the success and lessons learnt for devising more effective planning and strategies which were more inclusive and cost effective.

He said the key progress and achievements, such as providing free and compulsory education to all children of ages five to sixteen under Article 25 A of the Constitution, in Islamabad Capital Territory and its ratification by Sindh and recently, Baluchistan were milestones towards progressing in achieving EFA goals, besides the increase in the education budget to accelerate education related to the Millennium Development Goals through the National and Provincial Plans of Action. He applauded the efforts of the UN agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO and WFP) for contributing to the preparation the report that would serve as a guiding document for different stakeholders working in the education sector.

Speaking on the occasion, representatives of WFP, UNICEF and ILO emphasized the need for more joint efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, particularly in education. However, they applauded the Government of Pakistan for taking a number of initiatives to accelerate progress towards the achievement of EFA goals and stressed the need to improve the educational planning and management system of Pakistan, aligning and enrolling over 5 million out-of-school children and improving incentives for teachers.

Students and teachers, through speeches and poetry, paid tribute to the important role and value of teachers for the development of the country.

At the concluding session, the Chief Guest, Muhammad Ahsan Raja and the representative of UNESCO distributed souvenirs among the outstanding teachers from different provinces/areas in recognition of their services.

As the lead agency for Education for All, UNESCO has been mandated to coordinate the international efforts to reach the goals by the end of 2015. The EFA movement reflects a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults, launched at the World Conference on Education for All in 1990.

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