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PR No. 228: MINISTER OF STATE ENGR MUHAMMAD BALIGH UR REHMAN ATTENDED THE LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF UNESCO 2016 GLOBAL EDUCATION MONITORING REPORT AS A CHIEF GUEST TODAY

I highly appreciate the efforts put in by the organizers who compiled this valuable report, and would also like to appreciate the change of the name of this report from GMR (Global Monitoring Report) to GEM (Global Education Monitoring) as rightly put, said the State Minister. This report receives immense attention and support from policy makers, media and general public nationally and internationally.

The Global Education Monitoring Report has got a new directive to review the progress of education under the 2030 Agenda. This report not only looks into the education sector but also focuses on the relationship of education and other sustainable developments goals. And for that our government has already adopted SDG4 and has converted it into our national development goals, education has always been our first priority and we are fully committed to it, said the Minister. Talking further about the report, Minister of State appreciated the thematic part of the report which highlights 6 Ps (Planet, prosperity, people, peace, place and partnership) and it also indicates towards the 7th P which is Pakistan. He added that according to this report poverty reduction, hunger eradication, improved health, gender equality and empowerment, sustainable agriculture, and just societies etc, could be achieved through quality education. And the monitoring part of the report deals with other challenges like progress assessment of SDG 4, including concrete recommendations for policy change.

Minister of State said that **your thinking defines the course you take so keep up your faith and don't lose your heart in the way. We must point out and try to rectify whatever we feel, is going wrong in our society but that does not mean that we should overlook whatever good is happening in Pakistan.** In order to find a solution to a problem we must identify it first, this report has identified many problems in education sector which is the first step toward finding the solutions to all the issues mentioned in it, stated the minister. **This report tells us that there are 24 million children who are out of schools but it also gives us the comparison that there were 25 million children in 2015 and 26 million children in 2014 who were out schools before. So we can clearly see the improvement in numbers which should not be overlooked, emphasized the minister.** Similar is the case with missing facilities like toilets in schools which has been reduced to 28% from 33% from last year.

If we look at the brighter side, we can safely say that we are on the right path, said the minister. Our government came with a clear vision and we adopted 4Es strategy (Extremism, Energy, Economy, and Education) and by the grace of Allah we have been able to improve each and every sector of society, be it education or energy issue. We have adopted vision 2025 in which the SDGs are fully imbedded. All the provincial governments are on board in this regard. NCHD has been mandated to achieve literacy rate of 90% by 2019. **We have established National Curriculum Council in which we have emphasized upon the character building, civic sense and care for the**

environment the most. As they say “instead of teaching a book to a student, inculcate the habit of reading books in children”, said the minister. Moreover he said that we have decided to revise the examination system of our boards in Pakistan in our recent Inter Provincial Education Ministers’ Conference. We are also focusing more on our national assessment system now. He also talked about the ongoing projects of Ministry of Federal Education with UNICEF and UNESCO, specially mentioned the Malala girls’ education program.

In the end, I would again like to congratulate the team of UNESCO and their partners for launching this report and I hope that this report would be beneficial for policy makers and educationist both, said the minister.

Ceremony was attended by Senator Razina Alam Khan, Director UNESCO Vibeke Jensen, Representative UNICEF Angela Kearney and Representative UNHCR Indrika Ratwatte.

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