



## Press Release

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**Further Inquiries**  
Phyza Jameel  
p.jameel@unesco.org  
UNESCO, Islamabad. +92 51 111 710 745 Ext 28  
www.unesco.org.pk

### **UNESCO and UNGEI Reaffirm Commitment to Girls' Right to Education in Pakistan**

**Islamabad:** United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) is a flagship for girls' education. It serves as a principal movement to narrow the gender gap in primary and secondary education and to ensure the right to education and gender equality for all children, girls and boys alike. It aims for a world where all girls and boys are empowered through quality education to realize their full potential and contribute to transforming societies where gender equality becomes a reality.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in collaboration with UNICEF, ILO and other UN agencies including UNIDO organized a special event today to highlight "Girls' Right to Education". Mr. Timo Pakkala, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Pakistan also attended the event. He emphasized that the girls' education is a must, in order to meet development targets in Pakistan. The event was timely as it encompassed findings of UNESCO's flagship document, "Education For All, Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2012", which was officially launched in Islamabad, Pakistan on 18<sup>th</sup> October in the presence of policy makers and educationists.

Dr. Kozue Kay Nagata, Director, UNESCO Pakistan, in her opening remarks quoted from the global speech of the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms. Irina Bokova said, "I would like to dedicate this ceremony to Ms. Malala Yousafzai, a young brave

activist for the right of girls to the education of Pakistan, assaulted last week, because she wanted to go school". Also, Dr. Nagata added, "Gender equality in education constitutes a basic human right as well as an important means of improving economic outcomes".

According to afore mentioned report, youth (between age 15- 24) female literacy rate in Pakistan is 61% against 79% for males. However, youth female literacy rate is projected to be 72% (against 82% for males) by year 2015, whereas adult female literacy rate of older age group (15+) is projected to be 47%. This indicates that young Pakistani females are more educated than their mothers.

The gender-based ratio (female – male) of illiterate youth between ages 15 – 24 is, 64% - 36%. This shows that gender gap still exists. Nearly two thirds (63%) of the 5.1 million out-of-schools children of primary school age group are girls. There are more female adolescents (3.9 million) than male adolescence (3.3 million) who are out-of-school, as stated in the Global Monitoring Report.

The Director UNESCO in her speech said, "Although gender gap in Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) in primary and secondary schools is getting reduced in major urban centers such as Islamabad, Peshawar, Lahore and Karachi, the gender gap is still high in Balochistan, Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), rural Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, interior Sindh, and other conservative communities".

The civil society, NGOs and UN agencies actively participated in the event to exchange views and urged for coordinated actions to promote girls' education in Pakistan.

This event was planned in lieu of UNESCO's Director-General, Ms. Irina Bokova's attribution to Ms. Malala Yousufzai during the international launch of Global Monitoring Report 2012 in Paris on 16<sup>th</sup> October, calling for global attention to the right of girls and women to education.