

Statement from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Delivered by His Excellency Farooq Wardak, Minister of Education

I have a case to present on how The Global Partnership to Education (GPE) will benefit the children and people of Afghanistan.

The first and foremost source of our confidence is the political support of our leadership for education, which is reflected in our Constitution and in the steady increase in domestic financial allocation to education. In the past four years, our recurrent budget for education has increased by an average of 32% each year, and the planned budget for the coming three years shows an average annual increase of 12% or an increased budget of 157 million USD (Equivalent to 9.5 billion Afs) in total.

Our second major source of confidence is the ever-growing support of our people. Social mobilization and community empowerment are located at the HEART of our strategy aimed at communities taking ownership of education and coming to the forefront of expanding, protecting and defending it. The community will strengthen and reinforce multiple pathways toward making education accessible to all through CBE, MBE, ALP, deployment of female teachers to hard to reach areas, reopening of schools closed for security reasons and many others alternatives.

Our third asset is the MOE ever growing institutional capacity, and the dedicated international community that stands by us during difficult times. Our recent membership of the GPE is the testimony of our capacity to fulfill the pre condition for this membership which was not there before.

Ladies and gentlemen! We have planned to achieve the GPE aims in Afghanistan via three distinct policy objectives:

1. Improving gender parity,
2. Enhancing learning outcomes, and
3. Increasing access to out-of-school children and youth including those in less secure and hard to reach areas.

Our strategies for achieving these objectives are as follows:

1. To reduce gender-disparity, we plan to recruit qualified female teachers who are willing to work in remote and insecure areas, pay them attractive incentive wages, and deploy them to districts with acute shortage of female teachers. These qualified female teachers will educate more secondary-school female graduates, who will be qualified in two years to teach in their own communities – thereby creating a local nucleolus of qualified female teachers.
2. To assess and improve national learning outcomes, we will establish a student learning achievement assessment system, for which globally tested achievement assessment tools such as TIMSS, PISA, SACMEQ, PIRL etc will be used. Our initial effort will be measuring math and language learning outcomes using a national sample of students completing grade-three. We will develop base-line data upon which educational progress, in terms of student learning, can be measured annually. This will guide our curriculum reform and teacher education efforts to become more focused on improving students learning achievements.
3. To reach to the most underprivileged, in less secure and geographically difficult areas, we will introduce multiple pathways to education and community-negotiated programs including expansion of Community-Based Education, Accelerated Learning classes, Mosque- and home-based schooling and reopening of schools which remained closed for security reasons. Same efforts will be used to reach other marginalized populations such as people with disabilities and Kuchis.

Through the GPE valuable partnership and support from our other development partners, our Education Interim Plan (EIP) expects to achieve the following results in three years:

1. Student enrolment will increase by 1.8 million.
2. 2,600 new schools and 2,500 new School Management Councils will be established.
3. Literacy training will be provided to 1.9 million adults.
4. Qualifications of 66,000 teachers (40 percent female) will be upgraded.
5. The first national learning achievement test will be administered, that will guide revision of the primary grade textbooks.

Overall, 8.7 million boys and girls will benefit from this pledge of the government of Afghanistan.

Ladies and gentlemen! This is a remarkable impact we expect in the next three years; for which we are extremely grateful.