Summary:

In 2012, the GPE agreed the partnership’s second strategic objectives would be for “All girls in GPE endorsed countries successfully complete primary school and go to secondary school in a safe, supportive learning environment.” This event is co-organised by the GPE working group responsible for taking forward this strategic objective and all comments and commitments will be aligned to this working group future plans.

There is overwhelming evidence that girls’ education is effective driver of development goals. Secondary education for girls is especially transformative for girls themselves and for societies. Over the years, important progress in girls’ education has been made alongside the general expansion of access to education. Yet despite recent advances in girls’ education, 65 million adolescent girls are not in secondary school and 31 million girls were out of primary school. Only 38% of countries have achieved parity in secondary education. And the situation is worse for girls in unstable contexts, with disabilities and in rural areas. If rates continue it will take until 2086 for poor rural girls to achieve universal primary education. So the progress mentioned is not progress enough.

While the learning crisis is a critical issue for both girls and boys, there is a need for targeted efforts to address the gender dimensions of learning. The GMR 2013/14 indicates that over 100 million young women living in low and lower middle income countries are unable to read a single sentence. In some contexts, child marriage is a key barrier to girls transitioning to and completing secondary education. The lack of female teachers is another major barrier to girls’ achievement. More female teachers must be recruited, especially in rural areas, as role models, to ensure girls’ safety and to improve girls’ learning outcomes. Gender bias in curriculum and pedagogy persist in many countries, and contribute to a hostile learning environment for girls and equally addressing this represents an opportunity to teach boys and girls about gender equality. Moreover, emerging evidence indicates that in many countries gender-based violence in and around schools is a critical barrier to girls attending and remaining in school, and learning.

Poised on threshold of 2015, the global community is far better equipped than ever before to create safe and supportive learning environments for girls. Education systems need to look beyond access to primary education, to ensuring that girls complete at least secondary education in a safe learning environment and that both girls and boys are ready to render the society more gender responsive; where women have the same economic and political opportunities as men. This side event provides an opportunity for all stakeholders to confirm their commitment to advancing girls’ education and gender equality. It also provides a venue to help focus GPE’s forward agenda on girls’ education. The GPE financing cycle promises a continuity of investment and implementation. Will this ensure progress for girls? To achieve results, GPE partners need to prioritize investments that:
• target girls’ learning, including progress by poor, marginalized girls;
• provide safe, supportive and effective learning environments; and
• promote girls’ progress through the secondary cycle.

**Expected outcomes:**

• Announcements of new or strengthened country, donor, multilateral and civil society commitments in support of the girls’ education agenda: *Girls Remain in School, Transition through Secondary and Learn*
• Recognition of the importance to go beyond measures of access to support gender responsive education sector plans, budgets and implementation strategies.
• Agreement to include strategies to create safe and supportive learning environments in education plans and interventions, including mechanisms to address gender-based violence in schools.

**Event Design: 70 minutes**

10:55 Welcome – Julia Gillard
11:00 Defining the Challenge (including statistics highlighting global achievements, remaining challenges and new evidence on learning and violence) – Geeta Rao Gupta

11:10 – 11:55 Moderated Panel discussion

**11:10 – Introductions and challenge/focus by moderator** - Sumaya Saluja YAG representative

**Panelists**

Developing Country Governments
1. Minister of Education from Ivory Coast
2. Minister of Education from Nepal

Donors
3. [Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, UK]
4. Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Australia

Civil Society
5. Executive Director, Plan International
6. Chair, Girls Not Brides

Multilaterals
7. Deputy ED, UNICEF

• How will your country/agency help ensure that girls remain in school, transition through secondary and learn? (To Developing Countries)
• What are the major challenges you are currently facing regarding girls’ education or gender, and what are you doing or planning to do?
• What do we need to do differently/What will it take to make a difference? (Resources)
• How can the GPE do a better job through its processes to strengthen education systems that ensure girls remain in school, and learn?

11:55 Concluding Remarks: [Ziauddin Yousafzai, Malala Fund]
Indicative list of key speakers:

- HE Chitra Lekha Yadav, Minister of Education, Nepal
- HE Camara Kandia-Kamissoko, Minister of Education, Cote d’Ivoire
- MP Lynne Featherstone, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, UK
- Senator Brett Mason, Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Australia
- Geeta Rao Gupta, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF
- Nigel Chapman, Executive Director, Plan International
- Princess Mabel Van Oranje, Chair, Girls not Brides
- Ziauddin Yousafzai, Malala Fund