June 03, 2011

Dear Leader of the Islamic Republic Of Pakistan

ON the occasion of the Global Action Week for EFA 2011 (May 2-8) we, the citizens of Pakistan are sending you 20,000 signatures as OUR petition (Urdu and English), entitled 2011 Global Action Week: “It’s a right, make it right! Education for Girls and Women NOW!”

We profoundly acknowledge your democratic government’s historic role in passing the 18th Amendment Act 2010 to the Constitution, & Article 25-A declaring the Right to Education (RTE) as a fundamental right.

Your excellencies, the provision of education as a fundamental right has thus become the statutory obligation of the Government to provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age group, five to sixteen years (Katchi – X). No child can be held back, or expelled until the completion of his/her schooling, including children who are challenged.

Article 25- A: Right to Education: The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law.”

The 18th Amendment has also devolved education entirely to the provinces leading to major changes in Pakistan’s education history such as the dissolution of the Federal Ministry of Education with some institutions retained under the newly created Capital Administration & Development Division for ICT area only. (www.cabinet.gov.pk)

However we must not forget facts outlined by the Education Emergency 2011 Report by the Pakistan Education Task force (PETF) (http://educationemergency.com.pk)/:
- Only 1 in every 3 women in Pakistan is literate
- One in 10 out of school children in the world live in Pakistan: Pakistan is second only to Nigeria for the largest out of school population globally! A large proportion being girls
- 3 million Pakistani children will never see the inside of a classroom– girls outnumber boys.
- 25 million Pakistan children aged 5-16 are denied their fundamental right to education.
- 50% of school children in Pakistan (aged 6-16) cannot read a sentence.
- The 2010 Floods emergency marooned 81 out of 140 districts of the country affecting 1.3 million children and 10,000 schools. The setback is profound in access and quality and the MDGs
- GDP to education for schooling in FY 2010-2011 is estimated at 1.5%
- Pakistan will only reach EFA/MDG targets by 2041 (Punjab) by 2049 (Sindh) 2064 (Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa) and 2100 (Balochistan) – But this can be reversed! (PETF Projection)

The Global Action Week for EFA 2011 is thus a timely opportunity for Pakistanis to demand at this
juncture URGENT IMPLEMENTATION of the Right to Education of every girl and boy in Pakistan 5-16 years old as per Article 25A as determined by law and the rules of business

For the Governments of Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan the challenge is not just 100% enrollment of girls but also persistence, retention and transition from one stage of education to the next. Will All the Governments and FATA/AJK work on similar plans to rationalize, re-imagine and restructure their education delivery systems for greater outreach and entitlements to ALL?

Will ALL the governments raise allocations to education as the first line of defense in Pakistan?

On behalf of ALL the signatories and the Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) we are seeking an URGENT response to this petition positively. We DEMAND on an EMERGENCY basis:

1. Support and funding for EDUCATION OF GIRLS & WOMEN as a partnership with the public sector and non-state partners in education and planning.
2. An increase of the current 2% abysmal education allocation to 4% NOW!
3. Positive partnerships across public and private sectors to enhance capacity to spend, bridging the gap between primary, middle and secondary education, so that girls and women can be educated across all levels of the spectrum.
4. Special resources and institutional support for out of school children (5-16 years) of age through catch up and non-formal literacy programs across the country

We are enclosing thematic policy briefs (Facts & Figures) with options for action on the basis of the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) Pakistan 2010 to help you ACT NOW!

Sincerely

THE CHILDREN, CITIZENS & FRIENDS OF PAKISTAN & THE PAKISTAN COALITION FOR EDUCATION (PCE)

Baela Raza Jamil (Director Programs ITA) & Zehra Arshad (National Coordinator PCE)