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## PRESS RELEASE

*National Launch of EFA Global Monitoring Report in  
Afghanistan*

### **Great achievements made, huge challenges remain**

**04 May 2011 Kabul** – On the occasion of Education for All (EFA) Global Action Week, UNESCO Kabul along with the Afghan Ministry of Education nationally launched the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2011 in Kabul.

This year's report, *The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education*, calls for education to be made central to efforts to prevent conflict. Education is vital to peace building – but it can fan the flames of conflict if it is inappropriate, inequitable or inadequate. The report sets out a comprehensive agenda for change, including tougher action against human rights violations, an overhaul of global aid priorities, strengthened rights for displaced people and more attention to the ways education failures can increase the risk of conflict.

Both Afghan officials and the international community acknowledged the achievements Afghanistan made so far in the education sector, but also admitted the huge challenges ahead. According to Mr. Farooq Wardak, Afghan Minister of Education, the number of students has increased eight folds since 2001. "However, we need the continued support of the international community to meet the EFA six goals in the future", he highlighted.

Mr. Aoyagi, UNESCO Kabul Director, referring to the main theme of this year's GMR report, emphasized on the importance of education to build peace in Afghanistan. "As societies emerge from conflict, education offers them a chance to confront the violent legacy of the past and forge attitudes conducive to a peaceful future", Mr. Aoyagi said.

The United Nations' Deputy Special Representative of Secretary General to Afghanistan, Mr. Michael Keating praised the encouraging figures from the education sector, such as raising the ratio of girls' enrolment from 0 in 2001 to 38 per cent in 2010. "More importantly," he continued, "there is a very strong thirst for education among the Afghans, which cannot be measured by figures, but is a huge source of hope for the future".

According to the Ministry of Education (MoE) data, over 7.3 million children are enrolled in over 12,500 schools across the country. MoE has been mobilizing local communities to influence the armed groups and negotiate reopening of schools closed due to insecurity. Over 200 schools were reopened during the past two years and the process is ongoing.

The official response by MoE to the GMR 2011 highlights systematic steps the MoE has taken in meeting the EFA goals, including policy planning and provision of education that aim to prepare Afghan people for society and employment, based on a non-discriminatory and inclusive approach where the needs of the learner are placed first. The response recognizes that the accomplishments in the education sector so far has been made possible with the generous support of the donor community and that donors' contributions to education will continue to be preconditions for success in achieving the EFA goals in Afghanistan.

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