



World Population Day #WPD2016

Investing in teenage girls for a more just, stable and peaceful world

PRESS RELEASE

Invest in Teenage Girls for a More Just, Stable and Peaceful World

Kabul 20 July 2016 - Ministry of Economy (MoEc) of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and United National Population Fund (UNFPA), other government ministries, national and international organizations and Afghan school girls marked the World Population Day this year by highlighting the situation of teenage girls and the importance of empowering to participate in the development of their society

The theme of the World Population Day 2016 which "Investing in Teenage Girls" is aimed to for a world that is more just, stable and peaceful.

"Afghanistan for sure has seen significant improvements in regards to girls' education and their participation, however, we agree that more efforts are required to meet the sustainable development goals and the Afghan Government is committed to doing more for an Afghanistan that should contribute to planet 50-50 by 2030", said H. E. Dr. Mohammad Ismail Rahimi, Deputy Minister of Economy.

"In Afghanistan, 57 percent of girls are married before the age of 19, about 40 percent are married at an age between 10 to 13 years, 32 percent at age 14, and 27 percent at age 15. Girls in Afghanistan are more prone to early marriage, a harmful traditional practice, which perpetuates the cycle of poverty and gender inequalities within the society, and greatly impinges on the human rights of girls. This is a challenge and shall be a barrier for girls' education unless we work hand in hand and do something about it," said Dr. Bannet Ndyabangi, UNFPA Country Representative for Afghanistan.

According to 2014 data from Central Statistics Organization of Afghanistan a total of 9.2 million Afghans are enrolled in any type of formal education, that includes primary, secondary, high school, vocational school, night school etc, of which 3.6 million are female that is 39.5% of the total 9.2 million.

On the other hand, as far as attendance in higher education or university is concerned not only does the total number of attendance for both boys and girls dramatically decrease, but also the gap between boys' and girls' attendance increases. Of the 300 thousand boys and girls enrolled in Universities, only 65 thousand are girls. This means that if the current trend continues, almost 4 out of 5 girls will never have the opportunity to continue education, and may never realize their full potential. These girls that are denied education are more likely to contribute to the continuation of the poverty cycle to the next generation.

The success of the Sustainable Development Agenda depends on how well we support and invest in teenage girls. When countries such as Afghanistan support and invest in youth, especially teenage girls, and create opportunities for them to realize their full potential, such countries are also better able to realize a demographic dividend, which will in turn propel economic growth and combat poverty.

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