



Media Update-2

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PRESS RELEASE

PM Sharif backs new Pakistan Safe Schools Initiative and pledges to make it 'a success'

Two months after school massacre, A World at School releases report with 15-point plan for a Safe Schools in Pakistan

A World at School today launches a [15-point plan for a Pakistan Safe Schools Initiative](#) - backed fully by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and UN Special Education Envoy Gordon Brown - in a multi-million dollar campaign for girls' and boys' education.

It follows an agreement between former British Prime Minister Mr Brown and Prime Minister Sharif to work together on a joint effort for the security and safety of schoolchildren. And the plan will be accompanied by an appeal to donor governments, foundations and the business sector to finance the initiative.

Prime Minister Sharif said yesterday: "I am personally committed to making this initiative a success."

Since the 1970s Pakistan has experienced more attacks on education than any other country in the world. Terrorists have destroyed thousands of school buildings, taken the lives of hundreds of teachers and students and denied the right to education to thousands more.

In the past five years, more than 1,000 schools have been destroyed in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, which includes Peshawar, where the latest and deadliest attack took place on December 16. During an eight-hour shooting spree more than 130 boys and girls and nine teachers were massacred by Taliban gunmen.



Now a full-scale response - championed by Mr Brown - is being launched to help protect schools, students and staff from further attacks. It will require major international funding.

The Pakistan government has already taken steps to implement some security measures and the Punjab government has released a set of requirements for schools, include installing closed-circuit cameras, raising boundary walls of schools to at least eight feet and topping them with razor wire before they reopen following the 2015 winter break.

But so far only 118 of 1,440 schools in Peshawar have been able to properly implement the new measures and reopen. Additional financing is urgently needed for scale-up, particularly for those schools and communities most at risk

The rigorous, 15-point best practices plan released today, which is built around global experience and expertise, is designed to ensure schools are safe for all children. The report was produced in collaboration with the Global Business Coalition for Education, a coalition of private sector businesses working to deliver quality education for all of the world's children and youth.

The report is intended to complement and support current government activities and serve as a basis for a framework to build school and community-based interventions to promote Safe Schools alongside support from the international community.

The proposal includes:

- * Community engagement to establish peace zones in and around schools
- * Negotiations with religious leaders to promote education
- * Establishing a community watch system
- * Individual security plans for every school
- * Setting up of rapid response units
- * Installing state-of-the-art communication systems



- * Creating special plans for schools in high-risk areas

In the wake of the recent attack in Peshawar, the Pakistani province of Punjab responded rapidly with a set of security measures to prevent future attacks on schools, as did other government authorities. These measures address many critical aspects of school infrastructure and defence in the most high-risk areas.

However, the 15 best practices proposal is a full framework for a comprehensive and integrated approach to protecting all schools by involving communities, empowering school staff and protecting children physically and psychologically from the threat of attack.

Mr Brown said: "One answer that helps educational institutions to stand up to terrorist violence and counter it is to designate our schools as safe schools and make them more secure. It is only by taking measures such as those in the 15-point plan that we will reassure parents and pupils that everything is being done to counter extremist threats."

Prime Minister Sharif said: "The recent tragedy at Army Public School Peshawar in Pakistan has yet again brought into focus one of the many manifestations of terror. The ruthless and inhuman murder of 146 schoolchildren and teachers also indicates the variety of challenges that we confront as we strive to bring safety to our children at schools. The safe school initiative of Gordon Brown is perhaps the first targeted programme which will go a long way in helping us to achieve this target."

In Nigeria, the first Safe Schools Initiative, launched by the UN Special Envoy with A World at School, the Global Business Coalition for Education and the Nigerian government, following the kidnapping of 276 Chibok schoolgirls, has leveraged \$30million from business, the Nigerian government and international donors resulting in a government initiative and a United Nations multi-donor trust fund for Safe Schools. In the first phase of activities, Safe Schools interventions are now in place in many schools and 2,400 of the most at-risk students from three states hit hardest by Boko Haram's terrorist activities have been enrolled in safer schools.

Later this year further steps will be taken to protect schools. The draft Lucens Guidelines have been drawn up with the aim of better protecting schools and universities from use by armed groups for military purposes and to minimise



the negative impact that armed conflict has on students' safety and education.

These guidelines, supported by several countries including Norway and Argentina, and championed by the UN Special Envoy, will result in a "Safe Schools Declaration" later this year with concrete guidance to states and non-state armed groups for the planning and execution of military operations to schools and education from attack.

But for now, Pakistan is the priority. Members of the Pakistan Working Group of the Global Business Coalition for Education as well as donors engaging in the Local Education Group are being asked to identify how they can contribute to this national effort to promote best practices for creating safe schools.

Through these efforts, a comprehensive and well-financed Safe Schools Initiative will reassure families and children that education is safe and provide a bold step forward in the achievement of universal education in Pakistan.

ILO

PRESS RELEASE

ILO and Pakistan Textile Exporters Association sign a unique Partnership Agreement Promoting Decent Work in Garment and Textile Industry in Faisalabad

Islamabad, Tuesday 17th February 2015: The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Pakistan Textile Exporters Association (PTEA) have signed a partnership agreement to promote Decent Work in Textile Industry in Faisalabad. The signing ceremony was held at Marriott Hotel Islamabad. Dignitaries from the Government of Pakistan, representatives of Employers and Workers Organisations, representatives of diplomatic missions in Pakistan including the European Union Delegation, United States



Embassy, German Embassy and the Royal Embassy of Netherlands participated amongst other bilateral development partners.

The Partnership Agreement includes a comprehensive framework on improving productivity through training and compliance with International Labour Standards including occupational safety and health, wages, contracts of employment, discrimination and other forms of mal labour practices as well as strengthening employers' and workers' bilateral arrangements in textile industry. The cooperation will continue for three years and will cover more than 200 industrial units (small, medium and large) that are engaged in the textile export. After successful piloting, this intervention will be replicated in other Industrial Associations across the country.

At this occasion, Mr Sikandar Ismail Khan, Secretary, Federal Ministry of Overseas Pakistani and Human Resource Development (OPHRD) said that, "GSP Plus is an opportunity for Pakistani industries and this collaboration between ILO and PTEA will help improve the image of Pakistan textile industries as responsible workplaces that are compliant with national laws, including those based on International Labour Standards".

Mr Amir Marwat, Federal Secretary, Ministry of Textile Industry endorsed the partnership and said that the Ministry has also reflected compliance to labour laws in the new Textile Policy which is of immense importance in order to reap the benefits of trade preferences such as GSP Plus.

Mr Ishrat Ali, Secretary, Labour and Human Resource Department, Government of Punjab, ensured district level support through effective and systematic labour inspection.

Mr Francesco d' Ovidio, Country Director, ILO remarked that, "Issues in the garment industry are systemic and require action that helps develop effective industrial relations and promote respect of international labour standards. There is therefore an urgent need to establish strategic and comprehensive public private collaborations and the signing of today's agreement is a positive step in this direction. I hope that other institutions, inspired by PTEA, will soon join this initiative. ILO's honoured to provide its technical support".

At the same occasion, Mr Sohail Pasha, Chairman PTEA said that, "this cooperation is a great opportunity to further strengthen our work towards the establishment of well-functioning industrial units to increase sectoral productivity and competitiveness and reap the benefits from GSP Plus".

Representatives of the Employers' and Workers' Organisations (EFP and PWF) fully supported the partnership framework and stressed on the



importance of establishing a coordination mechanism between textile industries, related workers organizations and Labour Departments on compliance and reporting on labour laws.

The signing ceremony featured a presentation on the partnership framework that defined in detail outcomes and outputs envisioned as part of this collaboration.

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