INFORMATION NOTE
ON
International Conference on Girls’ and Women’s Literacy and Education: Foundations for Sustainable Development and the Awarding of UNESCO Literacy Prizes

Organized by

Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh in partnership with UNESCO in support of the UN Secretary General’s Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) on the Occasion of International Literacy Day, 2014

8 September 2014, Dhaka

1. **Backdrop:**

This Conference is proposed to be organized by the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh in support of the UN Secretary General’s Global Education First Initiative (GEFI). As a Champion Country for GEFI, Bangladesh will contribute to the global movement for education by sharing its successful policies and practices in promoting girls’ and women’s literacy and education.

Reflecting the firm commitment of the Government since the country’s independence, Bangladesh has made remarkable strides in education and literacy, especially in the areas of girls’ and women’s literacy and education. Gender parity has improved in both primary and secondary education as well as in youth and adult literacy. While the primary school net enrolment ratio increased from 60.5% in 1990 to 98.7% in 2011\(^1\), the primary school net enrolment ratio for girls increased from 50.8% in 1990 to 99.4% in 2011\(^1\). The adult literacy rate increased from 35.3% in 1991 to 57.7% in 2011, with that for women going up from 25.8% to 53.4%\(^2\).

Proposed to be organized on the occasion of the International Literacy Day, this event will help refocus world attention to the global challenges of girls’ and women’s literacy and education as critical enabling factors for sustainable development. The outcomes of the Conference are expected to feed into the discussions on post-2015 developmental agenda as well as provide an opportunity for multiple stakeholders to reflect on innovative strategies for expanding good quality learning opportunities for girls and women. It will be an opportunity to showcase Bangladesh’s holistic approach to girls’ education and its recent efforts to enhance non-formal education for out-of-school children and adolescents as well as adult illiterate populations, especially women. Examples of effective laws, policies, financing and innovations together with enabling factors for the success, challenges and lessons learnt will be presented, offering the opportunity for information exchange and charting the way forward.

\(^1\) Source: The Millennium Development Goals Bangladesh Progress Report 2012
\(^2\) Source: The Millennium Development Goals Bangladesh Progress Report 2012
Building on the successful case of Bangladesh and UNESCO’s worldwide experience, the event will seek to make the case for comprehensive/holistic approaches to girls’ and women’s literacy and education and their centrality to sustainable development. Issues to be addressed include:

- Conceptualization of literacy as a developmental imperative providing a gateway for lifelong learning and an essential building block for sustainable development;
- Policy formulation;
- Financing;
- Contextualization of literacy learning opportunities through active community involvement;
- Institutionalization of lifelong learning facilities through learning centres.

The expected outcome of the Conference will be a statement reflecting the collective resolve to address key challenges and the unfinished literacy and education agenda, especially for girls and women, through a multi-pronged, collaborative, synergistic action at global, regional, national and community levels.

2. Objectives

Building on the successful case of Bangladesh and UNESCO’s worldwide experience, the event will seek to make the case for comprehensive/holistic approaches to girls’ education and women’s literacy and their centrality to sustainable development.

The expected outcome of the Conference will be a statement reflecting the collective resolve to address key challenges of girls’ education and women’s literacy through a multi-pronged, collaborative, synergistic action at global, regional, national and community levels.

3. Venue and Date

The Conference will be held on 8 September 2014 the Bangabandhu International Conference Center, Dhaka, Bangladesh. The participants are expected to arrive on 7 September and departures will begin on 9 September.

4. Participants (Approximately 200):

- High level representatives from the 14 GEFI Champion countries, 8 SAARC Member States, E-9 countries and countries that have actively supported education and literacy efforts;
- Representatives from UN organizations (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN-Women, IFAD, ILO, UNGEI, WHO);
- Bilateral and multi-lateral donors, including international financial institutions;
- National and International NGOs;
- Representatives from private sector who have made a contribution to advancing education and literacy, especially for girls;
- Global Partnership for Education, UNESCO Chairs, UN University, Commonwealth of Learning;
- Senior officials, representatives of civil society and private sector from Bangladesh;
- Prize winners of 2014 UNESCO Literacy prizes.
5. Working Languages

The working language of the Conference will be English.

6. Provisional draft agenda *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09:00-09:30</td>
<td>Registration of the delegates</td>
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<tr>
<td>09:30-11:00</td>
<td>Inauguration of the International Conference and Presentation of UNESCO Literacy Awards</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30-13:00</td>
<td>Session 1: Plenary&lt;br&gt;Panel discussion on the global literacy challenge and the importance of focusing on girls and women’s literacy and education for sustainable development&lt;br&gt;Presentation on the Bangladesh experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:00-14:00</td>
<td>Lunch break</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:30-16:00</td>
<td>Session 2: Parallel Sessions&lt;br&gt;Policies, programmes, funding, monitoring, institutional strengthening, multi-stakeholder partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:00-16:30</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:30-18:00</td>
<td>Session 3: Plenary&lt;br&gt;Reporting from the groups and charting the way forward</td>
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<td>18:30-20:30</td>
<td>Cultural programme followed by dinner</td>
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*Subject to further change under intimation to all concerned.

7. Hotel and Transportation to and from Airport

The venue of the Conference is Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, Bir Uttom Khaled Mosharraf Avene, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, and Tel. 880 1713-046029.

Delegates will be staying at Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel, Airport Road, Dhaka Cantonment, and Dhaka 1206, Tel. 880 2-8754555. Participants can check in to their rooms after onsite registration desk located near the reception. Check-out will be on 9 September or as required. Rooms and meals are being provided at no extra cost.

For the arrival and departure of delegates, the Conference organizer will provide free transportation service to provide lift from the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, between the Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel and Bangabandhu International Conference Centre. A reception desk will be in operation on 7 September to receive delegates at the airport.

The distance between Dhaka Shahjalal International Airport and Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel is 5km. The distance between Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel and Bangabandhu International Conference Center is 9 km.
8. International travel

Participants will bear the expenses of their respective international airfare. However, delegates from Least Developed Countries (LDC) are advised to contact the following UNESCO focal point to benefit from funds available to facilitate participation from LDCs:

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9. Additional information

International delegates are advised to obtain visa from the Bangladesh Embassy or Consulate located in their respective countries. Delegates coming from countries where there is no Bangladesh embassy or Consulate will be issued visa on arrival by the airport immigration on payment of required fees.

International delegates are responsible for their own accident or medical insurances. However, the organizers will arrange the services of a General Physician in case of emergency.

The usual temperature in September in Dhaka varies between 26 and 32 Celsius. The weather is normally sunny and dry during this time of the year.

10. Contact Information

To learn more about the Conference, please contact:

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