



Engr. Baligh ur Rehman Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training

We applaud the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) Pakistan for its rigorous and sustained engagement in interrogating learning challenges. Since 2010 ASER has cast a nationwide footprint for learning and access challenges. The Government is committed to improving the education system and learning outcomes for our children, youth and adults. In 2016 ASER's citizen led teams surveyed 83,324 households in 144 districts, 5540 schools and 255,269 children (3-16 years) nationwide.

ASER Pakistan tracks children's enrolment covering age group 3-16 and their learning outcomes for 5-16 years old, aligned to Article 25 A as a fundamental constitution right. ASER provides us with regular benchmarking to set targets for improvement. We are also appreciative that the ASER data set is closely tracking many of the indicators for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 to which we are a signatory. Data on learning, access, equity, governance facilities, disability and ICTs generated by ASER is very valuable to us indeed. This information is deepening the culture of evidence based approaches and data revolution nationally, locally and globally. We acknowledge ASER teams for generating powerful but easy to understand data through visual info-graphics and metrics for parliamentarians, administrators and citizens alike helping them engage actively in planning for and claiming essential rights.

This year ASER 2016 data has shared vital characteristics from the households (HHs) and especially for the most vulnerable. Pakistan is proud to see 89% Mothers and 93% Fathers as registered voters nationally. ASER 2016 is forward looking, capturing alternate literacies as part of the 21st Century Skills. 70% HHs are using mobiles, 58% send SMS and 28% use Whats App from FATA to Sindh. This data also revealed that 18% of our HH are beneficiaries of BISP/Akhuwat and other social safety net poverty reduction programs. With 46% of the Pakistani population living in poverty according to the multi-dimensional poverty index (MDPI), there is an urgency to reach out to the most vulnerable. ASER provides vital information on all CPEC districts where we stand firmly committed to human development.

We are glad to note that ASER as a citizen led assessment (CLA) has become a mainstream genre of global metrics featuring in the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) Catalogue of Learning Assessments, thus providing authentic first hand data for provincial and national trends. ASER Pakistan is a social movement and a global one with 14 counterparts in Asia, Africa and Latin America, now an icon for citizen led learning accountability, measuring quality, equity and access in education. We are keen to see this methodology extend to post primary levels as well to map the learning outcomes, especially target SDG 4.1 at grade 5 and 8 respectively as well as our adolescents and youth for skills and livelihoods. We are committed to providing enabling facilities, capable teachers and a stable predictable learning environment for all; we want to see government support scaled up for learning improvement as well.

We believe that our mission of ensuring every child in school, attending and learning as a 21st century enterprise can only take place when we have reliable collaborators like the ASER Pakistan team led by Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) in alliance with many national/provincial/local civil society and semi-autonomous organizations. We salute the 10,000 volunteers who come together for a public cause and a critical public good. We congratulate ITA and all its partners, for providing an open source public service on learning in 2016; the evidence is compelling. We must act NOW to realize our promise and ambitions for Article 25 A & SDG 4.