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**ISLAMABAD: With the global learning crisis costing \$129 billion annually, the 'Education for All Global Monitoring Report' published by UNESCO on Wednesday set targets for governments and donors to commit to spend at least 20pc of their budgets on education.**

Asked whether UNESCO's recommendations would be implemented, Minister of State for Education, Training and Higher Education Balighur Rehman, who launched the report here, said it all depended on the collection of revenues and added that efforts were being made to increase the tax-to-GDP ratio.

The report points out that the agriculture sector makes up to 22.5pc of GDP, but its share in tax revenue is only 1.2pc. Tax revenue as a share of GDP is growing far too slowly in poorer countries, and at present rates, only four of the 48 countries currently raising less than 20pc of GDP in tax will reach the 20pc threshold by 2015.

While governments must lead the drive to reform taxation, donors can play an important complementary role. Just one dollar of aid can generate up to \$350 million in tax revenue.

The report proposes that a target should be set for national governments to allocate at least 6pc of their GNP to education. It includes Pakistan in the list of 10 countries which need most additional primary teachers and predicts that the country will not even be able to fill the gap after 2030 if its past trends in recruiting teachers continue.

Teacher absenteeism harms learning too, and can reinforce learning gaps between boys and girls. In rural Pakistan, where girls and boys are enrolled in separate schools and taught by a teacher of the same gender, 18pc of female primary schoolteachers were absent in 2004, compared with 9pc of male teachers.

The report shows that Pakistan is likely to be 'very far' from the Education for All goals concerning universal primary enrolment, adult literacy and gender equality by 2015.

In Pakistan, fewer than half of children are learning the basics whether they have been to school or not. This crisis will last for generations, leaving the disadvantaged far behind, unless tackled urgently. Rich boys and girls are expected to complete primary school by 2020, but on recent trends poor boys will reach this fundamental target only in the late 2050s and poor girls just before the end of the century.

In Sindh, less than a fifth of the poorest girls can do basic calculations compared to over half of the richest boys.

Some provinces are doing much better than others. In Balochistan, only 45pc of all children of grade 5, whether in school or not, could solve a two-digit subtraction, while in Punjab 73pc could do so.

One reason for the difference is the chance of a child getting into school and staying there until grade 5 – 53pc reach grade 5 in Balochistan and 69pc in Punjab. Another reason is that the conditions of schooling are considerably better in Punjab.

Children who speak a minority language also face a major barrier to learning if teachers do not have the correct training to break it down. In parts of Pakistan, 91pc of children tested in Pashto could not read a word by the end of grade 2.

In Pakistan, 30pc of women with no education believe they have a say over how many children they should have, compared with 52pc with primary education and 63pc with lower secondary education.

**Source:** <http://www.dawn.com/news/1083667/unesco-wants-20pc-of-budget-spent-on-education>