

**Key Points**  
**Consultation on 25 A & SDG 4: engaging with the High Level Political Forum (HLPF)**  
**2019**

**ITA Head Office, Lahore**

**May 28, 2019**

Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi, realizing the importance of monitoring SDG 4 and Article 25-A, convened a consultative session to discuss the status of SDG 4 and The Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act 2014, with a focus on the exploration of avenues to engage more meaningfully within the province and also with the upcoming UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) and the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process. Representatives from government, governmental departments, civil society organizations and research think tanks and media participated in an interactive session, during which the following key points were discussed. It was indeed strategic to have the presence of Ms. Ayesha Nawaz Chaudhry as Chair of the Standing Committee on Education in Punjab Assembly; Ms. Amtul Qudus - Additional Secretary Education Reforms SED and Mr. Tariq Mahmood - Deputy Secretary Planning L&NFBE Department Government of the Punjab. Each participant may act as a multiplier of key messages of the meeting.

**Key Points of Discussion of the meeting**

- It was identified that there was a need for a better understanding pertaining to the scope and overlaps of Article 25 A/Punjab Right to Free & Compulsory Education Act 2014 and SDG 4/SDGs 2030, HLPF 2019 and the VNR Process. Participants were informed that in order to monitor progress towards the achievement of SDGs, the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC) has planned for an annual review and high-level discussion on selected SDG themes in the form of a High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) which also hosts a ministerial meeting (July 9-19<sup>th</sup> 2019) . The Forum meets annually for eight days, including a three-day ministerial segment and every four years holds a SDG Summit at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the General Assembly for two days (Sept. 24-25, 2019). The theme for this year's HLPF is "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality" under which SDG 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17 are to be reviewed.
- Discussion on how SDG 4 is linked with other SDGs also took place. It was highlighted that SDG 4 is at the core of all other SDGs for equitable, quality and inclusive education and thus is a prerequisite for the achievement of SDGs. Sadly there is little popular understanding of SDGs/SDG4 and even RTE -25 A Punjab Act 2014.
  - ITA presented the national/provincial and global architecture of monitoring and engaging with SDGs/SDG 4. The vital role played by UIS and GEM Report UNESCO with UNESCO Playing a custodian's role in tracking SDG 4 along with UNICEF for SDG 4.2 (ECE) was highlighted. The participants were made aware of the multiple and instant knowledge products around GEM Report that can be

widely used by parliamentarians, civil servant decision makers media, academia and CSOs alike.

- Participants were of the opinion that SDG 4 and Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act 2014 were, by and large, similar in nature and that there was a need to popularize the commonalities between the two. It was agreed that indicators used to track the progress on SDG 4 can also be used to monitor the implementation of the provincial RTE act. The rules for the Punjab RTE Act 2014 are still not made and hence implementation is formally delayed.
- For work on gender equality, it was proposed that representative from Punjab Commission on the Status of Women may also be invited for future discussions- and be kept in the loop.
- Participants were apprised that implementation of the Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act 2014 was not possible unless the rules of business for the same act were devised. It was agreed that Chairperson Standing Committee on School Education, Additional Secretary Education Reforms and ITA will work for the formulation of the rules of business. In this regard, ITA has also shared the draft of shadow rules made and shared earlier with the concerned authorities.
- Moreover, revision of the curriculum was also suggested to instill civic sense and global citizenship among students.
- A shadow VNR report on Children with Disabilities, which was prepared by the civil society organizations including ITA in the context of HLPF 2019, was also shared with the participants.
- It was discussed that the monitoring of SDG 4 and 25-A in Punjab was necessary. Regarding this, ITA shared the template which is being used for tracking the progress of SDG 4 in Punjab. This template has been created by PMIU with assistance from ITA and provides a comprehensive mechanism for the tracking activity. Similar activities are also underway in KP and Sindh in collaboration with the respective departments.
- Data integration was also identified as one of the major challenges for the tracking of SDG 4. All participants conceded to the need for a centralized system for Data. For this purpose, the SELD and the E&SED, in Sindh and KP, have notified the establishment of a dedicated SDG 4 Cell in the respective departments.
- Additionally, the issue of the categorization/classification of disabilities was considered. It was proposed that, with the help of Standing Committee on School Education, the categories might be expanded to multiple functionings in order to measure the disability prevalence and to identify and incorporate all children with disabilities in the schooling system. Correspondingly, NADRA may also be reached out to for expanding the categories of disabilities in the Birth Certificate and Child Registration Certificate. Possible legislation in this regard may also be considered through which the provincial assembly may acknowledge various categories of disabilities instead of only four categories.

- To address the challenges of inclusion including minorities, diversity and tolerance a meeting with concerned representatives would also be held with the Advisors/Chairperson Standing Committee on Education in Punjab.
- Lastly, the Chairperson Standing Committee on School Education Punjab and Vice Chair of the CAST Taskforce, Ms. Ayesha Nawaz Chaudhry assured all participants that the current government was willing to take full ownership of the education sector reforms and that the government was working actively for the provision of right to education to all children. Accordingly, the provincial government has segregated the operational aspect of its work on Education from the long-term policy making and has separate teams working on both components.
- For the HLFP SDGs Summit in September, a questionnaire was floated for considered responses on challenges and progress as well as three high Level Political ASKS globally from the group and/or institutions for which the response time is only till 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019.  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdh7h5dHJJj8yZ92oIsruRXZw\\_z5bTCm8eCn-jeOwJFY\\_vOEQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdh7h5dHJJj8yZ92oIsruRXZw_z5bTCm8eCn-jeOwJFY_vOEQ/viewform)

This meeting was the first among a series of consultations on SDG 4 and Article 25-A which ITA plans to organizing in Punjab.

**List of Materials Shared:**

- Key Messages (UNESCO-GEM Report 2016)
- Punjab Education Act 2014
- SDG 4 – Targets and Indicators
- Relationship of SDG 4 with other SDGs
- Draft of the template for monitoring progress on SDG 4 in Punjab (Work in Progress)
- SDG Summit Questionnaire

**List of Participants:**

S.no	Name	Designation	Organization
1	Ms. Ayesha Nawaz Chaudhary	Chairperson, Standing Committee on School Education Punjab	Member Provincial Assembly , Government of the Punjab
2	Ms. Amtul Qudus	Additional Secretary	School Education Department, Government of the Punjab
3	Mr. Tariq Mahmood	Deputy Secretary (Planning)	L&NFBE, Government of the Punjab
4	Mr. Suneel Malik	Manager Programs	Center for Social Justice
5	Ms. Sahar Kamran	Senior Research Associate	IDEAS
6	Mr. Hassan Waqas	Admin Officer	Search for Justice
7	Mr. Mansoor Malik	Staff Reporter	Dawn News
8	Ms. Baela Raza Jamil	CEO	ITA
9	Mr. Muhammad Afzan Munir	Senior Research Analyst	ITA
10	Mr. Qazi Ehsan	Provincial Coordinator	ITA
11	Ms. Afnaan Qayuum	Manager Communications	ITA
12	Mr. Zain Ashraf	Research Associate	ITA