



## **Inclusive Education for ALL - #RaiseAPen for the Future of Afghanistan**

*At this moment of great urgency for Afghanistan, mothers throughout the country are calling on the global community to highlight the critical role Afghan women must play in the intra-Afghan talks. They are also asking that the right to education for all – including higher education – be made a top priority in the negotiations.*

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### **EDUCATION FOR ALL IS A HUMAN RIGHT**

The right to education is enshrined in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, goes further to stipulate that countries shall make higher education accessible to all.

### **EDUCATION IS KEY TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

When the international community adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015, it recognized that education is essential for the success of all 17 of its goals. Sustainable Development Goal 4, in particular, aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030.

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### **IN AFGHANISTAN, THIS HUMAN RIGHT – EDUCATION FOR ALL – IS IN JEOPARDY**

Numerous studies show that there have been tangible gains for Afghan women and girls in recent years, including the right to education and employment, as well as other basic rights denied to them during the Taliban rule, when women were not allowed to work and not allowed to be educated after the age of eight, and when violence against women was commonplace. Today, the Constitution of Afghanistan (2004) enshrines equal rights for both men and women, and states that any kind of discrimination or distinction between citizens of Afghanistan is forbidden.

These gains must not be erased at the negotiation table in Doha. The Taliban are insisting that their interpretation of Islam must prevail in any future agreement, including the Taliban’s position on the rights of women and girls to an education, including higher education. “Islamic Rights of Women and Tradition” is on the agenda at the talks but what does that entail exactly? Does it mean going back to the days when women and girls rights were denied? How much importance is being placed on the vital link between education for all and sustainable peace and development, as well as the vital connection between the protection of women’s rights and peace and security?

## EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT TO AFGHAN WOMEN AND GIRLS

All over the Muslim world, considerable progress has been made on the rights of women and girls to higher education. Qatar—inspired by H.H Sheikha Moza bint Nasser—along with Indonesia and Morocco are three examples of Muslim nations that have prioritized such education. In other predominantly Muslim countries, education with a greater emphasis on higher education for women and girls is flourishing as well.

**No country can get ahead if half its population loses its rights to education and gets left behind.**

Afghan women consider the right to education one of the most important gains to be protected during the peace talks. According to a recent AWN/UN Women Report study of over 800 Afghan women, from eight provinces and diverse social groups, over 90% cited women's rights, including the right to work (76%) and education (88%), and the overall maintenance of Afghan women's achievements of the past two decades, as the most critical topics for the peace table.

## THE VOICES OF THESE WOMEN MUST BE HEARD

With the help of leading Afghan women, global leaders and organizations, and invested supporters, Make Mothers Matter and the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security are initiating this call to action. We must ensure that the Taliban respect the right to education for all, including higher education' as enshrined in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We need to act urgently to ensure inclusive and equitable education and lifelong opportunities for all. Without it, we risk not just an uncertain future for Afghan women and girls, but also challenges to peace, stability and development in Afghanistan, the greater region and the world.



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**#RaiseAPen**

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