

Iran, Islamic Rep. of

Morteza Haji

Minister of Education



Development in education through reforms: quality, participation, decentralisation, technology, dialogue

In the Name of God, The Compassionate, The Merciful

Today's world has well recognized the significance of education as the only resort to develop the human resources and to make social, economic, and political developments. Nowadays, the political empowerment is based on knowledge which itself is the most precious capital for each nation.

Individuals access to knowledge is only possible through improving the quality of education and transforming the infrastructure of educational system. Education, in the Islamic Republic of Iran, is the major realm of development and advancement, the suitable ground for creativity, thinking and social commitment; hence, it is the very origin and manifestation of reforms and the corner-stone of government-nation interaction.

In compliance with the objectives stipulated in the World Declaration on Education For All (Jomtien, 1990), the Islamic Republic of Iran, could raise the ratio of net enrolment to 98.07%, drawing on the Islamic principles, the current laws, the scientific mechanisms, and public participation. It hopes to achieve the ratio of 100 % by the year 2005.

At present, the Ministry of Education is duty-bound to provide educational services and apprenticeship programs for the 19 million-student population. To realize its mission, the Ministry enjoys one million staff. Meanwhile, the system of education is now facing various challenges hindering it from fully achieving the long-term objectives of education countrywide as proclaimed in The Third Five-Year Development Program (1999-2003). The imbalance between teachers' salaries and living costs, irrelevance of the content of the textbooks with the courses and learners' needs are such challenges, to name but few.

The Government is highly determined to pave the way for the full-fledged development through reforms. Due to the enormous recent changes and transformations occurring in the society, the Ministry of Education has undergone extensive developments itself. The educational reforms are expected to speed up during the new government's term of office. Allocating more budget to education sector, improving teachers' living standards and thus encouraging them to do their duties, gradually delegating the responsibilities to subordinate levels, changing the management in the system of education to semi-decentralized one and involving parents and public in educational policy design are such measures to be more focused by the new Cabinet.

Students' participation in the specialized committees of the Supreme Council of Education which is the highest policy-making authority in the field of education on national level and implementation of such plans as election of "school mayors" and "student councils" help students to learn citizenship issues, social participation, and living together.

As the new Minister of Education, I intend to facilitate the furtherance of more participation of parents, teachers, students, authorities, and elite in the system of education and exert more efforts on implementation of decentralization programs. Moreover, adoption of proper policies to utilize information and communication technologies (ICTs), to modernize teaching-learning approaches, to encourage innovation and creativity in students, to apply modern software-oriented technologies, and to develop human resources required in order to resolve the problems, to improve the quality of curricula and to achieve the desired results is also of particular interest to focus in the framework of the forthcoming needs of the country.

The Ministry of Education welcomes sharing the experiences and exchange of information in the changing world in order to enrich its curricula. It holds the fundamental belief that the profound relations among various educational institutions would facilitate the education and fostering of well-aware citizens who would not only enjoy the updated knowledge and information and be bound to their own culture, customs, and traditions but also respect other cultures and traditions culminating in more commitment toward peaceful coexistence and development of various approaches of dialogue among civilizations and the nations.

In closing, I plead the Almighty God to crown the efforts of my counterparts with success in achieving the objectives of Education for All. 