

Today it is an honor for me to be speaking again after a long time, being here with such honourable people is a great moment in my life. Dear brothers and sisters, do remember one thing, Malala Day is not my day... today is the day of every woman, every boy and every girl who have raised their voice for their rights. So, here I stand one girl among many. I speak, not for myself, but so those without voice can be heard. Dear friends, on the 9th of October 2012, the Taliban shot me on the left side of my forehead, they shot my friends, too. They thought that the bullet would silence us, but they failed. And out of the silence came thousands of voices. The terrorists thought that they would change my aims and stop my ambitions but nothing changed in my life except this: weakness, fear and hopelessness died; strength, power and courage was born. I'm here to speak up for the right of education of every child. I want education for the sons and daughters of the Taliban and all the terrorists and extremists. I do not even hate the Talib who shot me. Even if there is a gun in my hand and he stands in front of me. I would not shoot him. This is the compassion that I have learnt from Muhammad-the prophet of mercy, Jesus Christ and Lord Buddha. This is the legacy of change that I have inherited from Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and Muhammad Ali Jinnah. This is the philosophy of non-violence that I have learnt from Gandhi Jee, Bacha Khan and Mother Teresa. And this is the forgiveness that I have learnt from my father and from my mother. And I remember that there was a boy in our school who was asked by a journalist, why are the Taliban against education, he answered very simply – by pointing to his book he said, "A Talib doesn't know what is written inside this book, they think that God is a tiny little conservative being who will send girls to the hell just because of going to school! The terrorists are misusing the name of Islam in Pashtun society for their own personal benefits. Pakistan is a peace-loving democratic country Pashtuns want education for their daughters and sons; and Islam is religion of peace, humanity and brotherhood. Islam says it is not only each child's right to get an education rather it is their duty and responsibility. Today, I'm focusing on women's rights and girls' education because they're suffering the most. There was a time when women social activists asked men to stand up for their rights, but this time we will do it by ourselves. I'm not telling men to step away from speaking for women's rights, rather I am focusing on women to be independent to fight for themselves. So dear sisters and brothers, now it's time to speak up. So today we call upon the world leaders to change their strategic policies in favor of peace and prosperity. We call upon the world leaders that all the peace deals must protect women's and children's rights, a deal that goes against the rights of women is unacceptable. We can not all succeed when half of us are held back. So let us wage... So let us wage a glorious struggle against illiteracy, poverty and terrorism. Let us pick up... Let us pick up our books and our pens, they are our most powerful weapons. One child, one teacher, one book and one pen, can change the world. Education is the only solution. Education first. Thank you!