

Govts unable to meet growing higher education demand

Says Unesco

UNB, Dhaka

Governments across the world are struggling to keep pace with rapidly rising demand of higher education as many families cannot afford it, shows a Unesco paper released yesterday.

The new policy paper from the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) at Unesco reveals that the number of university-level students doubled to 207 million between 2000 and 2014.

The paper sets out a series of measures

to make higher education more equitable and affordable, including ensuring that student loan repayments do not exceed 15 percent of their monthly incomes. Anything more threatens to leave the disadvantaged behind.

Six specific recommendations are given to policymakers to ease the situation for all and help ensure both good policy and effective implementation.

These are keeping an eye on the target and make sure those who need help the most are getting it, guarantee equity and affordability in regulatory frameworks, step up monitoring and

establish national agencies to ensure equal opportunities, use different admissions criteria to respond to different individuals' needs, establish an agency to coordinate different forms of student aid, such as loans and grants; and limiting student loan repayments to 15 percent of their annual income.

Equitable and affordable higher education is essential to achieving the SDGs. The demand for higher education will continue to rise and, as it does, governments must respond by ensuring that all groups can access affordable, quality programmes, said the policy paper.