Senegalese President Macky Sall on Monday pledged that his government’s offer of 100 scholarships for women who have seen their right to education decimated under Taliban rule in Afghanistan to pursue their university’s degree in Senegal.

Senegalese President is among dignitaries who are attending the Women Deliver 2023 Conference (WD2023) which is taking place in the Rwandan capital Kigali from 17 to 18 July 2023.

Taliban restrictions on education have created a desperate situation for many young women as they continue to be excluded from school a few months after the Taliban takeover.

Speaking at the opening session of the Women Deliver 2023 international conference which is taking place in Kigali, Macky Sall promised 100 scholarships for Afghan students in the Senegalese public Universities.

The decision by Senegalese President aims to emulate the experience of Rwanda after authorities in Kigali have accepted the relocation of Afghan girls to Rwanda to continue their education. The move comes after Taliban decided to ban women and girls from secondary and tertiary education in Afghanistan.

Since the Taliban takeover of July 2021, it has rolled back a wide range of human rights of women and girls, including a ban on attending high school and university, especially.

According to Shabana Basij-Rasikh, Co-Founder and President of the School of Leadership, Afghanistan (SOLA), now operating in Rwanda, these are part of global efforts to draw Afghan girls by providing a rigorous education promoting critical thinking, a sense of purpose, and respect for self and others.

Basij-Rasikh started SOLA as a way to feel less guilty about her own luck and make sure that more youth, especially young women in Afghanistan have similar opportunities.

SOLA students in a classroom in Rwanda

Initially, SOLA started as a scholarship program where Afghan youth would be identified and facilitated to access qualified education and, later on, go back to their home country as highly skilled Afghans in whichever profession they chose.

When Kabul fell under the control of the Taliban, school managers evacuated immediately our entire school community and they safely landed in Rwanda on August 2021 before they resumed classes as usual.

Currently SOLA continue its recruitment over Zoom, from Afghan refugee communities and camps in countries around the world, to bring them to Rwanda.

The theme of Women Deliver 2023 is “Spaces, Solidarity, and Solutions” with the purpose enable inclusive and co-created spaces that foster solidarity for sustainable solutions on gender equality.

Delegates are expected to discuss ways to break barriers, address challenges, and identify opportunities to advance gender equality and improve the wellbeing of girls and women, in all their intersecting identities.