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The United Nations can look back on a proud record of working with many partners to dismantle colonialism, defeat deadly diseases, triumph over apartheid, advance international law, keep the peace in troubled areas and articulate a body of treaties to safeguard every person’s birthright to freedom, equality and dignity.

At the same time, there have been setbacks along the way, and the world has still not found the lasting peace and stability the founders had envisaged. The United Nations continues to work around the world and around the clock to confront the emergencies of the day while building the foundations for a better tomorrow. Peace, sustainable development, and human rights are the interrelated and mutually reinforcing pillars of our efforts.

The seventieth anniversary comes at a time of great transition for the human family. An organization founded with 51 Member States is now home to 193. A global population of an estimated 2.3 billion in 1945 is now a single human family with more than 7 billion members. Most of all, ours has become a world in which the distinctions between the national and the international are disappearing. In such an interconnected world, challenges faced by one become challenges faced by all.

Every day, the United Nations makes a positive difference for millions of people: vaccinating children; distributing food aid; sheltering refugees; deploying peacekeepers; protecting the environment; seeking the peaceful resolution of disputes and supporting democratic elections, gender equality, human rights and the rule of law.

The theme of this anniversary year -- “Strong UN. Better World” -- captures the importance of multilateralism. This is a time of test but far more one of tremendous opportunity. The United Nations looks forward to working with people everywhere to bring the ideals and objectives of the UN Charter to life, and to build lives of safety, prosperity and dignity for all. Thank you for your engagement and support.

Ban Ki-moon,
Secretary-General, United Nations
UN 70: Reaching out to Pakistani youth

This is a very special year. UN celebrates its 70th anniversary and I feel glad to be in Pakistan where there is a huge reserve of youth. Young Pakistanis are ready to make a difference in their country which has an important role as a member of the UN. Keeping this in view, UNIC has come up with interesting initiatives to engage Pakistani youth. These initiatives will not only empower youngsters across Pakistan but will also highlight how the UN is trying to make this world a better place to live.

Although this edition of the newsletter does carry information on the events that introduced these initiatives but I want to take this opportunity to let you know here briefly about UN Corner and the UN Wall. UN Corner is a communication campaign specially designed for young Pakistani students. UN Corners in Pakistani universities will provide an opportunity to both faculty and students of the member institutions to have access to independent and impartial information from the United Nations.

Also, through the UN Wall campaign, participating institutions country-wide will be able to disseminate messages of various agencies of the UN using a designated wall in their premises. The messages will relate to UN’s priority areas of work that include education, health, climate change, refugees, women empowerment food security and socio-economic development.

Our team at the UNIC Islamabad is very excited about these campaigns and will make its best to ensure Pakistani young people actively contribute to the global communication campaigns.

Vittorio Cammarota, Director, UN Information Centre
A picture is worth a thousand words and does not need any translation.” Mr. Vittorio Cammarota, Director of the United Nations Information Centre mentioned this adage referring to photography as a powerful communications tool.

The occasion was a UN photo exhibition to mark the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, “Pakistani People and United Nations - Human stories through photography”, which opened on April 17 at the City Heritage Museum in Lahore. The exhibition, produced in collaboration with the National College of Arts (NCA) and the Lahore Museum, includes two collections of professional photos. “Pakistani People and United Nations" showcased 74 professional photographs documenting human stories in the main areas of UN work in Pakistan: education, employment, food security, health, gender equality and social justice, humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, rule of law and governance. Commemorating the 70th anniversary, a special section from “We the people” collection presented a unique view of the United Nations’ history and its engagement with people from all over the world since its founding in 1945. In her opening remarks, Ms. Jacqui Badcock, United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, a.i., commended the cooperation and support extended by the Lahore Museum and the National College of Arts in organising the exhibition in Lahore. She hoped that the exhibition will offer people an opportunity to learn about the support provided to the people of Pakistan by agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations.

Mr. Quddus Mirza, Head of the Fine Art Department at the National College of Arts, and a renowned artist and art critic, observed that the multi-sector range of United Nations’ contributions, from development issues to humanitarian work, is well captured in these photographs and will make learning about the work of the United Nations much easier for the younger generation than learning about it through publications. Ms. Sumaira Samad, Director Lahore Museum, in her welcome remarks expressed her appreciation for representation of stories of the people of Pakistan through powerful photography in the exhibition. The exhibition remained open to public at the City Heritage Museum in Lahore from 16 April until 17 May 2015.
Showcasing Pakistan

The Lahore Museum is proud to be part of the global movement celebrating the 70th anniversary of the United Nations and to contribute to this important milestone by highlighting the outstanding contribution of the world body to the socio-cultural, educational and economic development of Pakistan.

The Lahore Museum is the oldest and largest museum of Pakistan. Its history is traced to 1855 and the present building, purpose-built for the museum, was inaugurated in 1894. It represents heritage from pre-historic era to modern times including collections from the Stone Age, the Indus Civilization and Gandhara art. The collections carry valuable coins, miniature paintings and manuscripts among others.

The Lahore Museum aspires to become a world class museum that seeks to showcase Pakistan’s cultural heritage, current situation and its future direction. Through exhibitions, educational programmes and by encouraging research and scholarship, it strives to transform the community’s relationship with art and history. As a repository of major collections, it documents, preserves and interprets its holdings in order to facilitate meaningful dialogue. Being the nation’s oldest museum, it aims at leading an association of museums within the country, and to create regional and international linkages.

The collaboration of Lahore Museum with the United Nations provides an opportunity for working together for promoting the work of the 19 agencies, funds and programmes of the UN system operating in Pakistan.

Using powerful photography the exhibition shared the contribution of the United Nations to development of Pakistan. In addition, this exhibition celebrated the achievement of Dr. Tehnyat Majeed who was awarded the UNESCO International Fund for the Promotion of Culture for the Lahore Museum-based exhibition and educational programme “Rediscovering Harappa”.

This exhibition opened an avenue to observe the diverse work of the UN and to foster further learning based on this work. For anyone who has interest in modern Pakistan, this exhibition provides a very good opportunity.

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Sumaira Samad,
Director, Lahore Museum
United we photographed

In our recent history, probably the greatest landmark in the realm of art is the democratic revolution. Which made everyone, whether trained at an institution or not, an artist; because most of us today carry a camera in our pockets or handbags. This small device that performs another function – of being mobile phone, has enabled a person to become a photographer and record his/her observations, impressions and experiences without a conventional skill, craft or mastery on the art of representation.

In a country like Pakistan that has been debating and delving on the notion of identity, this change in the nature of image making presents a different possibility. The act of documenting one’s surroundings – almost perpetually and punctually has suggested a new view on past and history. In fact the history of a nation may be separated between the era before digital (or mobile phone) photography and traditional photographs which were created with negative film and some chemical processes.

It would be interesting to collect, sort and examine the history of photography in Pakistan, since it would offer a difference between the trained eye and the raw hand. It may also indicate how the shift in approaches towards the subject took place. Now instead of formal, arranged and orchestrated pictures, a casual and relaxed manner of photographing someone (like selfie) is preferred. Compared to earlier attempts in capturing the ethnic, exotic and eccentric visuals of a society, the spread of photography has generalized the choice of subject matter in our times.

Yet as every image, act or concept is not without a political position, the simple act of pressing a button – or prolonging the touch of finger on a screen – denotes a person’s ideas and ideologies. In the exhibition organized by UNIC, one can detect how the artists – rather ordinary citizens – have portrayed their reality and realities. The poetics of politics is as evident in these pictures, as it can be grasped in our discussions, disagreements and debates. One must realize that the platform provided by UNIC is significant because it connects visions and views of a diverse range of individuals, some of those who have never considered themselves capable of making ‘art’. The occasion to experience this practice, pain or pleasure is the most important aspect of our image making which unites us with everyone else and within ourselves too.

Quddus Mirza,
Head of Fine Arts Department,
National College of Arts, Lahore
Innovations help fight polio in Pakistan

Anam wraps a shawl around her shoulder and covers her face as she tells me about her day to day work as a Communication Network (COMNet) social mobiliser. She works in Pakistani communities which are most at risk for the polio virus in the Punjab province. Anam helps vaccinators address parents’ concerns about vaccination, identifies children who have not been vaccinated, and oversees the effectiveness of polio vaccination campaigns.

Pakistan was responsible for more than 85% of the world’s polio cases in 2014, and is now one of the last remaining global polio endemics. In the first three months of 2015, Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only two countries in the world with recorded cases of polio.

Like many frontline health workers, Anam has to educate parents who refuse to vaccinate their children because of certain misinformation and preconceptions about polio. Reaching Pakistan’s 35 million children under five is a significant logistical challenge.

The busiest time for Anam is around campaigns. She gets up early and usually returns home late. Polio frontline workers in Pakistan often face security threats and workers, like Anam, have to be extremely cautious.

Parents usually have many questions and if Anam cannot answer even one, the chances that they refuse to vaccinate their children increase. To ensure such social mobilisers know how to talk to parents, they are provided training on polio and interpersonal communication skills.

In order to help COMNet to refresh their knowledge on interpersonal communication skills, UNICEF Pakistan has designed a series of “quizzes.” The phone quiz consisted of two questions about real situations frontline staff often encounter similar to those when a caregiver may get angry or aggressive, reluctant or unwilling to cooperate.

When Anam’s supervisor informed her she will get an automated call with two questions she thought UNICEF just needs some information from COMNet. However, after taking the quiz she understood that the call actually was about helping her.

It took 5 hours to ensure over 1,000 of COMNet social mobilisers completed the quiz. Anam notes she liked the option of the call back the most. “I was right in the middle of the visit to a household, talking to a parent. It was very comfortable for me to select call back in one hour option,” she says.

For the sake of security, we have not disclosed Anam’s real name as well as her real work location.
The Change-maker

“I’ve been trained as a Change-maker: I don’t wait for change to happen. I make it happen”. What can be more empowering for a person than understanding and acting upon this to spend one’s life. For Asma Ahmad Sheikh it hasn’t been an easy journey.

Asma Ahmad Sheikh was 17 when she dropped out of school. Helping with housework and looking after cattle were what her parents wanted from her. But Asma wanted more from her life.

Two years later, she heard about a business and technical training course and begged her parents to let her enroll. Empowerment through Creative Integration (ECI), the non-governmental organization that organized the training, helped her persuade her family, assuring them that she would be safe. ECI is technically and financially supported by International Labour Organization’s project, GE4DE (Gender Equality for Decent Employment) which collaborates with the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade & Development, Government of Canada.

“My family wasn’t keen. They didn’t think women should be running a business; that was a man’s job,” she said.

Faced with her determination her parents gave in. Ms Ahmad Sheikh got herself registered. The programme was called Change makers: business solutions to so-
ocial problems. Change makers identify demand for a product or service and mobilise people, especially women, to get the right vocational and enterprise development training to meet that demand.

Ms Ahmad Sheikh was trained in stitching and enterprise development, including social mobilization and value-chain analysis. She has used these skills to set up her own stitching business centre, which acts as a hub through which villagers get orders from business people for tailoring and handicrafts. This has eliminated the role of middlemen and helped them get orders for tailoring and embroidery crafts directly from the markets in Karachi and other major cities.

Ms Ahmad Sheikh lives in Thatta, one of the most underdeveloped districts in Pakistan, and within Thatta, her village is one of the poorest, with little education and few basic amenities such as safe drinking water and sewerage.

Ms Ahmad Sheikh not only runs her own stitching business centre, but also a community business centre where she has helped more than 30 other women and men get training and set up their own businesses in stitching, cosmetics, electrical work, livestock management and waste recycling.

“That means that 30 families now have more money that they can spend on sending their children to school, buying uniforms and school books, going to the doctor and buying medicines,” she said.

Her work led to Ms Ahmad Sheikh winning second prize in the global “Skills in Action Awards 2014”, organized by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNEVOC).
UNIDO Cleantech program: an innovative solution

Faisalabad is the hub of textile and other industries and these industries produce lots of industrial effluents which pollute the water streams in and around the city. This polluted water is very dangerous for local people especially for those in nearby villages as it affects crops as well as drinking water.

UNIDO Pakistan is executing a Global Cleantech Program, which is a global competition aimed at promotion of Innovations in the area of Clean technologies. The main aim of this competition is to foster innovations in Renewable energy, Energy Efficiency, Water Efficiency and Waste to Energy. In this regard, a call for awards has been launched for this purpose to covert clean technology innovations into viable businesses.

Under this program, UNIDO supported and trained many Cleantech innovators nationwide; one such team (semifinalist of 2014) developed an interesting and novel way of treating industrial waste water by means of a technique called Photo-remediation and Bioremediation in Faisalabad in 2014.

Treatment of industrial waste water is quite an expensive exercise. The innovative technology involves process of phytoremediation of contaminated soil as well as water. This has led to development of constructed wetlands for the irrigation of textile effluents to produce plant biomass/bio fuel production and carbon sequestration.

With further support of UNIDO program, the innovators intend to apply locally developed wetland technology for the cleanup of domestic and industrial effluent. It will help to convince industries and other organization such as Environment Production Department, Water and Sanitation Agency to apply this technology for the remediation of industrial and domestic effluent.
Fortification is globally considered as one of the most cost-effective strategies to address micronutrient deficiencies with long term impact and high return rate as evidenced by the Copenhagen Consensus 2008 and Lancet Series on Maternal and Child Nutrition 2008, 2013. The launching ceremony of AJK Wheat Flour Fortification Initiative was held in Islamabad under the aegis of National Fortification Alliance. The State Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir in collaboration with World Food Programme (WFP) and Micronutrient Initiative (MI) in its efforts to scale up nutrition interventions is committed for State wide wheat flour fortification. An estimated 300,000 tons of fortified wheat flour shall be produced annually while engaging with 11 flour mills in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK), reaching 65% of the population which are 2.6 million people including 500,000 women of child bearing age. 43.7 percent or over 10 million children under five years are stunted in Pakistan. The stunting prevalence in AJK is 31.7 percent whereas 46 percent are anemic compared to 62 percent in all the country. There is very high prevalence of other micronutrients deficiencies such as Vitamin A, D and Zinc. Only 7.3 percent of children 6-24 months receive the minimum acceptable diet, due mainly of poor dietary diversity.

Javed Iqbal, Minister for Food, AJK committed that the Government is ready to support policy, legislative and implementation measures for wheat flour fortification and this will be an important strategy to resolve AJK’s micronutrient deficiencies. Lola Castro, WFP Pakistan Country Director emphasized that increasing the micronutrient intake of the population through food fortification initiatives, mainly iron, folic acid and other essential micronutrients, is critical to reduce the prevalence of anemia and other micronutrient deficiencies in a sustainable way in the country and in AJK region as Pakistan is the 9th major wheat flour producer in the world with 25.3 million tons wheat flour produced in 2014 which is also exported. It is estimated that micronutrient malnutrition alone causes a loss of 2.6% of GDP (Pakistan Economic Survey 2011-12, Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan 2102) in Pakistan, a loss that can be ill afforded. Dr. Tausif Janjua, Country Director MI informed that this will only cost 10 paisa per kilogram of wheat flour to be fortified, but the impact will be huge, especially in reducing the maternal anemia. AJK Flour Mills Association and Pakistan Flour Mills Association representatives also assured their full support and commitment to this initiative and ensured that industry is willing to invest for the betterment of their population. Under Vision 2025, it is a national priority to reduce malnutrition, particularly the prevalence of anemia and other micronutrient deficiencies and food insecurity in order for Pakistan to achieve its full potential, and wheat flour fortification, recognized as one of the most cost effective and high return nutrition intervention is part of that essential strategy in Pakistan.
The final draft of the National Report for Habitat III Conference was presented and discussed at the national workshop held in Islamabad on April 7.

A two-pronged strategy consisting of conducting literature review and holding meetings and roundtable discussions with relevant stakeholders at all provincial headquarters, including Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad, Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) was adopted in preparing the draft national report. The Ministry of Climate Change requested the Provincial/State Planning and Development Departments to designate Coordinating Officers to facilitate discussions with relevant stakeholders. The meetings and roundtable discussions were held and the inputs received from this process, as well as literature review, have been incorporated in the draft National Report. UN-Habitat Pakistan and Oxfam GB provided technical advisory support and financial support, respectively.

Pakistan Government through the Ministry of Climate Change has led the entire process and full ownership of the report following the guidelines and format provided by UN-Habitat.


The Pakistan Government was to officially submit the National Report on or before the 2nd Preparatory Committee meeting for Habitat III in Nairobi, Kenya from 14 to 16 April 2016.

Mr. Sajjad Ahmad, Director General (Environment), Ministry of Climate Change, led the workshop and was joined by Dr. Manzoor Ahmed Awan, Associate Country Director, Oxfam GB and Ms. Bella Evidente, Country Programme Manager a.i., UN-Habitat Pakistan. Representatives from the Federal and Provincial Governments and Line Departments, Civil Society, and Urban Planners/Experts actively provided their feedback and valuable contributions. This participation encouraged the lead author of the report, Mr. Jawed Ali Khan.
Promoting climate change adaptation

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) chalked out a comprehensive programme to improve the environmental situation and address issues regarding emission of greenhouse gases and promoting climatic change adaptation and resilient development in Korangi Sector 7-A through Global Environmental Fund (GEF).

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in cooperation with PTA (SZ) Environmental Society Korangi Industrial Area Karachi conducted a consultative workshop. The workshop provided environmental scientists, experts and stakeholders a platform to discuss threadbare various issue concerning environmental degradation and the way forward for improving environmental canvas.

There can be no two opinions that climate change is now a reality. There is a consensus among scientists and experts that effective mitigation efforts especially with regards to checking emission of greenhouse gases and promoting greater adaptability is critical to the new reality. Among other, the scarcity of water is indeed the most pressing concern in wake of environmental degradation and fast paced climatic change. To overcome this challenge in Pakistan which has moved from a water affluent country to water stressed country, UNIDO has chalked out a program to improve the environmental situation of Korangi Sector 7-A through Global Environmental Fund (GEF).

Mr. Esam Alqararh, UNIDO Representative to Pakistan, while welcoming the participants, appreciated the role of Ministry of Climate Change and in particular extraordinary support of Mr. Arif Ahmad Khan, Federal Secretary for realization of the project under GEF funding. Mr. Alqararh also appreciated the support extended by Mr. Gulzar Firoz, President PTA southern zone and the private sector keen interest shown and for the upcoming GEF project.

The project would strengthen, enable sustainability, and enhance viability of sector level initiatives undertaken previously. Optimized leather production process, optimized and enhanced sector level combined facilities including CETP; their technical and professional capacities will be enhanced; and necessary add-ons will be initiated to reduce GHG emissions.

In depth discussions were conducted and concrete proposals to address the climate change issues of Korangi Sector 7-A was chalked out.
Climate change debate: Pakistan at COP21

A panel on “Climate Change: Pakistan at COP21” was organized by the United Nations in the context of the “United Nations Speaker’s Corner” at the National Book Fair Festival on 24th April 2015, at the Pak-China Friendship Centre.

The panel discussion was organized in collaboration with the COMSATS Centre for Climate Research & Development and with the French Embassy. Speakers included Olivier Huynh-Van from the Embassy of France, Nina Kylilainen from the UNDP, Shakeel Ahmad Ramay from the Sustainable Development Policy Institute and Sajjad Ahmad, the Director General Environment and Climate Change from the Ministry of Climate Change. Advisor to CCRD, Ambassador (retired) Shahid Kamal moderated the discussion.

Ambassador Shahid Kamal noted that 2015 is an important year for climate change given that the summit on sustainable development will also take place this year before the UN Climate Change Conference 2015 (COP21) is held in Paris in November/December.

UN representative, Vittorio Cammarota from the United Nations Information Centre was of the view that youth are very important and in the past we have involved the youth representatives at the climate change summits. For COP21 we are making sure the youth have a voice by collecting stories and drawings about climate change from schools across Pakistan and we intend to put them together in a publication and distribute it in Paris.
Corruption undermines development and hampers progress in developing countries and in Pakistan corruption has been recognized as a barrier to development.

As the main transit country and first line of defence Pakistan faces huge challenges when it comes to drug trafficking.

Ms. Heather Cruden, Canadian High Commissioner and Mr. Cesar Guedes, UNODC Representative in Pakistan handed over essential operational equipment to the ANF Balochistan. The assistance package comprising of high-powered binoculars, night vision devices and personnel safety equipment was received by Brigadier Adnan Azim, Force Commander ANF Balochistan. Staff from UNODC Pakistan and Canadian High Commission Islamabad was also present on the occasion.

The Canadian High Commissioner said she sincerely hoped the equipment will add strength to the ANF’s operational capacity against drug trafficking in the country, which will have a greater impact on the world at large.

Recognizing ANF’s recent achievements and contributions in the international fight against drug trafficking, Mr. Cesar Guedes reiterated UNODC’s resolve in closely working with the Government of Pakistan.

The equipment has been supplied by UNODC as part of its Pakistan Country Programme (2010-2015) which has been co-funded by the Government of Canada. The broad based assistance programme of UNODC helps the ANF in improving its drug interdiction capacity particularly covering Pakistan’s border with Afghanistan, an area that has seen a gradual increase in illicit drug trafficking over the recent years. ANF is the leading Pakistani counter-narcotics agency and an important stakeholder to UNODC’s capacity-building initiatives under the Pakistan Country Programme. Operating under the umbrella of Triangular Initiative (TI) between the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, UNODC’s capacity-building activities contribute to enhance operating capacities of Pakistani border management and counter-narcotics agencies charged with managing Pakistan’s borders with Afghanistan and Iran.

Thanking the Canadian High Commission and UNODC Pakistan for their assistance, Brigadier Adnan Azim reaffirmed ANF’s commitment in combating the menace of drug trafficking in Balochistan.

Handing over ceremony of equipment to the anti-narcotics force in Balochistan

On March 2, UNODC supported the National Anti-Corruption Campaign by handing over three hundred standees to the National Accountability Bureau’s (NAB) awareness and Prevention Wing. The standees, bearing several anti-corruption messages and slogans are being displayed in high traffic areas such as international airports, police stations and government agencies. The Say NO Campaign integrates a national theme coupled with the UN Global anti-corruption message. In Pakistan it is designed as an ongoing effort by the NAB and UNODC to raise awareness against corruption and encourage prevention.

This partnership between the NAB and UNODC demonstrates the importance that the agencies share to raise the awareness of the general public about the harm of corruption.

“Say No to Corruption” campaign

Corruption undermines development and hampers progress in developing countries and in Pakistan.
SBP- FAO training of trainers on agriculture value chain financing

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) in collaboration with Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations have organized a five days Training of Trainers (ToT) on “Agricultural Value Chain Financing” from 30 March to 3 April 2015 in Karachi. Two international Master Trainers, Mr. Calvin Miller from FAO, and Dr. Prasun Das from Asia-Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association (APRACA) will be presenting global best practices of various value chain financing models with the training participants.

The inaugural session was chaired by Mr. Syed Samar Hasnain, Executive Director, State Bank of Pakistan. The session was attended by around 100 participants largely including senior executives of commercial banks, officials of SBP and FAO. While addressing the audience, Mr. Hasnain highlighted SBP’s strategy of working closely with the banking and agriculture sectors for meeting the growing demand of agri-credit in the country. He appreciated the efforts of banks which have already achieved 58% of annual target of Rs. 500 billion for agri-credit disbursements in the first eight months of current fiscal year 2014-15.

Mr. Nasar Hayat, Assistant Representative at FAO highlighted the efforts and assistance that FAO has been extending to the Government of Pakistan in building and strengthening national agriculture infrastructure in the country. He emphasized the need of an inclusive and efficient agriculture and food systems. In particular, he shared FAO’s initiatives to support smallholder farmers of Balochistan to improve their yield as well as market access. He also said that this training designed by FAO is an effective tool to improve financial services available to the agricultural value chains.

On this occasion, representatives of Habib Bank Limited (HBL), Khushhali Bank and Engro Foods also shared their experiences of working with the emerging value chains in Pakistan.
The Balochistan Development Forum - challenges and growth opportunities

Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Nawaz Sharif inaugurated the Balochistan Development Forum 2015, a two-day conference on development-focused dialogue between the Balochistan government and development partners on 19 January in Islamabad.

An initiative of the UNDP-supported Chief Minister’s Policy Reforms Unit (CMPRU), the objectives of the forum are to share Balochistan government’s vision and plan for implementing development projects; create a policy, planning and implementation interface by engaging stakeholders for effective service delivery, and facilitate development partners in achieving development targets in the province. The CMPRU is assisting provincial government departments in making the necessary policies, frameworks and structures. UNDP helped draft the Balochistan Comprehensive Development Strategy 2013-2020 which highlights means to achieve growth, improve livelihoods and prosperity.

The situation in Balochistan is more challenging when it comes to performance on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The province lags behind national averages on all MDG indicators and it is estimated that by 2015 none of the goals will be met in the province. It is considered to be the most under developed province of the country having high multi-dimensional poverty with a poverty rate of 48 percent, extremely low literacy of 45 percent, accounted by extremely low level of enrolment in rural parts of the province and a gender parity index of 0.58 for primary education.

In his address, the Prime Minister said the Forum will provide a great platform for the government of Balochistan to share strategies with various development partners. The Prime Minister also pointed out that development in Balochistan has a lot of potential and will offer countless socio-economic opportunities for the population of the province.

Dr Kaiser Bengali, the head of the CMPRU was of the view that Balochistan is an extremely resource-rich province, yet it suffers from severe poverty. The CMPRU has identified development strategies for the next decade which are expected to boost the economy of the province.

The Chief Minister of Balochistan, Dr Abdul Malik Baloch, said that the province needs a three-dimensional strategy that focuses on institutional, infrastructural and human resource development. The CMPRU is assisting provincial government departments in making the necessary policies, frameworks and structures. UNDP supported the development of the Balochistan Strategic Plan 2013-2020 which highlights means to achieve growth, improve livelihoods and prosperity.

The situation in Balochistan is more challenging when it comes to performance on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The province lags behind national averages on all MDG indicators and it is estimated that by 2015 none of the goals will be met in the province. It is considered to be the most under developed province of the country having high multi-dimensional poverty with a poverty rate of 48 percent, extremely low literacy of 45 percent, accounted by extremely low level of enrolment in rural parts of the province and a gender parity index of 0.58 for primary education.

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Fifteen international experts from DFID, Asia-Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association (APRACA), Frankfurt School of Finance & Management, Policies, Markets and ICTs-CTA, FAO Rome and FAO Thailand converged in Islamabad for a conference. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations conducted a two days International Conference on the “Innovative Agricultural Financing” from 28 to 29 April 2015 in Islamabad. The Conference aimed to discuss innovative strategies and solutions to increase outreach of agriculture credit to small-scale farmers, and also highlight opportunities at the high-end of the market focusing on corporate farming and agriculture-food enterprise.

During the two days, the conference highlighted global experiences on agricultural financing through plenary discussions, breakout sessions, and “plug-and-play” sessions. Major topics included policy framework, value chains financing, warehouse receipts financing, risk management, and use of technologies.

Chief Guest Senator Ishaq Dar highlighted the high priority Government places on the development of country’s agriculture sector due to its strong linkages with other sectors of economy, and its high significance in ensuring food security, reducing poverty, and generating widespread prosperity.

In his address, Mr. Patrick T. Evans, FAO Representative to Pakistan said the Agriculture financing in Pakistan is limited with low percentage of finance going to the sector in relation to the needs and to its contribution to the country’s gross domestic product (GDP). Many farming households are excluded from adequate financing due to the bankers’ reliance on of-land titles for securing loans.

Experts also discussed the three main factors that contribute to agricultural growth i.e. increased use of agricultural inputs, technological change and technical efficiency. Increased use and a better mix of inputs also require funds at the disposal of farmers. In less developed countries like Pakistan where savings are negligible especially among the small farmers, agricultural credit appears to be an essential input along with modern technology for higher productivity.

The credit is important for development. It helps farmers and entrepreneurs to undertake new investments or adopt new technologies. So, it is vital to introduce agriculture value chain finance and other innovations into the banking sector and in building technical capacity to scale up its use and implement across the country.
Pakistan has not reached any of the Education for All goals with measurable targets, but made significant progress in closing the gender gap, particularly in the early years after 2000. When the goals were set, there were 68 girls enrolled for 100 boys. By 2007, there were 83 girls but this only increased to 87 by 2012.

These are the key findings of the 2015 EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) “Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges”, produced by UNESCO which has tracked progress on these goals for the past 15 years. The Report was launched on 22 April in Islamabad at ILO Auditorium in the presence of the Minister of State for Education, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Trainings, along with educational institute experts and representatives.

Baela Raza Jamil, Director Programs, Idara-e-taleem-o-Aghahi said that in spite of many efforts by the Government of Pakistan and the civil society to upgrade the education sector, the education indicators do not add up to a picture of a glass half full. To reverse this, it is imperative that partnerships between the government and other stake holders are matched by coherence, upgraded norms of quality learning facilities, post primary opportunities and above all progressively higher financing of education.

The GMR made the following recommendations:

**Complete the EFA agenda:** Governments should make at least one year of pre-primary education compulsory. Education must be free for all children. Literacy policies should link up with the needs of communities.

**Equity:** Governments, donors and civil society must develop programmes and target funding to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged so no child is left behind. Governments should close critical
data gaps in order to be able to direct resources to those most in need.

**Post-2015:** Future education targets for education must be specific, relevant and realistic.

**Close the finance gap:** The international community, in partnership with countries, must find the means to bridge the US$22 billion annual finance gap for quality pre-primary and basic education for all by 2030. Vibeke Jensen, Representative/Director UNESCO Islamabad concluded in her presentation of the GMR report by stressing that plans for achieving new goals will need to be set including ensuring of the implementation of government commitment to raise the share for education from 2% to 4% GDP.

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**Artful Initiative: UNDP Pakistan and Lahore Literature Festival 2015**

UNDP Pakistan joined the Government of Punjab, a number of embassies and consulates, education institutions and the corporate sector to support the annual Lahore Literary Festival. I attended the Festival for the third year in a row along with many colleagues.

This kind of public space is absolutely crucial for democratic values to flourish and this edition provided a brilliant opportunity for intelligent, rational, open and respectful exchange and dialogue accompanied by poetry and music. Pakistan at its best!

Despite a bomb blast a few days ahead of the festival, the show went on and brought together in Lahore an exceptional group of authors, intellectuals and journalists for over 80 sessions and book launches.

UNDP is proud to have supported the amazing and tireless work of the team organizing the festival.
Picture this: A woman on top of the world

Picture it - a Nepali schoolgirl on the top of Mount Everest. At primary school, Nimdoma used to dream of doing extraordinary things. She made her dream come true and didn’t stop at Everest, which she conquered when she was 17 years old. Nimdoma, a wonderful example of women’s empowerment, went on to climb the highest mountain on every continent with a Nepali, all-woman, climbing team.

On International Women’s Day this year, I want to pay tribute to the girls and women who dream big. Empowering women empowers humanity. At the World Food Programme, we believe that women and girls who are empowered will lead to our ultimate goal, a world with zero hunger. Women and their work – paid and unpaid – are central to the production, preparation and provision of food, so are essential to food and nutrition security.

While every March 8 we celebrate the many images of women, there is another picture that comes to mind, of women’s hunger and deprivation. A WFP gender assessment of one of the poorest countries in the world in 2014 found women had half the time that men had to rest in the course of a day. At 7am, when men woke up to have their breakfast, women had already worked for two hours to prepare the food, fetch water and get the children washed and they also went to bed later.

We will only achieve a zero-hunger world when women, girls, men and boys have equal opportunities, equal access to resources, and a regular voice in the decisions that shape their world. Picture the future.

Steps it Up

In observing International Women’s Day on 8 March 2015, Punjab made new commitments and pledges to support women’s issues and their protection. Mr. Shahbaz Sharif, Chief Minister of Punjab in a commemorative event held in Lahore, Punjab, announced establishment of Violence Against Women Centres in the province saying these would be “the first line of defence for women victims”. He added that two days earlier three provincial bills and amendments were made in the existing law, dealing with family laws and courts, as well as enhancing penalties on child marriages.

Mr. JamshedKazi, Country Representative, UN Women, in his message said “UN Women urges Pakistan, its provinces and regions, to “step it up” for gender equality, with substantive progress to eliminate inequalities faced by women and girls by 2020”. In his speech Mr. Kazi conveyed a quote from the International Women’s Day message of Mr. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General: “When we unleash the power of women, we can secure the future for all”.
Two decades after the world's largest gathering of women adopted a far-reaching agenda for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, women are only marginally better off with respect to equality at work.

"Are working women better off today than they were 20 years ago?" asked International Labour Organisation (ILO) Director General Guy Ryder. "The answer is a qualified yes. Has this progress met our expectations? The answer is decidedly no. We need to be innovative, to reframe the debate and to intensify the focus on ensuring the rights of women at work, and promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment."

Progress in realising the Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 has been mixed, the ILO said in a briefing note prepared for International Women's Day.

The ILO also published a new working paper on the “motherhood pay gap” that imposes a wage penalty often over and above the wage gap already experienced by women worldwide. According to it, mothers often earn less than women without children, depending on where they live and how many children they have.

Yet women continue to experience widespread discrimination and inequality in the workplace. Globally, the gap in labour market participa-
tion rates between men and women has decreased only marginally since 1995. Currently, about 50% of all women are working, compared to 77% of men.

Access to maternity protection has improved, though many women are still left out. Today, women own and manage over 30% of all businesses, but tend to be concentrated in micro and small enterprises. Women sit on 19% of board seats globally, and only five per cent or less of the CEOs of the world’s largest corporations are women.

Violence remains a major factor undermining women’s dignity and access to decent work. Some 35% of all women are victims of physical and/or sexual violence that affects their attendance at work.

A gender pay gap persists, both for women with and without children. In general, women earn on average 77% of what men earn with the absolute gap widening for higher-earning women.

“The overriding conclusion 20 years on from Beijing is that despite marginal progress, we have years, even decades to go until women enjoy the same rights and benefits as men at work,” said Shauna Olney, Chief of the gender, equality and diversity branch of the ILO.
Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ICCI) along with UNIDO celebrates International Women’s Day

The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) in collaboration with UNIDO celebrated International Women’s Day. The theme of the event was ‘Economic Empowerment of Women – A Way Forward for Prosperous Pakistan’ and was attended by 40 UNIDO beneficiary women entrepreneurs among other participants.

Speaking at the occasion, Esam Alqararah, UNIDO representative, said Pakistani women were very talented but facing many problems, including gender inequality. He said UNIDO had initiated several projects for gender equality for bringing women in the mainstream. He further said UNIDO had assisted about 6,000 women to enter into entrepreneurial activities who were now making useful contribution to the economic development of Pakistan.

Esam assured that UNIDO in affiliation with ICCI would continue to play a significant role for promoting and creating new opportunities for economic empowerment of women. He suggested ICCI establish a permanent centre for display of women entrepreneurs’ products to motivate other aspiring women to start business ventures, and UNIDO could be more than willing to provide technical assistance to them.

In his welcome address, ICCI Senior Vice President Shakeel Munir said women were almost 51pc of Pakistan’s total population and there was an urgent need to enhance their role in the economic development of the country by creating enabling environment and providing them with better opportunities. He further expressed that in many developed economies, women’s participation rate in the workforce was over 60pc, but share of women in Pakistan’s workforce was just 25pc, which necessitated the government should take more legislative measures and provide better incentives to bring them into the mainstream.

Shakeel appreciating the role of UNIDO for taking initiatives for economic empowerment of women said the ICCI would like to work closely with UNIDO for capacity building and skills development of women entrepreneurs.

Many women entrepreneurs assisted by UNIDO shared their success stories. They also pointed out that banks were charging high interest rates on business loans, which was a major bottleneck for women therefore, they stressed the government ensure easy credit facility with low interest rates for women entrepreneurs. They endorsed the idea of establishing a display centre so they could showcase their products with confidence and contribute for improving trade and exports.
Recognizing services to gender equality and women’s empowerment

An economically empowered woman artisan, Shahida Bibi, presented her handmade Kashmiri crafts during a two-day exhibition. Delightfully she said “I am determined to establish my own set-up and teach what I have learnt to other women and by selling my products”.

This was the occasion where UN Women and local Women Development Departments in celebrating International Women’s Day recognized the services of individuals and organizations to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.

In Quetta, women were honored for their continued work on development and women’s rights, despite the regional challenges, and included parliamentarians, police officers, teachers, human rights activists and community workers. UN Women staff were also recognized for their efforts and dedication in driving the gender agenda at the grass-root level. In Muzaffarabad, organizations were also recognized for providing decent work opportunities to marginalized groups and individuals, including home based women workers, in dress making and embroidery. In developing new skills and confidence of these women, these organizations have provided greater exposure to markets and increased earning opportunities.

Gender and social reconstruction

International Women’s Day also gave way to provincial dialogues on “Gender and Social Reconstruction” by Women Development Departments and UN Women. In highlighting the importance of women’s role in the process of social reconstruction in the context of complex emergencies, natural disasters and crisis, civil society groups and women activists stressed that “women are the most vulnerable members of society, hence despite their valuable contributions, the courageous survivors are deprived of their due rights in every walk of life”. They called for strengthening women departments, recruitment of women Rescue 211 teams, establishment of protection units, and women’s enhanced participation in decision-making.

Ms. Yasmeen Lehri, Member of Balochistan’s Provincial Assembly, said “We have passed many bills protecting the rights of women, however more efforts were required for their implementation”. Male activists and government officials actively participated in the discussions.
UN Women, in engaging with and fostering strategic partnerships with the public and private sectors under their corporate responsibility on social welfare, launched a socio-economic initiative for the women of Kashmir titled: ‘Empowered Women, Prosperous Family’ on 10 March 2015. This follows a tripartite agreement between UN Women, the Women’s Development Department (WDD) of Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK) and the Bank of Azad, Jammu and Kashmir in 2014, on economic empowerment opportunities for local marginalized women. The project, launched to commemorate International Women’s Day, is expanding micro-credit and financial borrowing schemes to women from five districts including Muzaffarabad, Poonch and Bagh. Skilled women enrolled in training centers of the Women Development Department are selected to benefit from these schemes, by establishing small businesses and forming market linkages.
Abolish all discriminatory laws against women and accept them as equal citizens", was the demand of speakers during a large rally of women workers in Hyderabad, Sindh, on the occasion of International Women’s Day. The working women, mainly home based women workers and women agricultural workers, carried red flags and raised banners inscribed with their demands, including the right to access and benefit from social protection. The rally was arranged jointly by the Home Based Women Workers Federation (HBWWF) and the Sindh Agriculture General Workers Union affiliated National Trade Union Federation (NTUF).

Speakers paid homage to “the struggle of those working women who started their successful movement in the year 1844 for increase in their wages, betterment in their working hours and living standard. This day emerged as a symbol of the era which accepts that the betterment of mankind and society depends on freedom of women. It is necessary for social and economic progress that all the discriminatory laws against women should be ended and the workers of informal sector, especially women working in the home based and agriculture sectors should be accepted as worker and facilitated with all social security schemes”. Speakers also realized that without giving working women social protection industrial progress is not possible. The uplift and freedom of society is linked to the freedom of women. The working women of Pakistan would play a vanguard role in the rising labor movement and play their due role in bringing revolutionary changes in the country.
Eighteen local private companies from Sialkot, Punjab, and the Employers’ Federation of Pakistan have in the last few months signed the Seven Principles of Women’s Empowerment under the theme “Equality Means Business”. The Women’s Empowerment Principles help private sector organizations and companies to focus on key elements integral to promoting gender equality at the work place, market place and within the community. The seven principles are the result of collaboration between the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the UN Global Compact.

One of the latest signatories to extend support to the principles is the Employers’ Federation of Pakistan, comprising of 88 staff members and 65 member companies, and is associated with the UN’s International Labour Organization (ILO). The President of the Federation, Mr. Khawaja Muhammad Nauman, signed the CEO Statement of Support in a ceremony held in Karachi, Sindh, on 10 March 2015.

UN Women is supporting these companies to mainstream gender in their work and to promote the Women’s Empowerment Principles among their employees, and member companies.

Male cyclists from Pakistan’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province gathered for a race under the banner: ‘Pedal Against Violence, Ensuring Peace.

This race, the first of its kind in Peshawar, saw thousands of spectators mostly men and boys come out in support.

In pedaling miles to raise awareness of violence against women and girls, UN Women sponsored one team of five cyclists that sported t-shirts with the messages “#orangeurhood” and “orange your neighbourhood - end violence against women and girls”. Visibility and messages of the #orangeurhood t-shirts spread among the cyclists and spectators through social media and local news channels, and more so as Team #orangeurhood won. This awareness raising initiative to end violence against women follows UN Women’s support to the provincial alliance on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Alliance in producing and launching a radio play “Tohmat” on HIV/AIDS as a form of Gender Based Violence.
UNDP promotes key governance reforms at federal and provincial levels

Political leadership and civil service are two wheels of the democratic system that have to work in harmony to promote good governance and produce bigger, efficient results for transformational change. The Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms of Pakistan on March 4 signed an agreement for $11.6 million with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to support implementation of key governance reforms at federal and provincial levels.

This joint project between the Planning Commission of Pakistan and UNDP will develop and expand the capability and accountability of the public sector over four years. It will further improve the effectiveness of the commission to convene, analyse, propose and support the implementation of select key reforms, including monitoring and evaluation of development programs, poverty and inequality monitoring and state structure modernisation.

The Planning Commission will benefit from UNDP’s technical expertise through its global governance and public administration reform practice, its Center for Public Service Excellence in Singapore and the Bangkok Regional Hub.

The project will sustain synergies and work closely with a range of public institutions, national think tanks, expert groups and universities, other multilateral and bilateral international cooperation institutions.

UNDP Country Director Marc-André Franche said, “Governance reforms in public institutions have received new momentum thanks to a joint initiative launched by the prime minister. The partnership with the Planning Commission will support governance reforms in public sector institutions, monitor the implementation of development plans and improve coordination between provinces and departments. The UNDP’s global experience and expertise will enable us to utilise a diverse set of communication tools to engage stakeholders and citizens to ensure their ownership for the reform process that will be crucial to prioritize action well.”
“Point six-six (.66) should be rounded up,” the trainer insisted, “You must be very clear on it with your returning officers – or the members may raise objections.” The District Electoral Commissioners meeting in a local hotel in Quetta city jotted down notes and tapped out the exercises on their cell phones to make sure they were clear. Simple issues like rounding could mean the difference between success and failure in elections.

This training was part of a new approach to operational training that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) used for the final phase of Local Government Elections in Balochistan. On 28 January, Balochistan led the nation in finalizing the local government election. In this final round of elections, the ECP needed to prepare their officials to oversee the election of leadership in more than 600 local bodies – from influential posts like the Mayor of Quetta to grassroots positions like the Vice Chairmen of a Union Council. The ECP and UNDP have already been using the award-winning BRIDGE training approach to improve the capacity of the election staff, and to adapt the approach to the operational environment in Balochistan.

The ECP and UNDP took special care with this training, because initial rounds had been plagued by issues from mid-election changes to the legal framework, unfilled seats due to a dearth of nominations, and concerns about the independence and competence of some returning officers appointed from the provincial administration.

The newly-elected bodies need both technical assistance and resources to lead on development, but the laws governing local bodies in the province leave much of the responsibilities and financial resources with the provincial government.

No democratic system is complete without the third tier of local government, and vibrant local government structures are critical to accomplishing the Millennium Development Goals. Balochistan has set the pace and shown what is possible.
Inauguration of the Service Delivery Center (SDC) at Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with technical support of UN-Habitat

For ensuring rights to citizens especially women and children proper documentation is essential. The joint initiative of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and UN-Habitat in providing computerized land records, especially to the poor and women, is a bold step forward towards improving land governance system in the province.

On 28 March 2015, Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Mr. Imran Khan and UN-Habitat Country Representative Ms. Bella Evdente, along with Revenue Minister Mr. Ali Amin Gandapur and Minister for Elementary and Secondary Education Mr. Atif Khan, inaugurated the first ever Service Delivery Center (SDC) in Mardan.

The establishment of Service Delivery Centre in Mardan was initiated by the Board of Revenue, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with technical support of UN-Habitat having high level of expertise in Land Property Management, Information Technology and Geographical Information System (GIS). UN-Habitat team developed in-house the software application for the computerization of land records, provided training and capacity building of BOR personnel and spearheaded the GIS component of the process. The computerization of land records in Mardan district had been completed and the SDC is now providing services to the public after its inauguration. This initiative will not only enhance transparency in the land records maintenance but will also provide better & secure data repository system.

With technical assistance of UN-Habitat and support from the Board of Revenue, a state of the art but user-friendly computer software was developed in-house wherein GIS technology was added to the quality MIS component of the system, populated with live data for testing, refined and deployed, including the establishment of district-level Service Delivery Centers. The Board of Revenue is currently replicating these efforts in 7 additional districts of the province.

It is the first such facility across the province and the automation of land records would not only bring relief to people but it would address land disputes as well.
Implementing accountability and anti-corruption measures in Government policies is the key to ensure transparency and holding public offices accountable for their services.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Country Office Pakistan convened a national dialogue to highlight and discuss the various issues related to corruption in Pakistan. The event, “A National Dialogue to Promote Good Governance and Development” was chaired by His Excellency Mamnoon Hussein, the President of Pakistan who also served as the chief guest.

The dialogue was attended by members of the Government, civil society partners and representatives from the International Community. Cesar Guedes, Representative, Mr. QamarZamanChaudhary, Chairman of the NAB and Mr. AshfarAusaf Ali, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Law were featured speakers. A special segment of the programme included two secondary school children who gave rousing speeches about corruption and the lack of accountability and their impact on them as children. This dialogue will be followed by series of roundtable discussions involving experts from the area of accountability and anti-corruption to develop a framework for Pakistan to move forward in its anti-corruption agenda, including effective implementation of the UNCAC. United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), Pakistan is scheduled to complete its UNCAC review in 2015.
It is difficult to imagine the pain and anguish that Gull Bano must have gone through when you first meet her. She is a smart advocate and goodwill ambassador. Fistula survivor GulBano was treated for fistula few years back at Koohi Goth Women’s Hospital in Karachi after living with fistula for two years following the birth of her stillborn baby. She is happy now and told us “My life has a meaning once more”.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) working with its partner, Pakistan National Forum for Women’s Health, and in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan, will hold a three day (24-26 March) Regional Conference on Fistula in Lahore, Pakistan, themed “From Despair to Dignity”.

Fistula is an abnormal tearing between a woman’s birth canal and bladder and/or rectum that causes her to leak urine and/or faeces uncontrollably. It is caused by obstructed labor due to lack of access to timely and skilled emergency obstetric care. An estimated 2 million women in developing countries are living with this condition, and some 50,000 to 100,000 new cases develop each year. It is estimated that 3,500 cases of obstetric fistula occur each year in the remote areas of Pakistan.

The impact of untreated fistula on the lives of women is devastating. In most cases, stigma pushes women living with the condition to hide and isolate themselves from their families and communities. It hampers them from participating in income generating activities thus pushing them into despair and poverty. Delaying the age of first pregnancy, increasing access to contraception, skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care are critical to the prevention of obstetric fistula.

Recognizing Fistula as a global public health problem, in 2003, UNFPA and its partners launched the global Campaign to End Fistula. Since then, UNFPA has supported programs to prevent, and treat fistula, and to rehabilitate and empower fistula survivors. Over the last decade, in Pakistan alone, UNFPA has funded around 4,000 fistula repair surgeries, rehabilitated 500 fistula survivors and trained more than 900 health personals, including surgeons, on fistula repair surgery and care. UNFPA also established fistula treatment and referral centers that provide treatment for the hundreds of women living with fistula and awaiting surgery.

The campaign has not only helped to restore women’s health, but has also brought a renewed sense of purpose.

“Fistula is a human rights tragedy” said Ms. Sarah Masale Deputy Representative UNFPA Country Office, Pakistan. “To address this tragedy, we need to invest adequately in the provision of reproductive health services, to eliminate social and economic inequalities, to prevent child-marriage and early child-bearing and to keep our young girls in school”.

There has been considerable progress but there is a long way to go before the need in Pakistan is met.
Pakistan National Forum for Women’s Health and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in collaboration with Government of Pakistan organized The Regional Conference on Fistula, themed “From Despair to Dignity” in Lahore, Pakistan. The purpose of the Conference was to provide an evidence-based advocacy platform for mustering commitments from political leadership and decision-makers for appropriate policy formulation to address obstetric fistula.

The event started with a Midwifery Conference in which renowned speakers from Government; regulatory body, Midwifery Association and development partners highlighted the role of midwives as essential frontline health workers in saving lives of mothers and newborns. Particular emphasis was laid on the critical role of midwives in prevention of obstetric complications that could lead to obstetric fistula.

Two days were dedicated to scientific sessions on obstetric fistula led by national and regional experts. These experts shared various features of fistula and its devastating consequences on the lives of women and girls and its impact on families and communities.

A dedicated panel discussion was held on the issue of increasing incidents of iatrogenic fistula in Pakistan, and this highlighted the key factors such as skills-gap among practitioners. The forum recommended close collaboration between urologists and gynecologists to address this highly avoidable condition.

Successfully this advocacy initiative brought together relevant stakeholders from Federal and Provincial Ministries, regulatory bodies, academia, experts, women activists, development partners, services providers and the media fraternity to re-commit to evidence-based policy change and strengthened collective efforts and adequate investment towards the provision of quality reproductive health services, elimination of social and economic inequalities, prevention of child-marriage and early child-bearing, and promotion of girls-education in order to eradicate obstetric fistula in Pakistan and in the region.

Delegates from Afghanistan, Nepal, Yemen, Bangladesh, and key officials from the Government of Pakistan, including Provincial Ministers for Population Welfare Punjab, participated in this important event which was attended by over 350 participants.
The UN in Pakistan expressed deep concern at the increasing number and pace of executions in the country since December 2014, and at the government’s recent announcement that it has now withdrawn its moratorium on the death penalty for all cases, not only terrorism-related. It has also been reported that among those executed there are persons who were minors when the offence was committed. According to some estimates, there are more than 8,000 prisoners on death row.

The UN also expressed concern about cases where the death penalty was handed to minors and welcomed reviews of these cases, such as the recent case of Shafqat Hussain.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated, “The death penalty has no place in the 21st century,” reflecting the global trend away from capital punishment. More than 160 UN member states with a variety of legal systems, traditions, cultures and religious backgrounds have either abolished the death penalty or do not practice it.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein expressed deep regret at the resumption of executions in Pakistan, stressing that no judiciary – anywhere – can be infallible. He noted in December 2014 that “this is particularly disappointing given that just last week, a record 117 states voted in the UN General Assembly in favour of an international moratorium on the use of the death penalty”.

The UN said that there was no scientific proof the death penalty served as a deterrent or contributed to combating crime or violent extremism. While it appreciated the need for effective counter-terrorism measures to protect people, including children, such action must strengthen human rights and be proportionate and necessary in a democratic society.

Under international treaties, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Pakistan legally committed itself to ensuring due process and not imposing the death penalty. Moving away from the penalty will contribute to human development, dignity and rights, the UN added.

The organisation urged Islamabad to reinstate its moratorium as soon as possible. It said it was ready to support Pakistan in doing so and assist in strengthening the existing justice system if it was requested.
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) provincial assembly unanimously passed the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 2015 on 6th of April 2015. This follows the ongoing labour law reform in the country which is a result of 18th amendment to the constitution under which, social subjects including labour was devolved to the provinces. The Government of KP had already promulgated 8 labour laws and this is another milestone. The Department of Labour KP with the support of the ILO is organizing awareness raising seminars and trainings on the existing legislation to engage workers, employers and government officials responsible for the implementation of enacted laws across all districts in KP.

There are 28 articles in this Act which provide for the prohibition of the slavery and debt bondage in all of its manifestations and regulating matters leading to debt bondage of workers. Once assented to by the Governor KP, the Act will be applicable throughout the province of KP.

Some of the salient features of the Act are as follows: bonded labour system shall stand abolished and every bonded labourer shall be free and discharged from any obligation to render any bonded labour; No person shall make any advance under, or in pursuance of, the bonded labour system or compel any person to render bonded or forced labour; any custom or tradition, practice or contract and agreement making a person or his family member bound to work or render service as a bonded labourer shall be void and inoperative; Liability to repay bonded debt to stand extinguished; no advance shall be extended or taken for extracting or rendering any labour under bonded labour system; Interest Free Advance (Qarza Hasna) is allowed in a prescribed manner and will not exceed three times of the minimum rates of wages; property of bonded labour to be freed from mortgage; and creditor not to accept payment against extinguished debt; The authorities to be specified for implementing the provisions of the act; duty of the authorised officers, inspectors, maintenance and production of records, punishment for enforcement of bonded labour, punishment for extracting bonded labour, punishment for omission or failure to restore possession of property to bonded labourer, punishment for obstructing inspector and abetment to be an officer; Vigilance committees shall be set up at the district level in a prescribed manner and a 1st class magistrate shall try an offence under this act. Provisions with regard to protection against all sorts of discrimination including on the basis of gender have also been made.
Aiming at enhancing the understanding about the human rights principals the United Nations in Pakistan published an Urdu version of the UDHR and launched it at the Speaker’s Corner session, held during the National Book Festival in Islamabad.

Dr. Jacqui Badcock, Resident Coordinator a.i. opened the session and briefed participants about the historical back ground of the UDHR and concept of the human rights among different civilizations. She said that an understanding of the articles of the Declaration allows us to debate the principles behind legal solutions applied in national laws, such as Part II of the Constitution of Pakistan – Fundamental Rights and Principles of Policy. Francesco d’Ovidio, who is the Country Director of International Labour Organisation (ILO) and chair of the Human Rights Task Force in the United Nations in Pakistan further elaborated the universal nature of human rights and said that every individual is a rights-holder and is entitled to the same rights without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. He informed that Pakistan was one of the initial signatories of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and shares a heritage of this ‘common commitment’ to human rights. Pakistan has also ratified seven of the nine core human rights treaties.

The Universal Declaration for Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted on 10 December 1948 as the “common standard of achievement for all peoples and nations”. The Declaration for the first time in human history spelled out basic civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all human beings should enjoy. Moderated by the UNIC Director, Vittorio Cammarota, the Speaker’s Corner was jointly organised by the United Nations System in Pakistan and the National Book Foundation in Islamabad.
A unique partnership to combat child labour

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and Stora Enso have entered into a unique public-private partnership to strengthen Stora Enso’s global policy and efforts to promote decent work and progressively eliminate child labour in its value chain in Pakistan.

The agreement has global and local components. The first one will focus on aligning policy and practice with international labour standards and increasing the company’s knowledge of child labour and other labour rights. The second component aims to promote decent work and combat child labour in the value chain of Bulleh Shah Packaging (BSP), Stora Enso’s joint venture in Pakistan.

The Director of the Governance and Tripartism Department of the ILO, Moussa Oumarou said, “The ILO is very pleased to enter into this partnership which will make an important contribution to the realization of decent work and the elimination of child labour in Pakistan, and support Stora Enso in its efforts to demonstrate its respect for fundamental labour rights throughout its value chain.”

Karl-Henrik Sundström, CEO at Stora Enso was of the view that for Stora Enso, this partnership is an important step in enhancing human and labour rights in their operations and supply chains.

The global component of the partnership will start with the ILO providing Stora Enso technical support to strengthen its policies and due diligence processes on child labour and other labour rights.
International buyers formalise their cooperation for a more responsible and competitive textile industry

A total of 14 brands in the garment and textiles sector convened in Karachi on Feb 27 and agreed on a governance structure for operations of the Buyers’ Forum in Pakistan convened by the Netherlands government, International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

This follows a meeting in December that saw the establishment of the forum to help international buyers -- ranging from Walmart’s and Levi’s to Hema and Primark -- speak with one voice in order to improve labour standards in Pakistan’s garment and textiles industry.

The forum agreed to work on knowledge management and sharing of best practices, public-private partnerships and key thematic areas like labour inspection, occupational safety and health as three major objectives to work on in future.

The forum is inspired by the Bangladesh model where buyers jointly tackle complex challenges that are both factory-specific and that thread across the sector and supply chain for stable and sustainable improvement, productivity and competitiveness.

Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Marcel de Vink apprised the participants that the Netherlands government jointly with the ILO is planning to support the improvement of Pakistan’s labour inspection system through a project worth $1 million. Part of this programme would also focus on engaging with buyers and streamlining private audits.

ILO Country Director Francesco d’Ovidio shared that the Buyers’ Forum should work towards encouraging engagement of suppliers and agents to promote environmental, labour and health and safety compliance through promoting enterprise-level advisory services and training across the value chain to impact those industrial units where compliance gaps are stark. He also shared that on Feb 17 ILO signed a partnership agreement with the Pakistan Textiles Exporters Association for promoting Labour Law Compliance in textile sector in Faisalabad.

The preparatory meeting was held on the side of the largest trade fair in Pakistan -- the Pakistan Expo. This provides an opportunity to showcase the positive steps being taken to promote better business initiatives.

Alamgir Feroz from El Corte Ingles, representing the Buyers’ Forum, said the meeting was an important initiative by the IFC, the Netherlands government and the ILO and will help improve the image of Pakistan and open avenues for the textile sector to explore better trade initiatives.

The participants agreed to convene the next meeting in April.
Awards for excellence in labour journalism

Four journalists from print and electronic media from across Pakistan won awards for excellence in reporting on issues relating to labour and gender during the second media awards organised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on March 16.

Chief guest was former information minister and current president of The Jinnah Institute Sherry Rehman. Also present were Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan Heather Cruden and International Labour Organisation (ILO) Country Director Francesco d’Ovidio.

Gender and Labour Reporter of the year award was won by Shahzada Irfan of The News on Sunday. Iram Noor of You Magazine won the award for the Best Female Gender and Labour Reporter of the year, also awarded for excellence in reporting for her work printed during the last year. Aoun Sahi of The News on Sunday won the best story award for ‘Work Until Tehminas Die’ focusing on the plight of domestic workers.

In the electronic media category, Mohmmad Kamran Butt of Geo won the first prize for his short documentary ‘Aisay Waisay Log’ focusing on the issues of domestic workers.

Speaking about a story on workplace harassment, Asma Shaheen, a trainee from Pakistan Workers’ Federation leadership development programme, explained how she had used her skills and training to train over 500 women and men in different schools and hospitals in Haripur and managed to get several organisations to improve implementation of the law against workplace harassment.

The Canadian high commissioner
reaffirmed her country’s commitment to promoting gender equality in Pakistan “to improve gender equality and unlock the power and potential of women”.

Sherry Rehman appreciated the journalists’ efforts to show that gender sensitive reporting wasn’t something to do because a project requires it or because someone asked them to, but because it is the right thing to do. She also appreciated the women behind the stories, saying “when you empower women, you create circles of empowerment. And those circles are growing”.

Francesco d’Ovidio said good, gendered labour reporting can help raise awareness about the issues of the 60 million workers in Pakistan about who very little was heard. Though women’s labour force participation was very low at only 23% they worked in conditions of vulnerability and needed the media’s spotlight to address their issues and highlight their successes. “Media is the shaper of the society, it can vulgarise it, brutalise it or help lift it onto a higher level,” he said.

Pakistan has inched forward towards the realisation of International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 11 of 1921 that it inherited in 1947. The Sindh government after the 18th Amendment has taken the lead to enact Sindh Industrial Relations Act-2013 (SIRA-2013) which for the first time has recognised the agriculture and fishery workers as industrial workers. These workers have thus earned the freedom and right to associate, form trade unions and collectively bargain with their employers -- landlords within Sindh.

This was revealed in an awareness raising seminar on SIRA organised by Sindh Labour Department, ILO, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and UN-Women in Hyderabad. Others among the audience were district administrations, representatives of the judiciary, police and agriculture, fisheries, livestock and poultry departments. Civil society representatives, academia and the media persons also attended. The Sindh joint director labour explained the rights promised vide various clauses of SIRA to agricultural workers, process of trade union registration, grievance redressal procedures, and powers vested in the registrar of trade unions for the settlement of industrial disputes through this Act. Representatives of the worker and employer federations welcomed the legislation and offered their support in creating further awareness.

Waqar Ahmed Memon, regional chairman of the Pakistan Workers’ Federation, stressed the need for creating congenial and bilaterally beneficial relations among harris and landlords for increasing productivity and thus the economy. Syed Adil Hussain Shah on behalf of the Employers Federation of Pakistan said they had already started the process of assessing the needs of employers-landlords regarding formation of employer associations under SIRA and would soon start forming the associations in Mirpur Khas and Dadu districts. He urged the provincial government to replicate the process in other districts.

Abid Niaz Khan of the ILO stressed the need for effective implementation of the SIRA. He said the right to organise and form employers’ and workers’ organisations is the prerequisite for sound collective bargaining and social dialogue. But the social scenario is regrettably controvert, which needs to be reverted in the interest of labourers. Asim Jaleel, national project coordinator at UN-Women, recommended that home-based workers be recognised as formal labourers so they could be brought under social security and welfare schemes. He called upon the Sindh government to listen to the demand of over two million women home-based workers, who are being exploited and forced to work in hazardous conditions just because of the absence of laws.

Call to empower workers of fishery and agriculture sector

**NEWS AND EVENTS | LABOUR**
Japan contributes to displaced from FATA and afghan refugees in Pakistan

More than 91,000 families were displaced from North Waziristan in 2014 following military operations against armed militants, and they remain in need of humanitarian assistance and livelihood support. Since 2008, almost 5 million people from KP and FATA have been registered as displaced as a result of a series of security operations against militants. At the end of 2014, 1.6 million people remained displaced in KP and FATA. Humanitarian partners, including UN agencies and NGOs, support the Government to provide life-saving assistance for the displaced population and to support the voluntary return of the displaced people.

In this connection, the Government of Japan announced that it has disbursed US$16.21 million in total to UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and World Food Programme (WFP). This disbursement was made to support their efforts benefiting people who had fled their homes due to security operations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Afghan refugees living in Pakistan.

Chargé d’Affaires ad interim of Japan to Pakistan Mr. Takeshi Katae and UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator Dr. Jacqueline Badcock made the announcement at the WFP Islamabad office with UNDP Country Director Mr. Marc-Andre Franche, UN-Habitat Country Programme Manager Ms. Bella Evidente, UNHCR Deputy Representative Mr. Johann Siffointe, UNOCHA Head of Office Mr. George Khoury, WFP Country Representative Ms. Lola Castro. Captain (Retired) Mr. Tariq Hayat Khan, Joint Secretary of SAFRON also attended.

Mr. Katae stressed that the Government of Japan attaches high importance to supporting the stability of the region near the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan since it is critical to the stability of entire Pakistan and the neighbouring countries. He also emphasized international community’s responsibility to support Afghan refugees, for whom Japan has been providing assistance since 2001.

WFP will use $5 million to support 91,000 displaced families from North Waziristan Agency (NWA) and returnees.

UNHCR, which has received $1.7 million for the displaced people, will provide legal assistance to approximately 83,300 families.

Approximately $2.75 million has been allocated to UNDP to provide technical assistance to the local government, create community networks, and provide livelihood opportunities through cash for work activities and skills training.

UN-Habitat has received US$ 4.03 million for the provision of Shelter and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) assistance to both North Waziristan Agency TDPs and Tirah Valley, Khyber Agency TDP returnees.

Dr. Badcock thanked the Government of Japan on behalf of the humanitarian community for their generous contribution, stating “This funding will provide critical support to address the humanitarian needs of some of the vulnerable populations.”
Launch of the FATA sustainable return and rehabilitation strategy

The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) is among the most underdeveloped regions of Pakistan. Since 2008, large populations were frequently displaced to and from FATA, from all the agencies. The latest wave of displacement has brought the total FATA displacement case load up to an estimated 310,729 families – around 2 million Temporarily Dislocated Persons (TDPs) – of which around 70% are women and children. The government has put in place a phased plan of returns for the TDPs, beginning with the first phase of returns to South Waziristan, North Waziristan and Khyber Agencies in March 2015.

The FATA Secretariat, with technical support from UNDP, has developed the FATA Sustainable Return and Rehabilitation Strategy, which aims to ensure the progressive and sustainable return of the entire TDP population to FATA. To encourage their safe, voluntary return, this comprehensive strategy seeks to establish an enabling environment in TDPs’ areas of origin in FATA.

While there has been considerable effort in the past to organize TDP’s return to FATA, this is the first time that the FATA Secretariat has set out a comprehensive return and rehabilitation plan for the entire region.

The initial focus shall be implementation of five key pillars of action over 24 months across entire FATA. The budget for the rehabilitation activities is USD 120 million. The five main pillars of rehabilitation include: (i) rehabilitating physical infrastructure, (ii) strengthening law and order, (iii) expanding government service delivery, (iv) reactivating and strengthening the economy, and (v) strengthening social cohesion and peace building. The strategy seeks to bridge long-term development and governance reforms in FATA. Although the Government and its humanitarian partners are continuing their important efforts to provide relief to this vulnerable population, more sustainable solutions are needed to support the return of TDPs to their areas of origin.
The process of developing vibrant communities, livelihood opportunities and a conducive, sustainable return environment for Afghan refugees is linked to overall improvements in the socio-economic situation in Afghanistan.

Representatives of the governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) agreed to intensify efforts to create an enabling environment for voluntary return and sustainable reintegration of returnees in Afghanistan.

25th Tripartite Commission meeting held in Islamabad highlighted that concrete measures can be taken to support this process by empowering returnees at an individual level by strengthening their self-reliance and coping mechanisms upon return.

To support this objective, the parties agreed to complement the current return cash grant of an average of USD 1,200 per family of 6, provided to returnees under the auspices of UNHCR’s voluntary repatriation programme, with the inclusion of an additional multi-purpose long-term reintegration component through the introduction of an Enhanced Voluntary Return and Reintegration Package (EVRRP) for a pilot period of one year.

Lt. General Abdul Qadir Baloch, Pakistan’s Minister for States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) welcoming the endorsement of the EVRRP said Pakistan is dealing with one of the most protracted human displacement situations of our time which calls for a collective response from the international community.

A commitment was made to undertake joint fundraising initiatives, led by the Government of Afghanistan, supported by the Government of Pakistan and facilitated by UNHCR to ensure resource mobilization for the implementation of the EVRRP.

Afghan Minister for Refugees and Repatriation, Sayed Hossein Alimi Balkhi told the forum that the new National Unity Government in Afghanistan has taken important steps to resolving the longstanding Afghan refugee issue, including bilateral discussions on the subject with the Government of Pakistan, plans to establish a National Migration Management Board and efforts to develop a comprehensive national strategy for voluntary repatriation.

UNHCR’s representatives in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Ms. Maya Amaratunga and Mr. Indrika Ratwattte emphasized that given the positive geo-political developments 2015 was a pivotal year which present a unique opportunity for the pursuit of lasting solutions for Afghan refugees.

The next Tripartite Commission meeting will be held in Kabul in August 2015. The Tripartite Commission is a formal body that governs the return and reintegration of Afghans from Pakistan since 2002. Under this arrangement, more than 3.8 million Afghan refugees have returned with UNHCR assistance to Afghanistan during the past thirteen years. This represents the largest repatriation of refugees in UNHCR’s history.
The UN Refugee Agency in collaboration with the United States Embassy inaugurated two education projects under the Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) initiative that will benefit more than 1,850 Pakistani and Afghan school students in Rawalpindi and Taxila.

U.S. Department of State Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration Simon Henshaw and UNHCR’s Representative in Pakistan, Indrika Ratwatte, participated in a ground breaking ceremony at a Government Girls’ High School in Rawalpindi. They also had an informal discussion with a group of Afghan and Pakistani students who talked about what education means to them.

Under the RAHA funding, the Government Girls’ High School in Rawalpindi will receive additional furnished classrooms and new latrines, and the Government Elementary School in Taxila will have three additional furnished classrooms, a new veranda, and extra latrines. Enrolment campaigns and a capacity building workshop for teachers are also included in these projects which are expected to be completed by August 2015.

In September 2014, the United States contributed nearly $9 million to the RAHA programme in Pakistan, supporting 40 projects throughout the country which will benefit nearly 300,000 people. This includes 19 education projects helping around 12,000 Afghan and 53,000 Pakistani students gain better schooling. In Punjab province alone, there are seven other projects being implemented which, together with the two schools in Rawalpindi and Taxila, are worth $2 million.

The UNHCR Representative in Pakistan, Indrika Ratwatte, said that the RAHA initiative is an effort to improve livelihoods, rehabilitate the environment, and enhance social cohesion within communities that have been hosting refugees for more than three decades.

The RAHA programme is a major component of the regional Solution Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) endorsed by the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan and UNHCR in May 2012 and it seeks to improve social cohesion, promote co-existence, and provide both the host Pakistani communities and Afghan refugees with development and humanitarian assistance. It also aims to reduce economic and social vulnerability of the most disadvantaged sections of society living in refugee hosting areas.
Adequate drinking water a rare find

One of the biggest successes of the Millennium Development Goals ahead of World Water Day according to UNICEF has been access to drinking water. However, for 748 million people around the world, just obtaining this essential service remains a challenge.

In Pakistan, more than 110 children under the age of five years, die every day from diarrhoea related diseases caused primarily due to unsafe water and poor sanitation. Though nine out of ten people have access to improved drinking water sources, only 65 per cent of the total population is considered to have access to water that is safe for drinking. While overall access to water and sanitation has improved, populations from lower wealth quintiles, continue to miss out.

During 2014 in Pakistan, UNICEF as a major partner with the Government of Pakistan has taken improved water, hygiene and sanitation services to almost 1.2 million people.

UNICEF launched a report titled "Adequate drinking water: a rare find".
‘Mapping of Inequities in Basic Water Supply and Sanitation Services in Pakistan’. The report shows large gap in access to toilets and safe water between the rich and poor as three out of four poorest rural households have no toilets.

“The story of access to drinking water since 1990 has been one of tremendous progress in the face of incredible odds,” said Sanjay Wijesekera, head of UNICEF’s global Water, Sanitation and Hygiene programmes. “But there is more to do. Water is the very essence of life and yet three-quarters of a billion people – mostly the poor and the marginalized – still today are deprived of this most basic human right.”

However, significant disparities persist. Of the 748 million people globally still without access, 90 per cent live in rural areas, and are being left behind in their countries’ progress.

In insecure areas, women and girls are put at risk of violence and attack. UNICEF estimates that in Africa alone, people spend 40 billion hours every year just walking to collect water.

Working with governments and partners UNICEF is pushing for innovative and cost effective methods to make progress.

UNICEF and partners are also engaging public in a social media campaign with the hashtag #wateris, to help raise awareness of the issue and highlight the plight of those who are still without drinking water.

To mark World Water Day, the Planning Commission together with multi-stakeholders organised a conference on March 27 focusing on this year's global theme, ‘Water and Sustainable Development - Role of Youth for Sustainable Water Resource Management’.

The conference aimed at sensitisation of key stakeholders on critical water issues and challenges; engaging stakeholders especially youth; advocating with the government for approval of National Water Policy and building consensus for the adoption of Islamabad Water Day Declaration 2015. The conference was organised in collaboration with World Youth Parliament of Water (WYPW), UNESCO, Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), Pakistan Water Partnership (PWP), International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Economic Cooperation Organisation Science Foundation (ECOSF), Asian Development Bank (ADB), UNICEF, FAO-UN, UN-HABITAT, Plan International, Muslim Aid, Helping Hand for Relief and Development, GLOF Pakistan, UNDP, RSPN, ICARDA, Riphah University and WaterAid.

Ambassador of Tajikistan Sher Ali; Cooperation Attache of French Embassy Olivier Huynh-Van; Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro, president of ECOSF; and Mukta Akter, representative of GWP Bangladesh, also addressed the gathering.

In her opening remarks, Vibeke Jensen, representative/director of UNESCO Islamabad, highlighted that 748 million people worldwide still did not have access to improved drinking water sources and quality water. She also stressed the academia to pay more attention to water research and its sustainable management.

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16,000 skilled workers will be produced as a result of the agreement that The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), AmanTech, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) signed to improve access to and quality of vocational training.

Speaking at a signing ceremony, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson said, “So many young people lack the skills and credentials they need to fill the many jobs that are available.”

Under the agreement, AmanTech will provide vocational training to under-served youth, certifying the graduation of at least 3,600 students, and also provide placement services, over a period of three years. UNDP will train over 13,000 youth, in partnership with the garment industry in Karachi, thereby enabling young girls and boys to be gainfully employed.

In his remarks, Marc-André Franche, Country Director, UNDP, said this is an important step that will empower young girls and boys to fulfill their potential as the architects of a prosperous and peaceful Pakistan and ensure long term economic growth in the country.

The signing ceremony was held at Aman Foundation’s headquarters in Karachi.

UNDP sub office Quetta in collaboration with planning and development department Government of Balochistan (GoB) launched a knowledge sharing platform.

The platform will provide an opportunity to policy makers, academics and practitioners to discuss, share knowledge and propose policy options and interventions on development issues for youth empowerment in Balochistan. A Committee of experts comprising of Government officials, public and private sector specialists and academia met on the 31st March 2015 to discuss key topics related to youth empowerment. Key areas that need attention include development of a youth policy framework, youth employment, youth engagement in civic activities and access to social development services. The platform will undertake analyses and mapping of different interventions to propose policy options that can support GoB and development partners for further planning and programming to address issues related to youth empowerment.

In his introductory remarks, Secretary Planning & P&D Mr. Zulfiqar Durrani commented that in post 18th amendment era, this forum is very useful to guide the development process in the province with particular focus on youth which constitutes 58 percent of our population. Continuing on the importance of Knowledge sharing platform, UNDP HoSo Ms. Ilaria Carpen addressed the need for policy formulation and planning platform in Balochistan. "We want to promote dialogue between various stakeholders on development issues in Balochistan. This forum shall collectively inform stakeholders on how to better assist GoB to formulate achievable plans and realistic policies”. A series of workshops / conferences in 2015 will be organized where the findings of these papers will be shared and discussed. All these activities will conclude in the form of concrete policy options and proposals for programmatic interventions for youth empowerment in Balochistan.
About 64 percent of the Pakistan's population is below 29 years of age. Pakistan's youth is a critical force for shaping human development in the country. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Pakistan set out its vision and aims for Pakistan's National Human Development Report (NHDR) 2015 on youth, today in Islamabad.

The report covers three drivers of youth empowerment – education, employment and engagement - with the objective to track the challenges faced by the young people in Pakistan and improve the policy landscape.

Guided by Lead Authors Dr. Adil Najam and Dr. Faisal Bari, the NHDR is intended to be ‘by the youth, for the youth’. The aim is not just to develop a report but to ignite a national level conversation through an intensely participatory process spanning discussions, focus groups, radio call-in shows, social media engagements and contests with young people throughout Pakistan.

To provide a robust foundation of quantitative data, fieldwork for a nation-wide Youth Perception Survey was undertaken, and the country’s leading statisticians came together to agree on the approach for sub-national Human Development and Youth Development Indices which will, eventually, be amongst the key components of the final report.

Marc-André Franche, Country Director UNDP in Pakistan was of the view that the NHDR 2015 will not only generate a sustainable conversation between policymakers and young people in Pakistan, but will identify relevant, evidence-informed policy interventions to improve the opportunities for Pakistan’s youth. The findings of this report will catalyse and guide us in creating the essential opportunities for education, employment, political and social engagement for young people.
The United Nations information centre increases outreach to the young people in Pakistan

The United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies (IPD) and with the Inter-University Consortium for Promotion of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts (IUCPSS) for enhancing dissemination of values and core messages of the United Nations among the young people of Pakistan.

The partnerships will focus on the joint development of several initiatives, including the UN Corner, the UN Wall campaign, the Academic Impact, an internship programme and commemoration of the UN Days.

Mr. Vittorio Cammarota, Director United Nations Information Centre welcomed the strategic partnership with IUCPSS and IPD and highlighted the valuable role educational institutions play in involving young people in the communication initiatives of the United Nations. He said that on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations we shall try its best to ensure Pakistani young people actively contribute to the global communication campaigns.

Ms. Farhat Asif, President, Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies signed the MOD and hoped that it shall help in promoting UN values across Pakistan through several steps and joint efforts.

Dr. Naseer Ali Khan, Chairman, IUCPSS and Vice Chancellor of the University of Haripur while signing the MOU assured his full support for promoting the UN’s ideals and values through the network of the universities all over Pakistan. He stressed the importance of establishing the UN Corners in Pakistani universities as they will provide an opportunity to both faculty and students of the members institutions to have access to the independent and impartial information from the United Nations.

The Inter-University Consortium for Promotion of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts, consisting on 26 universities representing all regions of Pakistan is the largest autonomous network of the public/private sector universities in the world.
The news from Nepal following the 25 April earthquake has been grim, and will likely get worse over the coming weeks. As we reflect on the tragedy that continues to unfold, and keep the people of Nepal in our thoughts, let us also take this opportunity to consider the importance of disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts in Pakistan.

The people of Pakistan face the risk of natural and man-made disasters each day. Although these vary by region and severity, those risks are being addressed in both policy and in action. Earthquakes and other natural disasters are an enormous hazard to human livelihoods and entire ecosystems. As communities, we can mitigate them only to a limited extent, but we can take steps to prepare for them when they are unavoidable.

Preparedness truly is a matter of life and death in Pakistan because it one of the most disaster affected countries in the world. From floods, droughts, landslides, avalanches, earthquakes, typhoons, and more, Pakistan finds itself frequently and repeatedly battered by both the forces of nature and man-made disasters that displace tens of thousands of people. This will only be exacerbated by the effects of climate change. As the seventh most vulnerable country to the effects of climate change, an even greater emphasis on preparedness will be required for the future.

The Government of Pakistan has made DRR a priority and the UN in Pakistan is working closely with the Government to improve response and resilience to all types of disasters and other forms of displacement. DRR is a key element of the policy and technical support the UN in Pakistan provides to Government in programmes encompassing nutrition, health, education, livelihoods, social cohesion, and governance.

Activities to limit the impact of disasters must focus on the livelihoods and wellbeing of individuals affected by disasters, particularly those most vulnerable because they are disproportionally affected by disasters. The poor and marginalized, including women and children, often bear the brunt of the aftermath of a catastrophe and their voices too frequently remain unheard. To make matters worse, they are often forced to sell their means of earning a livelihood just to have the resources to get by following a disaster. With limited means to recover from disasters, the poor are rarely able to get fully back on their feet before the next crisis hits. Attention to their human rights – life, access to jobs, clean water and sanitation, but also the ability to participate in decisions when local governments discuss disaster preparedness, must, in fact, be an essential element of all UN disaster response and rebuilding initiatives.

Disaster risk reduction holds the key to sustainable development in Pakistan

DRR concerns all of us and is not the exclusive domain of any one institution or group of people. It is not an island among Government policies, but an essential element of development planning and policy considerations. This is a discussion that needs to continue and that the UN in Pakistan is working to expand with Government, partners and the people of Pakistan.

Jacqui Badcock,
UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan, a.i.
Strengthening disaster risk reduction in Pakistan

On 18 March, the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) culminated in the official adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030). UNDP was actively engaged in this process, both in the months of development leading up to it and at the WCDRR itself. UNDP welcomed the new framework because a big part of UNDP’s advocacy campaign over the last year has been to emphasize that disasters are the result of poor, risk-blind development choices, and to encourage partners to adopt a risk-informed approach to sustainable development. UNDP’s key message: ‘if it isn’t risk-informed, it isn’t sustainable development’, gained enormous traction at the Conference and was featured in the many media interviews that followed.

Substantially, the Framework consists of four priority areas relevant to the business of disaster risk reduction at the country level. UNDP’s support to the process has led to the inclusion of risk governance and recovery as two of the four dedicated priority areas. UNDP announced at Sendai the development of a new 10-year global programme called ‘5-10-50’. This programme, which is still under development and targeting an early 2016 release, will see UNDP support 50 countries with comprehensive risk-informed development.

This is very relevant to Pakistan because across the country, communities struggle with the threats posed by the environment in which they live. Many areas of Pakistan are prone to natural disaster, from drought to flood, to devastating earthquakes, and as the world’s climate shifts, Pakistan is expected to be severely affected. UNDP supports Government and communities in preparing for these threats. In 2014 we piloted Community-Based Disaster Risk Management in 30 communities in KP, Balochistan and Sindh provinces. Through this, vulnerable communities learned to identify hazards and risks, and analyse their own vulnerabilities. Community groups were trained in First Aid and Search 
& Rescue and equipped to develop into an emergency response force at the frontlines of disaster. As a result, local women and men became active leaders in protecting their communities instead of relying solely on outside support for emergency relief.

UNDP’s Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy is closely aligned with national policy and the National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP). In 2014, we helped the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) establish the NDMP Implementation Unit to monitor implementation, improve coordination, and mobilize resources from international development partners.

In 2014, UNDP helped the Pakistan Meteorological Department to develop and field-test an early warning system using FM radio to broadcast messages to remote areas during the 2014 monsoon season. Effective response to disaster is dependent on timely information.
UNIDO’s initiatives to address issues of the leather sector of Sialkot

Climate change and the related climatic variability is found to have a close link to extreme events where majority of them turn into hydro-meteorological disasters such as floods and droughts. With climate change the frequency and intensity of extreme events like floods is one of main environmental challenges globally. The recent disasters in Pakistan have exposed both strengths and weakness of the Pakistan’s DRM and climate change adaptation efforts. The capacities and the expertise on DRM and climate change adaptation are limited. UNIDO on the request of Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and industries has begun assisting the Tanning industry of Sialkot in overcoming DRM, CC Adaptation concerns through Sialkot Tannery Zone Relocation Programme.

There are more than 250 tanneries in Sialkot scattered in and around 30 kilometre area mostly in residential congested areas. The industries discharge their untreated industrial waste into the nullahs with the result that contaminates underground water reserves. Also the water table has gone low because tanneries use a lot of water. Individual tanneries are not able to set up appropriate Effluent Treatment Plants and infrastructure related to pollution control.

To overcome the situation Sialkot Chamber of commerce and industries in coordination with the Punjab government has planned to relocate the tanneries to a designated Tannery Zone for which 400 Acres of land has been purchased by the tanners. UNIDO with the assistance of GEF funding and collaboration of Sialkot Tannery Guarantee Limited (STAGL) is assisting in the Tannery zone project.

The project will deploy and transfer the relevant adaptation technologies for water conservation and water retention within urban and industrial zone and building water supply resilience among the vulnerable population in the Sialkot district. Capacities will be built for flood management including the dugri drain which also provides water for agriculture use, overcoming the water overflow during flood season and effluent treatment plant management. In addition water conservation techniques will be incorporated in the development of tannery/leather zone and individual buildings and tannery/leather units.
As a result of global warming, the climate in Pakistan has become increasingly volatile causing unpredictable weather patterns making the country prone to progressively intense natural disasters such as flooding, landslides and drought. The unprecedented 2010 floods impacted 20 million people and left 10 million in need of humanitarian assistance. The World Bank ranks Pakistan 8th in its list of natural disaster hotspots.

In partnership with the National Disaster Management Authority, WFP’s Readiness Initiative experts undertook a simulation exercise in Lahore from 28 to 30 April 2015 to augment national emergency preparedness and response capabilities. Funds for the exercise, starting with a Training of Facilitators, have been generously provided by the Australian Government.

“There is a very positive trend, particularly in more advanced economies such as in South and South East Asia, of increasing national ownership of responses to disasters,” said Lola Castro, WFP Pakistan Representative. “Same has been experienced in Pakistan such as last year’s fast and coordinated national response to flooding to which a similar emergency simulation exercise in June 2014 contributed.”

Followed by the Training of Facilitators in Islamabad two weeks ago, selected federal, provincial and district disaster management staff, who are the actual emergency responders, participated in the simulation and worked as a team to address several realistic emergency scenarios.
Strengthening flood warning system in Pakistan

Disaster management is one of the priority areas in Japan’s development assistance to Pakistan. The Government of Japan and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have agreed to implement a project worth US$ 4.05 million to further improve flood warning and management capacity of the Government of Pakistan.

This project is the second phase of the earlier project implemented by UNESCO with the financial assistance of Japan. In the first project, flood forecasting systems using satellite technology, the Integrated Flood Analysis System (IFAS) and the Runoff-Inundation model (RRI model), have been successfully developed for the upper and lower catchment of the Indus River. More than 39 districts are now being covered with the flood forecasting and early warning system of IFAS, and more than 53 million residents in 32 districts located in the lower Indus river basin are now served with the new flood hazard maps generated by the RRI model. However, the Eastern Rivers are yet to be covered by IFAS and the RRI model; and the accuracy of IFAS should be further increased.

In addition, JICA and UNESCO plan to promote sharing of flood forecasting information among Pakistan and its neighboring countries, especially Afghanistan.

Government of Japan had committed in November 2013 that it would provide 1.6 trillion Yen (approximately US$ 16 billion) of public and private finance to developing countries over the three years from 2013 to 2015 to support their response to climate change. This current project which was signed between H.E. Mr. Kazuyuki Nakane, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr. Takashi Katae, Chargés d’Affaires ad interim of Japan to Pakistan, Mr. Mitsuyoshi Kawasaki, Chief Representative of JICA Pakistan Office, and Ms. Vibeke Jensen, Representative / Director, UNESCO Islamabad, Pakistan builds upon that commitment.
In disaster prone areas of two Union Councils in Jacobabad (Din Pur and SherWah) and two Union Councils in Jaffarabad (Qabula and Sameji) it was essential to equip the community with the knowledge of how to tackle a disastrous situation.

So, to raise the awareness of people of Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction 156 CBDRM trainings were conducted.

All of this began in May 2014, when WASH cluster approached UN-Habitat asking to carry out an assessment in some areas of Sindh where they felt there was a need of WASH intervention owing to the damages of the 2010 floods. UN-Habitat responded to the request and conducted a re-assessment of the areas that were hit by floods in 2010, viewing the still continued plight of the inhabitants even after four years had passed, this assessment was conducted to point out problems. Based on the results of the assessment the ‘PSFRP Resumption and Completion’ was launched in August 2014.

The PSFRP Resumption and Completion project was implemented in March, 2015 and in no time it successfully reached out to 3,920 families in Jacobabad, Sindh province and 1,120 and in district Jaffarabad, Baluchistan province.

Outputs included reaching out to the masses who knew that open defecation was a bad thing but they couldn’t construct latrines. 625 improved latrines were constructed; not only that but to serve the people with maximum life saving WASH facilities their needs were catered to by construction of 206 lead hand pumps, rehabilitation of 3620 hand pumps and washing, soak pits and drainage, distribution of 3920 household potable water filters and usage training, 3620 water storage tanks, and 3920 hygiene kits. In addition to the WASH infrastructure 30 water ponds were rehabilitated, to inhibit poor hygiene practices 156 hygiene campaigns and 45 Behavior Change Campaigns were conducted.

The community benefited from knowledge that is very basic but will go a long way in maintaining well being.
Enhancing Pakistan’s emergency response capacity

In the past decade, the people of Sindh have suffered considerable losses due to natural disasters affecting the province including the flooding in 2010, heavy rains in 2011 and drought in 2014. Experts confirm that continuous shocks have left the inhabitants of Sindh, especially those residing in rural areas depending on agriculture and livestock, vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition.

The Humanitarian Response Facility (HRF) network is a joint project between World Food Programme (WFP) and the Government of Pakistan with the primary objective to increase the emergency and disaster response capacity of both the Government and the humanitarian community in Pakistan.

Under this project, the World Food Programme (WFP) has officially handed over the Humanitarian Response Facility (HRF) to the Sindh Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA).

Work on this facility began in July 2014 and was completed in record time of eight months at a cost of Rs. 250 million. The HRF covers 9.1 acres and has one 20 by 50 meter warehouse, two 15 by 32 meter warehouses and one 10 by 20 meter climate-controlled warehouse to store temperature sensitive items such as ready-to-use food and medicines. The total covered storage capacity of the facility is 3000 metric tons and an open space of up to 10,000 metric tons. Four pre-fabricated offices and a reinforced paved area to facilitate truck movement have also been constructed.

The facility is designed to cater to basic needs of the warehouse staff and is equipped with alternate power solutions. The structure is also earthquake-resistant and other environmental hazards have also been factored into its construction.

The Government of Pakistan has provided land to WFP to construct eight strategically located HRFS in each of the most disaster-prone districts to enhance the country’s emergency response capacity. The project is being implemented in close coordination with the NDMA and PDMAs of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan with the generous funding provided by the Government and the People of Japan, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, Denmark, and the United States of America. WFP is also providing training on how to run and maintain the HRFS effectively as well as targeted training on emergency response.
Over 300 students from colleges and universities in Lahore attended interactive discussions about work of the 19 UN agencies working in Pakistan.

After Gilgit Baltistan, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the United Nations Communication Group enhanced its outreach to Punjab and organised communication workshops in Lahore with the aim of promoting common understanding about the development and humanitarian assistance programmes of the United Nations in Pakistan and strengthening relations with different stakeholders at the provincial level.

Two communication workshops specially developed for the young students were organised in collaboration with University of Central Punjab (UCP) and Lahore College of Management Sciences (LUMS).

The UNIC Director, Vittorio Cammarota and communication experts from the United Nations informed students about the role of the United Nations in Pakistan and in the world in the areas including: education, health, climate change, refugees, women empowerment, food security and socio-economic development. Mr. Cammarota also shared about up-coming United Nations’ communication campaigns such as UN Wall campaign and UN Corner specially designed for the young Pakistani students. He encouraged youth to take active part in these campaigns. A media workshop was also organised with the journalists associated with the Lahore Press Club and the Lahore Un-
ion of journalist. Over 40 journalists actively engaged with the colleagues from the United Nations and hold discussions on the projects and programmes of the United Nations in Pakistan.

The communication workshops provided a great opportunity for students, media and the United Nations to interact with each other and enhancing the understanding about the role and interventions of the United Nations.

UN Speaker’s Corner at the national book festival

The United Nations System in Pakistan joined National Book Festival and organised a Speaker’s Corner in collaboration with the National Book Foundation, at Pak-China Friendship Centre in Islamabad.

Representatives from NGOs, media and young students participated in a round of discussion, led by Mr. Vittorio Cammarota, Director, UN Information Centre, on the work of the United Nations’ agencies, funds and programmes in Pakistan.

Mr. Cammarota shared information about the campaigns, special events and projects celebrating the 70th anniversary of the United Nations this year. He encouraged youth for joining the campaigns and engaging in such activities for their personal and professional development.

Volunteerism in Pakistan and the role of UN Volunteers, Operations of the United Nations System under ONE UN Programme, UNIDO’s role in sustainable and inclusive industrial development, UNHCR’s assistance for hosting refugees and supporting local communities and WFP’s support for enhancing Pakistan’s emergency preparedness and response capacity.

Participants of the session interacted with UN officials and exchanged their views about the projects and programmes of different UN agencies.
The show began with a segment on the role of UNIDO-Pakistan and its efforts to promote and accelerate sustainable industrial development and work towards improving living conditions in the world’s poorest countries by drawing on its combined global resources and expertise. This was an exclusive interview with Radio 1 FM 91 where UNIDO Representative Mr. Esam Alqararah, with Programme Manager of Sustainable energy and use of Biomass Mr. Muhammad Ahmad and Programme coordinator of Clean-tech for SMEs and start-ups Ms. Shahina Waheed talked about the visions, missions, and achievements of UNIDO in Pakistan while highlighting the importance of development in energy sector and industrial empowerment and efforts of UNIDO to meet the solutions in this critical time. In second half of the show Agro-Industries and how UNIDO serves to strengthen forward and backward agro-industrial linkages in order to raise productivity and increase the potential for promoting growth was brought into the discussion. This show was successful in letting public know about the commendable work UNIDO is doing in Pakistan to meet the solution of energy crisis and to promote sustainable industrial growth.

World Water Day
22 March 2015

The onset of climate change, growing demand on finite water resources from agriculture, industry and cities, and increasing pollution in many areas are hastening a water crisis that can only be addressed by cross-sectoral, holistic planning and policies – internationally, regionally and globally.

Among the most urgent issues are access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Despite progress under the Millennium Development Goals, adopted in 2000, some 750 million people -- more than one in ten of the world’s population -- remain without access to an improved water supply. Women and children, in particular, are affected by this lack, as not only is their health compromised, but considerable hours are wasted in the unproductive – and sometimes dangerous – business of collecting water.

International day of solidarity with detained and missing staff members
25 March 2015

On this International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members, and as demand for United Nations engagement intensifies, I call on relevant Member States to respect the status, privileges and immunities of the United Nations and to immediately release all UN staff members and associated personnel who are being unlawfully detained.

International day of Nowruz
21 March 2015

This year’s Nowruz also takes on special meaning as the United Nations works to shape a new vision for sustainable future and adopt a meaningful universal climate agreement. These priorities for 2015 are in line with the spirit of Nowruz, which promotes harmony with nature and all peoples to foster cooperation for lasting peace.
International day for the right to the truth concerning gross human rights violations and for the dignity of victims
24 March 2015
The right to the truth – which is both an individual and collective right – is essential for victims but also for society at large. Uncovering the truth of human rights violations of the past can help prevent human rights abuses in the future. That is why the United Nations supports fact-finding missions, commissions of inquiry, and truth commissions to uncover the truth about gross violations of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law. We work to promote justice, propose reparations, and recommend reforms of abusive institutions.

Message on the international day of reflection on the genocide in Rwanda
7 April 2015
The International Day of Reflection on the Genocide in Rwanda offers an opportunity to honour the memory of the more than 800,000 people – overwhelmingly Tutsi, and also moderate Hutu, Twa and others – who were systematically killed across Rwanda in less than three months just over two decades ago. It is also an occasion to recognize the pain and the courage of those who survived.

Message on international mother earth day
22 April 2015
As a global community, we have the opportunity to make 2015 a turning point in human history. This can be the year our children and grandchildren will remember as when we chose to build a sustainable and resilient future – both for Mother Earth and all those that development has until now left behind. Let us seize this historic opportunity together.

World malaria day
25 April 2015
On World Malaria Day 2015, I call on the international community to “invest in the future: defeat malaria”. We have a real opportunity to defeat this terrible disease. Let’s not waste it.

International day of sport for development and peace
6 April 2015
As we prepare a new development agenda for the period beyond the year 2015, including a set of Sustainable Development Goals, I will continue to look to sportsmen and women to be advocates for building a better world for all.

On this International Day, let us pledge to strengthen the role that sport plays in communities around the world. We need to have everyone on the team: governments, international organizations, NGOs and many others.

Message on World Health Day: “From farm to plate: make food safe”
7 April 2015
The production of safe food is important for economies – it fosters trade and tourism and supports food security and sustainable development. Food safety is also important for education – sick children miss school, and it is at school that the next generation of consumers can learn basic food safety practices. WHO and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) work together to set international standards for safe food. They assess the safety of new food technologies, and help countries to prevent, detect and respond to outbreaks of food-borne disease. These agencies also help countries build their own capacity to predict and manage food-borne disease risks.

World autism awareness day
25 April 2015
This year, I am pleased to launch an employment “Call to Action”, inviting businesses to make concrete commitments to employ people on the autism spectrum.

We encourage public offices, corporations, and small businesses to have a closer look at the way they perceive people with autism, to take the time to learn about the condition and to create life-changing opportunities.
We the People

Coping with disaster: Refugees and displaced person in South-East Asia

Coping with disaster: Palestine refugees

01 January 1977
We the People

Coping with disaster: Refugees and displaced person in South-East Asia

Drought in Africa
05 November 1984
We the People

Children fetch water during flooding
11 August 2008

Coping with disaster: Earthquake in Mexico
24 September 1985
We the People

Drought in Africa: Ethiopia
05 November 1984

Coping with disaster:
Refugees and displaced person in South-East Asia
The United Nations has a long-standing partnership with the people of Pakistan in support of national development goals. The United Nations has also been providing humanitarian assistance in case of natural disasters and crises. Led by the Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, United Nations works in all eight administrative areas of Pakistan through 19 resident organizations. Straddling humanitarian assistance and sustainable development, the work of the United Nations in Pakistan includes key areas such as education, health, water & sanitation, nutrition, economic growth, employment and livelihoods, resilience against disaster, governance, gender equality and social justice.

The One UN Programme for Pakistan, United Nations focuses on accelerating progress towards achievement of Millennium Development Goals, reducing poverty, promoting opportunities for youth as well as advancing gender equality and human rights both at national and sub-national levels.

United Nations encourages economic growth in Pakistan through supporting policies and programmes that link small farmers to markets, improving working conditions for women and supporting home-based and domestic workers. It will also assist the Government in strengthening democratic processes and institutions at the federal, provincial and local levels. Tackling the effects of climate change and reducing Pakistan’s vulnerabilities to natural disasters features especially prominently in the work of the United Nations in Pakistan in 2014.