Focus on
General Assembly High-Level Event on Climate Change.

Our Climate Imperatives.
Agricultural development and climate change.
Green jobs.
Capacity building and climate change.
Climate change and the role of biosphere reserves.
UN-Habitat’s climate change initiatives in Pakistan.
UNIC channels Pakistani youth’s voices on climate change.
UNIDO’s efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change.
Climate change and food insecurity in Pakistan.
Climate change - from small villages to major cities.
The United Nations Pakistan Newsletter is produced by the United Nations Communications Group

Editor in Chief: Vittorio Cammarota, Director, United Nations Information Centre

Sub-editor: Leena Nishtar

Producer (content): Ishrat Rizvi

Producer (photography): Umair Khaliq

Graphic Designer: Mirko Neri


Photographers: Yann Arthus Bertrand, Qaisar Khan Afridi, Asif Shehzad, Asad Zaidi, Atif Khan, S.Khan, Tabinda Siddiqui, Torsum Khan
FOCUS ON

| 4 | General Assembly High-Level Event on Climate Change
| 6 | Our Climate Imperatives
| 7 | Agricultural development and climate change
| 8 | Green jobs
| 9 | Capacity building and climate change
| 10 | Climate change and the role of biosphere reserves
| 11 | UN-Habitat’s climate change initiatives in Pakistan
| 11 | UNIC channels Pakistani youth’s voices on climate change
| 12 | UNIDO’s efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change
| 12 | Climate change and food insecurity in Pakistan
| 13 | Climate change - from small villages to major cities

REAL LIVES’ STORIES FROM THE FIELD

| 16 | Countering malnutrition in the Thar Desert
| 18 | Mobile registration teams provide services to remote Afghan refugees on their doorsteps
| 19 | Shaligram bridge: linking two villages
| 20 | My Vote, My Voice
| 21 | Bridge in Bannu links Villages

NEWS AND EVENTS

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

| 22 | Appraising fishery resources in Pakistan
| 23 | Cold storage facility to provide nutrient rich foods to malnourished mothers and children in Sindh
| 23 | Pakistan’s efforts to control Foot and Mouth Disease

DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

| 24 | Emergency response facility in Peshawar

DRUGS AND CRIME

| 25 | Regional workshop on youth drug use
| 25 | Regional information sharing and case management workshop
| 26 | Enhancing the canine capacity of the Anti-Narcotics Force in Pakistan

ECONOMIC GROWTH

| 27 | Promoting entrepreneurship in the area of clean technology
| 28 | Pakistan’s economy is growing despite macroeconomic imbalances
| 28 | Restoring banks confidence
| 29 | Promoting sustainability in the textile sector in Pakistan

EDUCATION

| 30 | RAHA inaugurates its first education project in Ziarat

GENDER EQUITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

| 31 | HeForShe campaign crosses into the 300k mark
| 32 | Women, Leadership and the Glass Ceiling in Public Services
| 33 | Rethinking gender equality
| 34 | 17 CEO’s “Step it Up” for Women’s Empowerment

GOVERNANCE

| 35 | Enhancing civic engagement
| 35 | Important Reforms Made in Cantonment Board Elections
| 36 | Pakistan: a circumscribed democracy or a fully-fledged one?
| 37 | Women being barred from voting in KP local government elections

HEALTH

| 38 | Shortage of midwives in Pakistan
| 38 | “End Fistula – Restore Women’s Dignity”
| 39 | Training for PEP starter kit custodians
| 40 | Addressing disabilities in Pakistan
| 40 | United States announces funding to feed temporarily displaced people in Pakistan

HUMAN RIGHTS

| 41 | Attack on the Ismaili community in Karachi
| 41 | International Day on Safety & Health at Work
| 42 | Media training on reporting child labour in Pakistan

MIGRANTS

| 43 | Migrant Resource Centre in Lahore

PRESS FREEDOM

| 43 | World Press Freedom Day 2015

REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

| 44 | United Nations convene donors meeting
| 44 | United States announces funding to feed temporarily displaced people in Pakistan
| 45 | Employment creation for temporarily displaced people

YOUTH

| 46 | World Refugee Day
| 47 | Government of Punjab and the United Nations sign MOU aimed at youth development
| 47 | National consultation on youth employment

ONE UNITED NATIONS

| 48 | Goal 1 - End poverty in all its forms everywhere
| 48 | Goal 2 - Creating new paths for nutrition, agriculture and food systems
| 49 | Goal 3 - A healthier 2030

GUEST IN TOWN

| 50 | UNHCR Chief visits Islamabad
| 51 | UNHCR chief lauds Pakistan’s generosity
| 51 | UNHCR chiefs Ramadan solidarity visit to Pakistan
| 52 | UNHCR Chief inaugurates new Emergency Assessment Unit at Shaukat Khanum Hospital in Peshawar

ON AIR

| 53 | Talk show on World Environment Day and World Ocean Day
| 53 | KAY2 TV: Sharing information on the United Nations
| 53 | Radio Pakistan: addressing the challenges of child labour

MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY-GENERAL

| 54 | International Day of Families
| 55 | World Telecommunication And Information Society Day
| 55 | International Day to End Obstetric Fistula
| 55 | World Environment Day
| 55 | World Oceans Day
| 55 | International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers
| 55 | International Day for Biological Diversity
| 56 | World Day to Combat Desertification
| 56 | Message on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
| 56 | International Widows Day
| 56 | International Day against Drug Abuse and Illega

PHOTO ALBUM

| 58 | We the people
Our journey towards bold climate action is at a critical moment. Five months from tomorrow, COP21 will open in Paris. Today, we have come together to take stock of what we have pledged, what we have delivered, and what else we must do to ensure that world leaders and their governments adopt an ambitious, universal agreement in December, in Paris. Today I would like to share my thoughts on what I hope to see in that agreement, and on how I plan to support this process. In many ways, the stars are aligned as never before. The world’s two biggest emitters of greenhouse gases have announced ambitious climate actions and are showing leadership based on mutual respect and collaboration. Other major economies in the G7 and G20 have announced their intention to act. Since 2009, the number of national climate laws and policies has nearly doubled, with three-quarters of the world’s annual emissions now covered by national targets. The world’s three biggest economies – China, the European Union and the United States -- have placed their bets on low-carbon, climate-resilient growth. The price of renewable energy sources is falling dramatically, and in some places has reached price parity with fossil fuels. The world is now using more renewable electric power each year than it is from coal, natural gas and oil put together. Investors and insurers are starting to integrate climate risk into their decision-making. A growing number of CEOs, including a select few from the oil and gas sector, are revamping their energy systems, strengthening resilience and calling for a price on carbon. Citizens, civil society and faith leaders, most recently His Holiness Pope Francis, are demanding action and reminding us of the moral imperative to protect the vulnerable and care for our common home. I take this opportunity particularly to thank His Holiness Pope Francis for his adding his spiritual and moral strength. And I also thank Cardinal Turkson who has been working very hard, and I thank him very much. These efforts demonstrate that the world is hungry for – and capable of – serious steps that can meet the climate challenge. However, the pace of the UNFCCC negotiations is far too slow. It is moving at snail’s pace. The key political issues are still on the table. With only ten days left, negotiating days, I really count on leaders, Presidents, Prime Ministers and Ministers to exercise their political direction so that this negotiation will move much faster. Now is when true leadership is needed from the highest levels. Heads of State and Government must give clear guidance to their ministers and negotiators so that they take personal responsibility for the outcome in Paris. The success
or failure of the world’s first truly global climate agreement will happen on their watch. As science is telling us loud and clear, we have only a few short years in which to do what is needed to have a reasonable chance of staying within the internationally agreed temperature rise threshold of 2 degrees Celsius. If we fail, we will condemn our children and grandchildren to a future of climate chaos. If we succeed, we can set the world on course for greater stability, better health and stronger economies that benefit all. Alongside the current COP Presidency of Peru and the incoming COP Presidency of France, I will be engaging with leaders on a regular basis. All countries can and must be part of the solution. With that in mind, allow me to highlight what I believe a meaningful agreement could include. First, it must provide a strong signal to governments and markets that the world is committed to building a low-carbon future, and that there is no going back. Second, an agreement must be durable so that it provides the private sector with the predictability and policy frameworks it needs to invest in clean energy and climate-resilient approaches. Third, it must be flexible so that it can incentivize and incorporate more ambitious, science-based nationally determined targets over time. I applaud those countries that have submitted their INDCs, and I urge others to follow suit as soon as possible. Those INDCs currently on offer provide a floor, not a ceiling for ambition, and are critical for building momentum and trust. However, it is already clear that these INDCs will not be sufficient to place us on a less-than-2-degree pathway. An agreement must therefore enable countries to regularly review progress towards this goal, and encourage more ambitious, nationally determined targets to meet it. Fourth, an agreement must uphold the principle of equity, support the adaptation needs of developing countries, and demonstrate solidarity with the poorest and most vulnerable countries through a focused package of assistance. Fifth, a new agreement must have clear mechanisms for measuring, monitoring and reporting progress in a transparent manner on a full range of actions. Sixth, credible climate financing is essential. I strongly urge developed countries to provide a politically credible trajectory for mobilizing $100 billion per year by 2020 to support developing countries in curbing emissions and strengthening their resilience. It is imperative that developed countries provide greater clarity on the public finance component of the $100 billion before Paris, as well as on how they will engage private finance. I will proactively engage with leaders from both the global north and south to make sure this goal is met and is considered credible by all. An agreement must also acknowledge the need for long-term, very significant financing beyond 2020. I welcome the recent announcement by Germany to double its climate finance support by 2020, and encourage other developed countries to follow this example. The Green Climate Fund must also be up and running, with funds that can be disbursed before Paris. Taken in sum, this finance package should build trust and help unlock the additional trillions in financing needed to build low carbon, climate resilient economies. Alongside an agreement, I will continue to work with the COP Presidents and the UNFCCC Executive Secretary to advance the Lima Paris Action Agenda. This Action Agenda builds on the many successful partnerships that were showcased at last year’s Climate Summit. Public, private and civil society partners are achieving real results on the ground – and in the atmosphere. The Action Agenda is not a substitute for an ambitious agreement, but a complement to it. It is also fully consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals by providing solutions at all levels, from the local to the global, on transport, cities, and energy, among others. Let us always remember that climate change and sustainable development are two sides of the same coin. The two agendas are mutually reinforcing: progress on one benefits the other, from food security to health, from energy security to water and the full scope of human need and endeavour. Development cannot be sustainable if it does not address the challenge of climate change. As we move from Addis to New York to Paris this year, I will meet with and convene all actors, public and private, needed to support a comprehensive sustainable development agenda. I pledge to you that I will spare no effort to ensure that the world leaders who are responsible for an ambitious agreement in Paris -- and the financing needed to implement it -- are directly engaged. I encourage you to quicken the pace and raise your ambition as the December conference draws near. A climate change agreement in Paris will not be the end point, but it must be a turning point in how the world collectively responds to the defining challenge of our time. Thank you for your leadership and commitment. Let’s work together to make this world better.

Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General, United Nations
In December 2015, France will host the 21st United Nations Climate Conference, otherwise known as COP21. The aim is crucial with higher stakes than ever before: to reach a new universal agreement that will limit the rise in global temperatures and preserve our planet as a livable place for future generations. We are halfway through a year, 2015, during which the focus is on development and climate. These battles can only be won if fought together: to tackle poverty and enable development, we must win the battle against climate change. In this context and given its extreme vulnerability to climate disruptions, Pakistan has a very important role to play and a voice to raise in Paris. France is working closely with Pakistani authorities and welcomes commitments already made. We are counting on Pakistan to join the collective effort, to be ambitious and forward looking and to submit its “national contribution” before October, based on its national circumstances and capabilities. To help create a momentum, the Embassy of France is organizing numerous events in 2015 throughout Pakistan, many in partnership with the United Nations. As incoming presidency of the COP21, France’s role is to facilitate an ambitious compromise between 196 parties, listening to all and without taking sides. We envision a “Paris Alliance for Climate” to be achieved in December. It should enable us to contain global warming within the limit of 2°C, and to adapt our societies to consequences already being felt. It relies on four components: a universal and legally-binding agreement; the submission of “national contributions”; proper finances to direct capital flows towards low-carbon economies and, last but not least, the participation of civil society under the “Lima-Paris Action Agenda”. Through this agenda, we want to promote this conference from a solution-sharing rather than a burden-sharing point of view, showcasing many concrete actions from non-state actors like NGO’s, businesses and local authorities. Climate change knows no borders and there is a shared responsibility and need for a shared commitment to redress the damage. Therefore appeal to all Pakistani citizens to raise awareness regarding the need to reach a successful global climate agreement this December, in Paris. If we want to achieve this — and doing so is essential for humanity — we will need everyone to contribute.

H.E. Martine Dorance
Ambassador of France to Pakistan
Agricultural development and climate change

Climate change has profound implications for the fight against hunger, poverty and the global food trade. The climate-smart agriculture approach is one of the various interventions that the Food and Agriculture Organization is promoting worldwide. This approach addresses the interlinked challenges of food security and climate change, and explicitly aims for three objectives. Firstly, sustainably increasing agricultural productivity, to support equitable increases in farm incomes, food security and development. Secondly, adapting and building resilience of agricultural and food security systems to climate change at multiple levels and lastly, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture (including crops, livestock and fisheries). What is new about this approach is an explicit consideration of climatic risks that are occurring more rapidly and with greater intensity than in the past. New climate risks require changes in agricultural technologies and approaches to improve the lives of those still locked in food insecurity and to prevent the loss of gains already achieved.

Francisco Gamarro,
Country Representative,
FAO Pakistan

Photo courtesy of Yann Arthus-Bertrand
The International Labour Organization (ILO) promotes green jobs as a way of generating employment opportunities with a reduced environmental impact and an increased ability to cope with climate change. The ILO is working towards reversing the loss of environmental resources by integrating the principles of sustainable development into countries policies and programs. Pakistan is one of the leading countries in Asia and the Pacific in the promotion of green jobs. With funding from the UN Human Security Trust Fund, the ILO in Pakistan is implementing a program on livelihood restoration, protection and sustainable empowerment of vulnerable peasant communities in Sindh. This project was designed in response to the July 2010 monsoon rains which flooded a significant part of Pakistan, Sindh being the hardest hit, leaving inhabitants extremely unprotected and financially insecure. The ILO has also provided flood tolerant construction skills to 272 right holders in Mirpurkhas district who are now locally available as skilled labour for eco-friendly construction. The ILO has supplied eco-friendly construction materials and eco-friendly, smokeless and fuel efficient stoves in the Mirpurkhas district as well as in adjoining areas.
Climate change is a harsh reality and one that requires prompt action. To help nations deal with the effects of climate change, the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP21, will be held in Paris in December, 2015. The objective of the conference is to achieve a legally binding universal agreement on climate change and to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases. Pakistan is currently preparing its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions and will send the commitments prior to the meeting. Pakistan was ranked the third most affected country by climate change in 2012 by the Global Climate Risk Index. UNDP is currently working with the Government of Pakistan to improve the capacity of communities to deal with climate change and its impact. Their main focus is on reducing risks from glacial lake outbursts and snow-melt flash floods in Northern Pakistan, combating desertification by strengthening institutional capacity, improving sustainable transport and capacity building in sustainable land management. As a result, more than 70,000 households in 62 villages across Pakistan have benefited from sustainable land use. 16,000 environmentally-friendly homes have been constructed in Balochistan’s Awaran district, and 3,000 community members have been trained on practices related to sustainable land management.
UNESCO’s Man and Biosphere is an intergovernmental programme that aims to establish a scientific basis for the improvement of relationships between people and their environments. The biosphere reserves are learning laboratories which promote research as well as initiatives towards improving the livelihood of local communities in an ecologically sustainable manner. Biosphere reserves bring added value to the fight against the negative impacts of climate change by applying an integrated and multidisciplinary approach. They have a vital role to play in rapidly seeking and testing solutions to the challenges of climate change as well as monitoring these changes as part of a global network. In 1977, Lal-Suhanra was declared as the first biosphere reserve. It is situated in the north-west edge of the Cholistan Desert in the Punjab Province of Pakistan. This arid landscape is relatively flat and interspersed with sand dunes, some of which are very unstable. The biosphere reserve is crossed by the dried-up bed of the Hakra River and comprises Patisar Lake and irrigated land. The lake was originally built as a water reservoir and used to be an important wetland as a wintering site of many waterfowls. Today, however, the pond supports extensive reed beds, submerged and floating aquatic vegetation, and has thus lost its habitat function for most birds. In 2013, Ziarat Juniper was declared the second biosphere reserve in the country. It is home to the largest juniper forest in Pakistan and it is believed that the forest is the second largest of its kind in the world. The juniper tree species found there are of global significance because of their advanced age and slow growth rate. In fact, the junipers of Ziarat are among the oldest living trees in the world. Local people refer to the trees as ‘living fossils’ and this remarkable longevity allows research into past weather conditions in the region, making the species of special significance for climate change and ecological studies.
UN-Habitat’s climate change initiatives in Pakistan

UN-Habitat aims to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. It is the focal point for all urbanization and human settlement matters within the UN system. UN-Habitat’s vision of “urbanization” encompasses all levels of human settlements, including small rural communities, villages, market towns, immediate cities and large cities and metropolises. UN-Habitat works closely with the Government of Pakistan, the Ministry of Climate Change being its key counterpart. UN-Habitat is actively supporting the Ministry’s mandate and priorities, particularly on issues related to urban climate change resilience, water and sanitation, solid waste management and climate change vulnerability assessments. UN-Habitat is actively advocating for a National Urban Policy, which will address climate change and disaster risk reduction, as well as promote better and well defined city extension planning and sustainable, resilient and climate smart urban development. Most recent and ongoing partnerships include the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment of Islamabad, the Cities, Climate Change and Pakistan National Report, Solid Waste Management through Integrated Resource Recovery Centre and the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions and Disaster Resilient City Development Strategies for Pakistan. These partnerships are aimed at helping the city focus in climate smart planning and increasing national resilience to disasters, crises and external shocks.

UNIC channels Pakistani youth’s voices on climate change

The United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) is committed to empowering the Pakistani youth by providing them with the opportunity to contribute to the global discussion on climate change. The Climate Summit Pakistan, organized with the COMSATS Centre for Climate Research, held in September 2014 in conjunction with the global summit organized by Secretary-General in New York, was the first attempt to engage Pakistani youth by sharing their suggestions and views regarding Pakistan’s vulnerability to climate change. This year, in the occasion of COP 21, UNIC plans to take their contribution forward by sharing their voice as one of the key agents for social change and technological progress.

In fact, UNIC plans to publish a booklet of essays and drawings by Pakistani youth on climate change to be presented and distributed at COP21 in Paris in December 2015. In order to collect essays and drawings, UNIC will seek collaboration with schools and universities across Pakistan. The booklet will be available in English and Urdu and will feature forewords by key stakeholders, including the UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth and the Minister of Climate Change of Pakistan among others. UNIC is also co-producing a series of radio and TV programs in collaboration with selected channels like Radio Pakistan, ARY News and AVT Channels. The programs will feature youth representatives from both urban and rural areas and will aim at directly involving them in raising awareness of climate change issues among their peers.

Lastly, Pakistani youth representatives will be involved in an interactive discussion on climate change in the context of the UN70 festival, a 3-day event to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the United Nations. The event will bring together representatives from youth organizations to create a nationwide plan of action on climate change for the youth.
UNIDO’s efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change

UNIDO in cooperation with various stakeholders is engaged in several industry related projects in major cities of Pakistan to deal with the hazardous effects of climate change and the mitigation of industrial pollution. One such programme is aimed at improving the environmental situation of Sialkot through the relocation of 250 tanneries from thickly populated residential areas to a Tannery zone. The project is designed to support water conservation, water treatment, water flow and flood management. Similarly, UNIDO is also assisting the Pakistan Tannery Association to promote climate change adaptation, low greenhouse gas emissions and resilient development in korangi industrial area in Karachi. UNIDO is sponsoring the installation of renewable energy plants including solar, which will help industries overcome energy supply and deal with the hazardous effects of climate change. A vital project being implemented by UNIDO in Pakistan is the “Sustainable Energy Initiative for Industries in Pakistan”. The prime objective of this project is to reduce energy related greenhouse gas emissions by facilitating the creation of a market environment to promote the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. The project will help the industrial sector develop a policy regulatory framework on renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies, capacity building of energy consultants, conducting energy surveys, implementing energy management systems and developing demonstration projects on renewable energy to help build replicable models. Apart from bringing new technological developments, UNIDO Pakistan is also fostering a change in the country through capacity building of local institutions through partnerships with key industrial public and private institutes as well as academia, in the field of environment and climate change.

Climate change and food insecurity in Pakistan

For the past few years, the United Nations World Food Programme has been actively strengthening vulnerable population’s resilience to floods and drought through community-based livelihood activities. This is currently implemented in six agencies of FATA, Swat in KP, and five Southern districts in Sindh. Since June 2014, WFP in collaboration with the Ministry of Climate Change has been supporting the government in its preparation for the COP21, which will be held in Paris in December, 2015. Upcoming activities include a workshop on climate change resilience for food security as well as phase two of the Climate Risks and Food Security Analysis, launched by the WFP in December 2014. In May 2015, WFP held a climate change workshop focused on capacity building of WFP’s staff to address hunger and to introduce resilience and adaptation measures into WFP’s interventions. WFP’s action plan for 2016-2018 will incorporate climate change action through programme interventions on disaster risk management and livelihoods and will seek to collaborate with UN agencies for greater synergy and successful tangible outcomes.
Climate change - from small villages to major cities

Living in a concrete jungle like Islamabad, the term climate change only meant early monsoon and delayed winters to us. However, the reality became clear soon after we got the elating opportunity to work with the United Nations Information Center in Islamabad. Our task was simple; we had to teach school children about climate change and how the smallest of actions were contributing to this major problem.

Picking up the “I am for Climate Change” placard gave me a sense of responsibility, direction and purpose. The journey took us from the brilliant Webex Session at UNIC to the small and vulnerable village of Mehrabadi. There we taught children about climate change, global warming and carbon footprints. Painting, being the favorite activity of most children, we painted a banner saying Climate Summit 2014 for UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon’s Climate Summit 2014. Since the UNFCCC’s COP 21 is expected to take place this December in France we decided to raise some voices of Pakistani youth in French.

We approached the National University of Modern Language and took their feedback on climate change. However our major concern was still not addressed. How do we create awareness about climate change in the small cities of Pakistan? Recently, we have launched a blog called Biology Decoded and have introduced a Summer Internship program for all aspiring writers of science. We received around 100 applications from all major and minor cities across Pakistan. Our concern was finally taken care of. The internship will start from 22 June and the first theme we will be introducing is Climate Change. Being a nature lover we are also in the process of conducting a conference on climate change and its effect on endangered species in COMSATS University, Islamabad.

I would like to thank everyone at UNIC for taking such keen interest in climate change and involving the youth in this project. Their support and guidance was with us at every step. I look forward to many more great times with the United Nations!

Saman Jehan Ansari, Intern, United Nations Information Centre
With regard to climate change, the International Labour Organization is working in areas of policy development and research, capacity building, programme development and knowledge sharing. Our aim is to ensure environmental sustainability by integrating the principles of sustainable development into countries’ policies and programs and by reversing the loss of environmental resources.

**Francisco d’Ovidio,**
Country Director, ILO Pakistan

We are helping Pakistani communities, including the poorest, prepare and adapt to the effects of climate change. Our work is laying the foundation of sustainable land use and strengthening district disaster emergency response cells. We are also helping prepare risk reduction plans in the valleys worst affected by the glacial lake outbursts. We will continue to work together with the government and other development partners to bring this agenda forward and to achieve our common goal of adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change in Pakistan!

**Marc André Franche,**
Country Director, UNDP Pakistan

UNESCO, through its multidisciplinary mandate in education, natural and social sciences, culture and communications is in a unique position to address climate change holistically. UNESCO and its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission are working in close collaboration with the French authorities to prepare a series of pre-COP21 events through which they aim to put their expertise at the service of member states, to help them identify promising recommendations and make informed decisions.

**Vibeke Jensen,**
Representative/Director, UNESCO Pakistan

We want to make sure that the Pakistani youth has a voice in the global conversation on climate change and we are providing them with the channels necessary to connect with their peers from all over the world. Pakistani youth’s contribution is crucial for reducing the effects of climate change and we are confident that they can take concrete steps towards doing so!

**Vittorio Cammarota,**
Director, UN Information Centre
UN-Habitat is the lead UN agency in promoting socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities. It is fully committed to working with and supporting the Government of Pakistan, particularly the Ministry of Climate Change as its key government counterpart in the country, along with other development partners. The Government of Pakistan has prepared a National Report, which is to be presented at the Habitat III Conference, planned in October 2016. The conference will further map out issues and challenges and reaffirm commitment from member states and other partners on the new urban agenda.

**Bella Evidente,**  
Country Programme Manager, UN-Habitat Pakistan

In order to promote climate change mitigation and adaptation and reducing GHG emissions, UNIDO in cooperation with various stakeholders is engaged in several industry related projects in major cities of Pakistan. The projects are helping the government, private sector and provincial authorities in addressing climate change through mitigation and adaptation measures introduced in selected sectors. Most of UNIDO assistance is supporting the industry with technological support in renewable energy, energy efficiency, water conservation and water management.

**Esam Alqararah,**  
Representative, UNIDO Pakistan

In a national context of frequent hazards, increasingly erratic weather patterns, and reduced availability of key natural resources, climate change is an aggravating factor of food insecurity in Pakistan. Therefore, assistance to the vulnerable populations should be carried out through linkages between food production, disaster management and community-based initiatives in order to ensure long-term resilience of populations in hotspots.

**Lola Castro,**  
Representative and Country Director, WFP Pakistan
Countering malnutrition in the Thar Desert

Pushpa is a resident of Meghwar Paro, a village in Tharparkar district located in the famous Thar Desert. She waits patiently at a UNICEF-supported nutrition centre for her third born seven-month-old daughter Lata to be examined for her nutritional status. “Raising children has not been easy for me,” says Pushpa. “Each one of my daughters was underweight at the time of birth and I had to take them to the doctor frequently as they would often fall sick.” Lata’s tests reveal that she is severely malnourished.

Malnutrition is a common problem amongst women and children living in Tharparkar district. Surveys conducted in the region reveal a serious situation that calls for swift action by the government. UNICEF has been supporting the Government of Sindh to counter acute malnutrition through its Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) programme. Currently, UNICEF’s partner organizations, Shifa Foundation and the Health and Nutrition Development Society are carrying out emergency nutrition activities in 44 Union Councils of the district. Reaching communities living in hard to access areas is essential for timely detection and raising awareness about malnutrition. Kavita bai works as a counselor for the programme. “Due to lack of education,
awareness about health, hygiene, maternal and neonatal issues is generally low among women in this area,” says Kavita. “However, they are keen to learn and adapt health and hygiene practices that I introduce to them during my sessions.”

A very important aspect of the programme is taking care of children who apart from being severely malnourished, suffer from either pneumonia, diarrhoea, fever or all at the same time. Such cases are referred to the Stabilization Centre in the District Headquarter Hospital of Mithi. The UNICEF Representative in Pakistan, Angela Kearney recently toured Tharparkar district in order to see UNICEF-supported CMAM activities. “Concerted efforts must continue with full vigour to improve the nutritional status of children and women of this area. Raising awareness regarding health and hygiene and helping communities to access basic health services is imperative so that precious lives could be saved” said Angela.
Mobile registration teams provide services to remote Afghan refugees on their doorsteps

In late April, a mobile registration team was deployed to Chagai district by the Government of Pakistan’s National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), supported by UNHCR. The team is issuing and updating important identity documents, such as birth certificates and Proof of Registration cards that provide temporary legal stay for 1.5 million registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Ghulam Mohi Uddin is a father of nine children. He is an Afghan refugee living in Chagai district in a remote corner of Balochistan in western Pakistan. Until last month, he had to travel for two days to register new born children in his family and update the identity cards that allow him and his family to live and move freely in Pakistan. This meant two days away from his family, two days without work, two days less pay, and two days of bus fares and travel costs. “The nearest card modification centre in Quetta is over 10 hours travel from here,” said Ghulam. “It is a very difficult journey, especially with my children.” Like many refugees, he is a manual labourer receiving a daily wage of 400 rupees (US$4). Travelling to Quetta by public transport would cost him at least one week’s wages. But Ghulam no longer faces these problems. “Having the mobile registration van on our doorstep has been so helpful,” he said. Haider Khan, head teacher of a school in Chagai refugee village has also just returned from visiting the mobile registration van. “My youngest son Matheullah has just turned five, and so today we were able to apply for his Proof of Registration card because of the mobile registration van,” said Haider proudly. During the next six months, similar teams will visit refugee communities that are substantial distances from any of the six card modification centres in Pakistan. Waqas Munir works at the NADRA office in Rawalpindi. “Many refugees travel for half a day or more just to visit our centre,” Waqas said. “The refugees start queuing outside the centre as early as four in the morning to beat the rush. The mobile registration vans will really help the Afghan refugee communities here in Punjab province, too.”
Shahgram bridge: linking two villages

It was a joyous occasion for the people of Kalam last month when Shahgram bridge was completed. Five years after the devastating floods of 2010, the two villages, Madyan and Shahgram are once again connected. Madyan and Shahgram make up the beautiful, Swat Valley, located in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Swat Valley was once a renowned tourist destination before floods and years of conflict brought death and destruction upon it. Ghaffoor Shah, a resident of the Shahgram village donated his land to allow the Shahgram bridge to be constructed. “The bridge is the primary connection between the two villages. I gave this land so that our people can prosper and our children can safely go to school,” said Ghaffoor. The bridge provides a quick and safe path for the children of Madyan and Shahgram to walk to school every day. “I will not be late for school anymore,” said a young boy. “I used to walk for almost an hour to reach my school…Now, it will not take more than 10 minutes. I am really excited.” he added. Another resident, Khair Rehman said, “I have a water-mill on the other side of the stream and I used to cross the stream, wading through, with a bag of grains on my shoulders, which was very unsafe and it used to hurt my back a lot”. Shahgram bridge is part of the UNOPS Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of Bridges and Irrigation Channels Project. In partnership with the Government of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and with financial support from Saudi Fund for Development, the project will benefit more than 21,000 people of Kalam and 25,000 hectares of agricultural land.
Local government elections were held in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on 30th May, 2015. 42,858 seats were elected in 3,600 local bodies, which amounts to around one seat for every 500 people in the province. One of the lessons learned from previous elections was that participation for local government elections needs to be significantly improved. Voters need to be made aware of the electoral process because voter education holds the key to encourage voting among rural communities. With support from DFID, UNDP initiated a province-wide voter education campaign called ‘Mera Vote, Meri awaz’ meaning ‘My Vote, My Voice’ in more than 24 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The campaign was aimed at improving citizen participation, especially among women and the youth. More than 600,000 information communication material illustrating the voting process and colored ballot papers were distributed in villages, educational institutions, government offices, local businesses and public spaces. A number of plays, speeches and art competitions were arranged in major educational institutions of the districts to create awareness about voting amongst the youth. Local students volunteering to display posters and stickers in the surrounding areas for high voter turnout said, “We may be young to cast vote, but we understand the importance of voting. Our elders need to vote to ensure a brighter future for us.” Female students were eager to understand the voting process. Young girls wore “mera vote, meri awaz” wrist bands and made illustrations to show their support for women participation in the local government elections. In collaboration with transport services, banners and stickers were displayed on public wagons and vans. 30 year old Waseem Sarwar from Union Council BAFA said, “It is a shame we do not realize the importance of voting but, this year it will be different. There has been a huge change within the community. People will go and vote, even women.”
The villages of Bharat Khas and Dil Nawaz Bharat in Bannu were torn apart in the aftermath of the devastating floods of 2010. To this day, the two villages are separated by a stream of flowing water created by the floods. The water flowing in from River Tochee has created many hardships for the people living on either side of it. Villagers have to brave the flowing waters every day to access facilities available across the stream, sometimes in torrential rains. It is also very difficult for female villagers and the elderly to cross the watercourse. Female students living in Dil Nawaz Bharat wanting to enroll in Bharat Khas high school, which offers a better standard of education, are unable to do so because of the difficulty they will have to face every day. Additionally, Bharat Khas has the only Basic Health Unit (BHU) in the vicinity. UNDP Pakistan, in partnership with the Participatory Rural Development Society, is building a bridge to help around 3400 individuals in the two villages gain better access to basic services available in both the villages. Construction for the bridge has already begun and is being monitored by the local community. The community has taken complete ownership of the work and is planning to use its own resources to complete a 1200 feet street pavement connecting the bridge. Usman crosses the watercourse every day for school and is soaking wet by the end of it. He has to wait for his clothes and shoes to dry off before he can enter his class. The bridge will help many children like Usman to easily move between villages and make it to school. Ayat Ullah, a member of the host community, is the president of the Community Network for the two villages. “Some families have relatives living on the other side and because of the lack of a proper way to cross the bridge, they do not meet each other for months,” said Ayat Ullah. Once the bridge is completed, families will no longer have to face these hardships.
Appraising fishery resources in Pakistan

Pakistan’s marine resources are a major source of income and livelihood for over a million people living along the coasts of Balochistan and Sindh. For two decades, the sustainability of marine capture fisheries in Pakistan has been at risk. This is primarily because of a lack of knowledge and inadequate monitoring of the resource and limited availability of qualified human resources and training institutions. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Pakistan has been working to strengthen the management and development of fishery related institutions in Pakistan through the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. Since 2008, through a series of surveys and data collection, FAO Pakistan in collaboration with the Marine Fisheries Department of the Government of Pakistan has been implementing the “Support to the Fishery Resources Appraisal in Pakistan” project. This project aims to provide a sound assessment of the status and prospects of the country’s coastal and offshore fishery resources. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department in Rome is providing technical support to the project activities. By the end of the project, it is anticipated that a framework will be established to allow for continued and timely appraisal of national marine fishery resources as required for responsible fisheries and their sustainable utilization and development. The project’s outcome will be the increased capability for fishery planning and management based on the sound knowledge of the state of the fishery resources and of the fisheries exploiting them.
Cold storage facility to provide nutrient rich foods to malnourished mothers and children in Sindh

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) inaugurated a Cold Storage facility in Karachi to store and protect high value nutritious items. These commodities are distributed at the Nutrition and Livelihood projects WFP is implementing in Sindh. WFP has constructed similar facilities in Multan, Peshawar and Quetta.

Many areas in Sindh are affected by constant droughts, causing a severe shortage of food, resulting in malnutrition, disease and death. Since 2014, WFP in Pakistan has adopted a persistent approach towards achieving sustainable food security in all parts of the country. In Sindh, WFP is implementing the Community Based Management of Acute Malnutrition interventions in five districts and a Stunting Prevention project in collaboration with the Government in 29 union councils of district Thatta. Through these projects WFP provides specialized nutrient-rich foods to malnourished mothers and children. These include micro nutrition powder and nutrient rich supplements, which are highly temperature sensitive and require to be stored at controlled temperatures. Protecting these commodities is challenging as Pakistan has a continental type of climate characterized by extreme variations of temperature, both seasonally and daily.

Therefore, WFP has constructed a cold storage facility in a rented warehouse at Port Qasim. The state of the art facility has a capacity to store 250 metric tons of food items. The facility will not only help safeguard WFP’s commodities but will also be used for other humanitarian agencies in Pakistan.

Pakistan’s efforts to control Foot and Mouth Disease

The hard work of the Food and Agriculture Organizations executed project “Progressive control of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in Pakistan” was recognized by the Regional Advisory Group at the 6th Annual Meeting of the West Eurasia FMD Road Map held in Almaty, Kazakhstan from 28 to 30 April, 2015. Pakistan’s status was upgraded from Stage 1 to Stage 2 in the FMD-Progressive Control Pathway. Risk-based control strategy of FMD in Pakistan was presented by the Project Coordinator in the meeting and was appreciated by experts and participants from 13 regional countries. It was considered as a model to be used by other regional countries for preparing their FMD risk reduction plan to qualify for the FMD-PCP Stage 2. Speaking at the occasion, the Project Coordinator stressed the need to continue efforts to control FMD in Pakistan for improving profitability of the livestock farmers in the country and to increase milk and meat production to ensure food security and reduce poverty.
Emergency response facility in Peshawar

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) inaugurated the fifth Humanitarian Response Facility in Jalozai, Peshawar on 19 May, 2015 in the presence of the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pervez Khattak, WFP Regional Director for Asia David Katarud, and WFP Pakistan Representative Lola Castro. The ceremony was also attended by the Ambassador of Denmark Jasper Moller Sorensen and Honorary Consul General of Japan Nawabzada Fazal Karim Afridi. The increasing number of unfortunate events in the last 7 to 8 years has made the need for effective disaster management an absolute priority. In addition, the effects of climate change and unpredictable weather patterns add to the existing burden on the response capability of the government and the PDMA, in particular.

“This unique humanitarian response facility will be utilized to further prepare the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to serve the communities in need” said the Chief Minister. WFP, the Government of Pakistan and international donors have been working together since 2013 to establish a network of humanitarian hubs to ensure emergency preparedness. Eight such state-of-the-art facilities have already been inaugurated in Quetta, Muzaffargarh, Lahore and Hyderabad. The value and importance of such facilities can be seen in Nepal, “where a logistics hub at Kathmandu airport is helping WFP and the whole humanitarian community reach earthquake survivors with life-saving assistance,” said David Katarud. It is becoming increasingly important to ensure the availability of the skills and tools required to respond more efficiently to a sudden emergency in order to save lives and protect livelihoods.
Regional workshop on youth drug use

The UNODC, under its Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighboring Countries, organized a four day workshop on the development and implementation of policies combating drug use among young people. The primary objective of the workshop was to provide an understanding of the processes required to plan and implement a survey on drug use among youth both in and out of school settings. Delegates consisted of mid-to-senior level professionals who are responsible for monitoring the drug situation and are currently working in the areas of drug use prevention and treatment, public health, and/or have expertise in conducting research in health related areas. It is expected that the workshop participants will become the national contact persons for future planning and implementation of the youth surveys in their respective countries. Addressing the delegates at his opening speech, Mr. Cesar Guedes, the representative from the UNODC, Pakistan said, “It is you, the delegates, what you take on board in such workshops and take back to your respective ministries at home that make significant differences in tackling the harmful effects of illicit drugs.”

Regional information sharing and case management workshop

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Pakistan (UNODC) in collaboration with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) organized a two day regional workshop for law enforcement officials and prosecutors from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Turkey to discuss challenges related to case management and information sharing in overcoming the growing concerns of human trafficking and migrant smuggling from the region. It also provided them with a common platform to share experiences and knowledge on the emerging trends and routes of human trafficking and migrant smuggling. During the opening session Mr. Naweed Riaz, UNODC’s Officer-in-Charge stated that “immediate attention was required from the regional states to protect human lives and to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice”. He further stated that UNODC Country Offices in Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan are working towards building the capacity of host governments’ in addressing the challenges posed by transnational organized crime. Mr. Khalid Qureshi, Additional Director General FIA stated his appreciation for the efforts of UNODC especially regarding the delivered training sessions and operational equipment which has enabled the FIA to dismantle trafficking and smuggling networks and has contributed towards building safer communities which are free from labour exploitation.
A technical needs assessment mission conducted by a team of counter-narcotics canine experts from the Bolivian Police, has been concluded in Pakistan. The special visit was aimed at evaluating the canine capacity of the Anti Narcotics Force (ANF), and to make recommendations for possible future improvements. The mission was jointly hosted by the UNODC Country Office Pakistan and the ANF. It explored the steps required to bring the canine capacity of Pakistani law enforcement agencies in line with international standards. The Bolivian Police Training Centre of Drug Detecting Canines is located in Cochabamba, Bolivia, and is considered one of the renowned canine training facilities in the world.

Welcoming the Bolivian experts, Mr. Cesar Guedes, the UNODC Representative in Pakistan, highlighted the importance of raising Pakistan’s counter-narcotics canine capacity as it is considered the first line of defense against international drug trafficking networks. At commencement of the 10-day mission, the Bolivian canine experts met Major General Khawar Hanif, Director General of the ANF and his staff. “The UNODC’s canine training initiative will enhance the capacities of the ANF, as well as that of other law enforcement agencies, as we look forward to making the ANF’s canine breeding and training centre one of the leading training entities in the region,” said General Hanif. The results of this initiative are anticipated to have a significant impact on anti-narcotics efforts in Pakistan.
In its ongoing efforts to encourage and promote the use of clean technologies, UNIDO with the support of Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Cleantech Open organized a 3-day training session for the Mentor and National Academy for semi-finalists of the Global Cleantech Innovation Programme for SMEs in Pakistan (GCIP). GCIP-Pakistan aims at fostering innovations in energy efficiency, renewable energy, waste to energy and water efficiency as part of the larger global programme currently operating in seven countries.

The Cleantech Open was founded on the premise that entrepreneurial innovation is the answer to the world’s most pressing environmental challenges, and the key to economic growth for all nations. This is the second year of the program and the number of applicants were extremely high but only fifty five teams were declared semi-finalist out of which women lead team’s percentage is 22%. All of these start-ups will be subject to extensive mentoring, training, access to investors and opportunities to showcase their innovations. Winners will be given prizes ranging from US$ 20,000 to US$ 15,000, in addition to a mentorship and training in Silicon Valley, USA.

Mr. Esam Alqararah, UNIDO Representative to Pakistan, while addressing the ceremony, shared UNIDO’s vision on inclusive and sustainable industrial development and the efforts being made to promote sustainable energy and protect the environment. He said that UNIDO was proud to join hands with such strong partners as the GEF and the Cleantech Open to engage hundreds of energy entrepreneurs and small trades around the world to raise awareness, acceptance and significance of innovation and investment in clean technologies of Pakistan.

Mr Paul deGVe, a trainer from Cleantech Open USA stated that Pakistan is the next entrepreneurial state in clean technologies and innovations.
Pakistan’s economy is growing despite macroeconomic imbalances

"Economic growth of Pakistan is expected to improve in the coming years, partly due to the Government’s major efforts to address electricity shortages and other infrastructural bottlenecks. However, there is an urgent need to make this growth more inclusive and broad-based by spreading its benefits to all parts of the country and segments of society", said Dr. Muhammad Hussain Malik, former Chief, ESCAP Macroeconomic, Policy and Analysis Section, who presented the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2015 at the UN Information Centre in Islamabad. The survey titled Making Growth More Inclusive for Sustainable Development shows that growth in the region’s developing nations will increase only slightly in 2015, with no significant change expected in 2016. Professor Ashfaque Hasan Khan, Dean of Social Sciences at NUST, noted that Pakistan’s economic growth has slowed down considerably over the last several years, giving rise to youth unemployment. Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) added that for growth to catalyse sustainable development it is crucial to achieve macro-economic stability and to distribute its benefits at micro level. Media representatives, academia, students and members of the diplomatic community participating in the event were welcomed by Vittorio Cammarota, Director of the UN Information Centre. Launching the survey in Bangkok, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, UN ESCAP Executive Secretary emphasized the need to promote quality growth and shared prosperity in the region, calling on regional policymakers to integrate and mainstream inclusive growth by adopting a mixed set of measures to achieve better social and environmental outcomes to enhance public welfare.

Restoring banks confidence

UNIDO successfully organized a consultative workshop on "Credit Guarantee Scheme for SMEs in Pakistan" in collaboration with SMEDA, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Italian Development Corporation on 7th May 2015 in Islamabad, Pakistan. The workshop is a follow-up of the study, "Feasibility Study for Setting up A Pilot Guarantee Fund for SME Sector in Pakistan" which was conducted through a private sector consultant under the UNIDO project “Investment Promotion Unit”. The objectives of the workshop were to share the findings of the study and to get feedback from commercial banks, the public sector as well private sector organizations before taking this study to development donors and the Government of Pakistan. The main reason for decline in SMEs lending is increase in non-performing loans, which makes banks hesitant in disbursing credit to SMEs. Other countries have established many credit guarantee funds to give comfort to banks to cover the defaults by SMEs. During the workshop, Muhammad Alamir Chaudhary (CEO SMEDA), pointed out that access to finance is one of the major issues of SMEs in Pakistan and that formal lending for SMEs in Pakistan is much less than the actual requirement. He emphasized that credit guarantee would be very helpful for easy access to finance for those SMEs which have difficulty in getting loans. Mr. Imran Ahmad, Additional Director, State Bank of Pakistan, shared the experience of having one Credit Guarantee Scheme. He emphasized that there is a need for many such schemes in Pakistan and that such a scheme would motivate the banks to extend loans to SMEs, which would benefit the overall economy of Pakistan.
At the third meeting of the Buyers’ Forum for the Textile sector, a total of 19 representatives of international brands reaffirmed their commitment to better labour and environmental practices in the textile sector. At the meeting, they discussed the need for adopting a Voluntary Declaration on Promoting Sustainability in the Textile Sector through improving productivity and competitiveness.

The Buyers’ Forum gathers the largest international brands that source from Pakistan – including H&M, Li&Fung, V&D, Gap India and C&A amongst others. These brands will work together to promote better compliance with standards in order to allow Pakistan’s textile sector to remain competitive and internationally attractive.

The participants also discussed the findings of a study on the status of compliance and existing good practices in the textile sector undertaken by the Sustainable Trade Initiative, a Dutch NGO. While deliberating on the recommendations of the study, the participants agreed on the need to foster support for three key areas; strengthening labour inspection regime, issues of contractual employment and supporting smaller manufacturers to improve compliance at par with International Standards.

A working committee of the buyers will come together to discuss the priority areas and draw an action plan that will be shared at the next meeting planned in October.

The acting ambassador of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Mr. Karel Hartogh announced a new and ambitious initiative to reinvigorate the labour inspection system in Pakistan, which involves training labour inspectors and institutionalizing mechanisms that will contribute to an effective and facilitative business environment and welfare of the workers.

The ILO Country Director, Mr. Francesco d’Ovidio said that it is important for the buyers to consider supporting local SME’s across the textile value chain, particularly those at the tail end to strengthen their capacity to comply with international labour and environmental standards which would in turn facilitate decent working conditions in the sector. He also shared that the ILO had conducted a regional research that will provide policy and legal recommendations for improving the minimum wage setting, implementation and working conditions in textiles sector.
RAHA inaugurates its first education project in Ziarat

The UN Refugee Agency through its partner organization, Balochistan Rural Support Programme, and in close collaboration with the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees, initiated the agency’s first ever education project in Ziarat on May 21, 2015.

The project will improve education facilities through the construction of a students’ hostel, multipurpose hall and a warden room. It will also include the provision of gym equipment for students and capacity building training sessions for the teachers of Alhijrah School.

The project will therefore not only improve the quality of education and living conditions but will also lead to a healthier environment for the students. The vice principal, Tariq Hussain, anticipates a 70% increase in students once the project has been completed.

While visiting the project site, Fabio Varoli, Head of the UNHCR Office in Quetta said “RAHA initiative is a token of appreciation for Pakistan’s generosity for hosting millions of refugees for over three decades.”

Since its start in 2009, RAHA has ensured that Afghan refugees as well as their host communities benefit through the improvement of key facilities in the sectors of health, education, water and sanitation.
HeForShe campaign crosses into the 300k mark

In the middle of final year exams, faced with resistance from a patriarchal society, a dedicated team of students from the University of Engineering and Technology in Lahore, Pakistan, ignited a spark among the youth to speak up against inequalities faced by women and girls.

Students from “Zimal” (a girl's society with the tagline “Breaking Stereotypes for Her”) and “Khardaar” (a boy's society with the slogan “As Brothers We Stand”) engaged over 5,000 men and boys to sign-up for the HeForShe movement, which crossed into the 300k mark.

Mr. Jamshed Kazi, Representative for UN Women Pakistan, expressed his appreciation for the dedicated and determined group of young volunteers. He said, “The students and youth who have demonstrated gender equality as their cause are the new generation ‘gender champions’. I encourage others to spread the word, build the momentum and join UN Women's HeForShe movement in Pakistan”.

The campaign is a truly inspiring initiative, which not only portrays awareness for the rights of Pakistani women amongst the youth, but also shows a strong will to bring about a positive change in Pakistan.
Women, Leadership and the Glass Ceiling in Public Services

Deputy Superintendent of Police, Ms. Shahzadi Gulfam was the first Pakistani female to be deployed as a UN peacekeeper and the only one to have received the International Female Police Peacekeeper Award from the United Nations. Ms. Gulfam is among the finest examples of Pakistan’s public service with an increasing number of women joining its ranks. There is however much more work to be done as the representation of women in Pakistan’s public service is among the lowest in the Asia-Pacific region at less than 5%.

Women in Pakistan continue to experience challenges and barriers related to recruitment, retention, and promotion in the public service. In addition to proverbial glass ceiling, which prevents many women from reaching the top tiers of civil service, ‘glass walls’ may also confine women to the social or ‘softer’ sectors such as culture, education, women’s affairs, and health. This explains their under-representation in departments responsible for economic, finance, planning and security matters.

Empirical evidence suggests that equal participation or women in the senior levels of public service brings increased benefits to their families, communities, and countries. Women’s representation in local governments has also made a difference in terms of investment in basic services. Research compiled by UN Women on panchayats (local councils) in India discovered that the number of drinking water projects in areas with female-led councils was 62 per cent higher than in those with male-led councils. Similarly, in Norway, a direct causal relationship between the presence of women in municipal councils and childcare coverage was found.

23 June marked United Nations Public Service Day to celebrate the value and virtue of public servants such as Shahzadi Gulfam and to encourage policymakers to ‘step it up’ in terms of reinvigorating Pakistan’s commitment to gender equality including in the public sector as part of Vision 2025 and in preparation for the forthcoming Sustainable Development Goals to be endorsed by Heads of State at the UN in New York this autumn.

Jamshed M. Kazi,
Country Representative,
UN Women Pakistan
A 2-day workshop on “Moving from Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals: Policies and options for Pakistan” was organized by the Department of Development Studies, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission, on 9 June 2015 in Islamabad. The workshop focused on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Speaking on the first day of the workshop, Mr. Jamshed Kazi, Country Representative, UN Women Pakistan stressed that while the MDGs focused on ‘promoting’ gender equality, the SDGs will instead focus on ‘achieving’ gender equality. “Freedom from violence, gender equality in capabilities and resources and gender equality in decision-making in public and private institutions are three main components of the SDGs’ gender goals” he added.

Mr. Kazi emphasized that investment in research, a meaningful education system, engaging with the private sector, youth and religious leaders, nurturing grass-roots women organizations and recognizing and re-distributing unpaid care work could optimize SDGs for women and girls. He also underlined that in addition to symptoms, root causes of gender inequalities and discrimination have to be addressed. Only then can Pakistan move forward to meet the SDG targets on achieving gender equality and empowerment of women and girls by 2030.
Seventeen CEOs from private sector companies in Pakistan have signed the CEO Statement of Support for the Women’s Empowerment Principles, at an event on 21 May 2015 in Sialkot. The event was organized by UN Women and Baidarie (an NGO established by rural women). The Women’s Empowerment Principles is a partnership initiative of UN Women and the United Nations Global Compact, which provides a set of considerations to help the private sector focus on key elements integral to promoting gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community, through policy and action. The private sector champions were identified through a series of consultations by UN Women and Baidarie. Ms. Bismillah, a home based female worker, upon hearing the news that her organization has adopted the Women’s Empowerment Principles, voiced her delight by saying: “If there will be more than 30% women employees then our strength will be reinforced and we can raise our voice for our rights”.

Speaking in support of his female colleagues and the seven Principles, Mr. Muhammad Majied, a factory worker shared: “Some female colleagues have no access to social security benefits such as health insurance and old age benefits…If the seven Principles are introduced I am sure the socio-economic condition of both men and women will become much better”.

Dr. Mariam Nouman, CEO of Capital Nexus, speaking at the launching ceremony shared her contribution in empowering local women: “In 2005 when my husband opened a sportswear manufacturing company, we decided to have 30% women in our workforce…We hired 20 local women as football stitchers who were professionally trained. Very soon we saw our women stitchers perform beyond our expectations. This encouraged us to hire more women. In 2012 we started another company and are aiming to have 50% of women as employees”. To quote Mr. Khawaja Masood, CEO of Forward Group, “It is a crime against humanity that our women are contained within the four walls of their houses as prisoners. I believe that there is no chance for the welfare of the humanity unless the condition of women is improved”.

17 CEO’s “Step it Up” for Women’s Empowerment
Enhancing civic engagement

A conference on enhancing civic engagement in the Local Government Act of 2013 was held in Peshawar. At the conference, Prof Dr. Hussain Sheheed Soherwordi, head of the Cell for FATA Studies, University of Peshawar, stated that local government represents democracy at the grass-roots level. However, local body elections take place once in a blue moon, which frustrates people and results in condemnation and undue criticism of the federal government. In his keynote speech, Provincial Minister for Local Government, Elections and Rural Development Department, Mr. Innayatullah Khan said that in addition to administrative powers, social, political and financial powers must also be devolved to the local government. The Minister further said that in accordance with the Provincial Finance Commission, fiscal powers must also be devolved and resources should be devolved on the basis of poverty, population, backwardness and lack of infrastructure in the districts. Mr. Hyder Yahya, local governance specialist UNDP, stressed the importance of raising awareness about civic engagement in order to enable citizens to engage proactively with the new local government. He also stressed the need to provide better municipal services to the common man through the Local Government Act. Justice (r) Mian Muhammad Ajmal focused on the constitutional aspect of the local government system by saying that holding local government elections and establishing an effective local government at the grass-roots level is a constitutional obligation.

Important Reforms Made in Cantonment Board Elections

The cantonment board elections held on 25 April are a critical step towards decentralization and local government. This is the first time in 17 years that the cantonment boards have been elected. The cantonment board polls are now the second group of local elections to take place following the local body elections.

UNDP and the Election Commission of Pakistan conducted extensive training of returning officers and presiding officers in the run-up to the polls. UNDP also consulted extensively with electoral managers, and assisted the development and distribution of 4300 handbooks for polling staff and returning officers.

"The training was very useful, the elections did not take place since more than 17 years so we had no idea on how to conduct these elections. Therefore the training was very helpful to us and we learnt exactly what to do in the elections" said Afreen Zubair Ch., Cantonment Executive Officer, Attock.

The Election Commission introduced a number of key administrative reforms including the modification of the counting procedure to include women, improved tracking of ballot printing and distribution, and improved accountability of returning officers and polling staff.

Most importantly, for the first time in recent history, the counting procedure required counting of the fingerprints on the electoral roll. While this is chiefly done as a fool-proof way to determine how many women voted, it is also a basic integrity check against additional ballots being introduced into the ballot box.

Furthermore, three female returning officers were appointed, one each in Rawalpindi, Lahore, and Karachi. Even though this only represents 6% of the 50 officers appointed, it is nonetheless a promising development and is a much higher portion than seen in previous elections.
Pakistan: a circumscribed democracy or a fully-fledged one?

On May 30, the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan went to the polls to exercise their hard-earned democratic right to choose their local leaders. However, newspapers reports emerged of candidates, community elders, and religious leaders conspiring to bar women from voting. In an earlier by-election, local media reported that out of 47,280 registered women voters, not a single woman cast her vote, following a decision by local leaders to ban women from voting.

It is a depressing reminder that aspects of Pakistan’s political culture remain far removed from the democratic ideals that have characterized the struggle for democracy in this country. Pakistani women are serving in the armed forces and increasing numbers of women are joining the police; putting their lives on the line to protect their fellow citizens and serve their country. Such noble sacrifice and contribution should be a source of national pride and not diminished by those misguided few who believe their gender disqualifies them from voting.

Such practices have no place in a democratic society. They should be consistently rejected and challenged by all those who subscribe to the concept of multi-party democracy and are committed to strengthening the democratic system in Pakistan.

A glimmer of hope has come from the protest and condemnation by local civil society organizations determined to expose what is happening, and the willingness of the media to bring such stories to the attention of a wider audience. This sends a reminder to those who believe such practices can be justified on cultural grounds that others in Pakistan think differently and are not prepared to stay silent. However, rhetorical rejection alone will not be sufficient to prevent such practices from reoccurring. Legislation is required to make such practices illegal and we urge the Special Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reforms to give due consideration to this in light of recent developments.

Political party leaders in particular need to add to the chorus of condemnation and sanction those in their ranks who violate the basic democratic ethos of their respective party brands. Doing nothing, or saying little, sends an equivocal message that inadvertently risks creating a permissive environment for the continuation and proliferation of such activities. But, the consequences are much broader than this.
The disenfranchisement of women voters, and the conscious violation of their basic rights, makes it harder for Pakistan to articulate a credible narrative to the outside world of a country moving forward, of a democratic system evolving, of Pakistan’s desire to become an example of progress for others to emulate. It calls into question what type of country Pakistan wants to be: a circumscribed democracy or a fully-fledged one.

Accomplishing development goals is not possible if women are denied meaningful political participation. No country will reach its full potential if its female citizens do not enjoy full equality. The countries which are making the most progress towards achieving MDG targets are those which have vibrant local government systems with an emphasis on participatory development. The active engagement of all members of local communities, particularly women, in decision-making processes is vital to improving living standards and ensuring sustainable development goals are met. If women are denied their rightful role as key agents of change, the story in the future risks being one of delayed development and unmet targets. In the challenging context of KP, this scenario would severely undermine collective efforts currently being undertaken by all stakeholders to promote stability in the province. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and in similar scenarios globally, such a story produces no winners.

Women being barred from voting in KP local government elections

It was reported that certain candidates, community elders and religious leaders were preventing women from voting in the local government elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, scheduled to take place on Saturday 30 May. In response, the European Union Delegation and EU Member States, together with the United Nations Development Programme, called on the Government of Pakistan, the Provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the leaders of various political parties to investigate these allegations and to take all steps necessary to ensure that women were allowed to participate in the elections. This is in line with a recommendation made by the European Union Observer Mission to the May 2013 General Elections which called for “…Resolute actions to be taken against agreements that prohibit women from voting.” The Special Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reform was asked to recommend appropriate legislative measures to ensure effective legal sanctions against such activities in future.

The UN also called upon the Government of Pakistan, as a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to honour its commitment under these agreements and to safeguard the basic rights of women by ensuring the removal of barriers that prevent women from casting their ballots for candidates of their choice.

Marc-André Franche, Country Director, UNDP Pakistan
The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan held a National Dissemination of Midwifery Workforce Plan on 15 May 2015 in Islamabad to present key findings on the subject and to raise awareness about the need for effective health workforce planning forecasting. This report reveals that Pakistan needs an additional 33,190 midwives to be able to provide adequate Sexual Reproductive Maternal Neonatal and Child Health services. The report also points to an urgent need to improve quality of pre-service midwifery education, deployment and retention policies, performance based incentives, ensure provision of regular consumable supplies and medicines, ongoing supervision and capacity building of midwifery teachers and midwives. In his opening remarks, the Director of Programs, Ministry of National Health Services Regulation and Coordination, Dr. Safi Malik, stressed the importance of improving coverage and quality of midwife services. Only then will we be able to achieve Millennium Development Goals 4 & 5 and post-2015 agenda in the next 15 years. To quote Ms. Sarah Masaleh Deputy Representative UNFPA Country Office, Pakistan, “We now have the Community Midwifery Workforce Plan. Let us use it to change lives. Let us use it to save lives. No woman should die while giving life.” The key lies in greater investment to increase the number of midwives and enhancing the quality of education and reach of their services.

“End Fistula - Restore Women’s Dignity”

The “3rd International Day to End Obstetric Fistula” was held in Pakistan on May 23, 2015 under the theme “End Fistula, Restore Women’s Dignity”. An estimated 2 million women live with the condition in developing countries and more than 3,500 cases of obstetric fistula occur each year in Pakistan. Thousands more women suffer in silence, unaware that they can seek medical assistance. The global Campaign to End Fistula, launched in 2003 by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and partners has made significant progress towards eliminating fistula. Over the last 8 years the UNFPA campaign has surgically treated more than 4100 fistula cases, rehabilitated over 550 fistula patients and trained around 1,000 health professionals to treat and manage fistula and obstetric complications. One such example is Razia who was widowed when she was 6 months pregnant. She developed a recto-vaginal and vesico-vaginal fistula while delivering a dead baby in 2007. “I was disowned by in-laws and with my parents support I went to the UNFPA-supported Fistula Hospital in Karachi for treatment and emotional healing. I became dry after series of repeated complex fistula surgeries” said Razia. Today, she is married with a 2 year old adopted baby. Razia has become a good-will ambassador and represented Pakistan at the World Health Assembly side-event on Fistula in Geneva on 22 May to celebrate the International Fistula Day 2015. Even though there has been considerable progress, much more needs to be done. Mark Bryan Schreiner, UNFPA Pakistan Officer-in-Charge stressed the importance of addressing issues such as lack of access to skilled birth attendants, child marriage, early childbearing and gender discrimination in order to put an end to this unacceptable attack on women’s and girls’ most basic health and human rights. To quote Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of UNFPA, “Let us decide, as a global community, that the world we want is one where fistula no longer exists... let us all work together to wipe fistula off the map”.

Training of the PEP kit custodians is an important step in the effective implementation of UN Cares 10 Minimum Standards and in preparing the UN system to tackle HIV and AIDS. At the training, UN Cares Country Focal person, Lazeena Muna-McQuay said that “this training helps to build the capacity of participants on Pakistan country protocols and where the kits are and how they should be administered.”

The training was opened by UNAIDS Country Director, Mr. Marc Saba, who stressed the importance of PEP starter kit training for custodians. He also mentioned that PEP management in Pakistan was a service integrated in the Delivering as One reform, and, therefore, the custodians did not only serve their individual agencies, but the entire UN family.

There are 61 PEP kits servicing all 4 provinces and 1 region throughout the country. The HIV PEP kit includes medication, laboratory tests and counselling. The PEP treatment must be initiated within 72 hours of possible HIV exposure and must continue for a period of approximately four weeks. In addition, a list of HTC sites, PPTCT centers and list of HIV treatment centers is also shared.

During the training participants gained valuable understanding on the function and utility of each component and medication in the PEP kit. Participants learnt how to protect themselves and others from HIV infection, learn the UN policy on HIV/AIDS and important key factors of HIV epidemic in Pakistan.

A representative of UN Plus stressed the need for increased measures to stop stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS. He said, “Stigmas are very common especially in rural areas which lack knowledge. If someone is affected often their own community wants to remove them.”

This initiative is certainly another step in helping UN staff members country-wide to attain their right to have access to more information about HIV and to work in a stigma-free environment.
According to the World Health Organization (WHO), over a billion people or 15% of the world’s population suffer from some sort of disability. Effective policy-making in this regard requires reliable, valid and detailed data on all aspects of disability, information that is lacking in Pakistan. Pakistan has ratified the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in July 2011 which requires governments to collect statistical and research data to identify and address barriers faced by people with disability. With support from the Canadian High Commission and WHO, in collaboration with Bait-ul-Mal, the Government of Pakistan is conducting the Model Disability Survey. Her Excellency, the Canadian High Commissioner, Ms. Heather Cruden said: “we are very pleased to be collaborating with the World Health Organization in Pakistan to clarify needs, resources and policies to support the people of Pakistan. This Model Disability Survey is a first step in this process of identifying an important community of valiant citizens of Pakistan who suffer from disabilities”. Barrister Abid Waheed Sheikh, Managing Director Pakistan, Bait-ul-Mal, stated that the evidence resulting from the survey will help policy-makers identify the interventions required to maximize the inclusion and functioning of Pakistani citizens suffering from disabilities. WHO Country Representative, Dr. Michel Thieren, underlined the fact that the survey will provide a complete understanding of the experience of people with disability and a better approximation of the true size and potential of the most unheard and uncounted population with disability. It will also offer estimates for tracking federal/provincial trends and making international comparisons. Pakistan is the second country in the world implementing the Model Disability Survey in a representative sample of a region and will provide the basis for a country wide disability. This survey will facilitate the monitoring of the situation of people with disability, to make sure they are not left behind in the wake of development progress, and to identify ways to include disability in national/provincial Post-2015 Development Agenda.

United States announces funding to feed temporarily displaced people in Pakistan

Since 2010, the United States has provided nearly $700 million in food assistance to the people of Pakistan, which serves as the main source of food supply for the country’s vulnerable populations, including the 1.6 million temporarily displaced people from FATA.

At a recent press conference and photo exhibition, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Pakistan Mission Director Greg Gottlieb announced that in addition to the $34 million that the United States has already provided in food assistance to Pakistan since October 2014, it will be providing an additional $27 million this year through the United Nations World Food Program (WFP). “The generous funding from USAID has provided over the years has improved food and nutrition security, livelihoods, resilience and response capability to sudden-onset emergencies which in turn contribute to the peace and stability as well as economic development in Pakistan” said WFP Regional Director Kaatrud.
The United Nations in Pakistan strongly condemned the attack carried out on the Ismaili community in Karachi which killed and wounded scores of people. It urged the Government to continue taking steps to build tolerance and strengthen relationships between diverse religious and ethnic communities in the country. "We are horrified by this act of brutality and extend our condolences to the families of the deceased and the wounded. We express our deep concern about the repeated acts of blind violence against religious and ethnic minorities in Pakistan and reaffirm our strongest commitment to protecting the rights of all minorities for them to freely exercise their rights," said Dr. Jacqui Badcock, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Pakistan.

International Day on Safety & Health at Work

A national occupational safety and health culture is one in which governments, employers, and workers actively participate in securing a safe and healthy working environment through a system of defined rights, responsibilities and duties, and where the highest priority is accorded to the principle of prevention. To mark World Day on Safety & Health at Work under the theme, “Join in Building a Culture on prevention on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)”, the Employers Federation of Pakistan, in collaboration with the Pakistan Workers Federation, the Provincial and Federal Labour departments and the International Labour Organization (ILO) held the 2015 OSH awards in Karachi on 28 April, 2015. The annual event raised awareness on OSH, recalled stakeholders commitments around the theme of the commemorative event and awarded employers who showed progress in the area of OSH at the workplace. Over 20 organizations were given the OSH awards including the Pakistan Refinery, which won the first prize while the Pak-Arab Refinery were the runners-up in overall best performance in terms of effective OSH measures at the workplace. Industries and businesses also secured prizes in various business sectors. The Chief Guest at the event, Mr. Sikandar Ismail, Federal Secretary, Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resources Development announced that the federal government would initiate a tripartite dialogue to consider the ratification of a new ILO convention including Convention155 concerning Occupational Safety and Health and the Working Environment, which will pave the way for mitigating OSH risks at the workplaces as well as address decent work deficits across Pakistan.
Media training on reporting child labour in Pakistan

The International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF and the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) organized a media training session on Wednesday 10th June, 2015. The training session was part of the commemorative activities for World Day Against Child Labour 2015 held under the theme “NO to Child Labour, YES to Quality Education.”

Official data estimates show a significant prevalence of child labour in Pakistan. However, there is a strong political will to address this menace. The constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan prohibits employment of children below the age of 14 years in any factory or mine or any other hazardous employment. There have been major national legislative developments in this regard. The media is considered an important tool for the facilitation of advocacy and awareness in curbing the inhumane practice of child labour. The purpose of the training, therefore, was to orient media persons and create awareness on child labour in Pakistan. The training also highlighted the role that education plays in eliminating child labour, particularly in its worst forms as well as the ethical standards that should be applied when reporting on this issue. Media coverage of child labour on the eve of international days or while covering events held in connection with world days is not enough.

The media needs to be continually sensitised on the significance of global, regional and country issues and their role in helping addressing them.
Migrant Resource Centre in Lahore

The International Labour Organization in Pakistan, through its EU funded South Asia Labour Migration Governance Project, has entered into a partnership with the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development to establish the first Migrant Resource Centre in Lahore, Pakistan, a space that is visited by hundreds of Pakistani migrant workers on a daily basis.

Pakistan is a major supplier of low and semi-skilled migrant workers to the Middle East. However, migrants often lack awareness about safe migration, the recruitment process and rights at work. They lack information about cultural, social and economic norms as well as practical and legal processes while in destination. Many of them face language barriers and have limited access to support services.

The center will address the issues that put migrants at risk of exploitation and abuse in the workplace. It will provide a range of services including information on safe migration and foreign employment options, supplemented by targeted outreach and awareness-raising activities in areas of high emigration as well as other support services that will facilitate their migration process.

World Press Freedom Day 2015

UNESCO and Media House Islamabad marked World Press Freedom Day, 2015 by organizing a debate under the theme, Let Journalism Thrive! Towards Better Reporting, Gender Equality & Media Safety in the Digital Age. The debate was well attended by renowned journalists, media professionals, journalism academicians, students and representatives of civil society organizations. Panelists at the event centered their discussion on issues pertaining to the freedom of expression in Pakistan. They stressed the importance of media ethics, impartial reporting and the need for senior journalists to guide junior media professionals. They also emphasized the role of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority to monitor hate speech and promote quality journalism in Pakistan.
United Nations convene donors meeting

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) convened a humanitarian donors meeting to update the international donor community on the overall situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

At the meeting, donors were informed of the progress of the returns process and the needs of people who are still living in displacement. The Director General of PDMA requested the donor community to increase their level of funding for the immediate needs of the people who are still living in hosting communities and camps.

In January 2015, OCHA and the humanitarian country team released a plan to support the needs of displaced population and the returnees. The plan aims to mobilize US$433 million. So far only US$293 million have been secured out of which the Government contributed around US$60 million in wheat through the World Food Programme.

Since 2010, the United States has provided nearly $700 million in food assistance to the people of Pakistan, which serves as the main source of food supply for the country’s vulnerable populations, including the 1.6 million temporarily displaced people from FATA.

United States announces funding to feed temporarily displaced people in Pakistan

At a recent press conference and photo exhibition, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Pakistan Mission Director Greg Gottlieb announced that in addition to the $34 million that the United States has already provided in food assistance to Pakistan since October 2014, it will be providing an additional $27 million this year through the United Nations World Food Program (WFP).

“"The generous funding from USAID has provided over the years has improved food and nutrition security, livelihoods, resilience and response capability to sudden-onset emergencies which in turn contribute to the peace and stability as well as economic development in Pakistan” said WFP Regional Director Kaatrud.
Employment creation for temporarily displaced people

An event was held under the International Labour Organizations project, Employable Skills Development for Improved Livelihoods of Temporarily Displaced Persons in North Waziristan Agency at the ILO office in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Initiated in October 2014, the project has imparted training to a total of 200 persons, 80 men and 120 women in marketable trades such as plumbing, electrical, tailoring and hand embroidery. The project is part of “Community Resilience Program” of the UNDP implemented through Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority.

At the event, displaced persons from North Waziristan shared courageous stories of their journey. One such story is Naseemullahs who is now proudly making ends meet through newly acquired skills in plumbing. While sharing his experience he said “we are mountain people and would not settle for anything less than honourable living. I can confidently state that it is ILO and ILO alone whose colleagues remained with us throughout the touch period of our lives and helped me start earning money in a dignified manner and provide for my family”. The event also showcased a heart-touching skit on the importance of decent work and the role of women as contributors in the household in order to improve their livelihoods.

At the event, the ILO Country Director Mr. Francesco d’Ovidio and Chief Guest Mr. Adil Mansoor-Assistant Country Director UNDP stressed the importance of employment creation to allow temporarily displaced families to earn a reasonable income and improve their standard of living. This would subsequently result in an improved nutritional status of families, a reduction in domestic violence and continued education for the children, preventing entry into anti-social or unproductive activities, including child-labour. To quote Confucius, “Give a person a fish and they will feed for a day; teach a person to fish and you will feed them for a lifetime.”
World Refugee Day

The UN Refugee Agency and the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) marked World Refugee Day with a series of events across Pakistan involving the Government of Pakistan, UNHCR, its partners, and refugee communities. Activities included speeches, seminars, quizzes, sports competitions, poems, plays, wall chalking, women’s exhibitions and cultural shows.

Pakistan hosts the largest protracted refugee population (1.5 million) and commemoration of World Refugee Day in Pakistan is aimed at paying tribute to the courage and resilience of the millions of people uprooted as a result of ongoing conflicts, war and natural disasters.

In his World Refugee Day speech, the Minister of States and Frontier Regions, Lt. Gen. Abdul Qadir Baloch reiterated the Government of Pakistan’s commitment to the voluntary, gradual and dignified return of Afghan refugees back to their country. “We are proud of our hospitality and will continue supporting every initiative for the establishment of peace, prosperity and development in Afghanistan” said Minister Baloch.

UNHCR’s Representative in Pakistan, Mr. Indrika Ratwatte expressed UNHCR’s appreciation for Pakistan’s generous hospitality in hosting the world’s most protracted refugee population and commended the Government’s current efforts at formulating a policy on Afghan refugees, including its decision of documenting the non-refugee Afghan population.
Government of Punjab and the United Nations sign MOU aimed at youth development

The Government of Punjab and the United Nations Information Centre signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at actively engaging the Pakistani youth in promoting the values of the United Nations in their educational institutions and among their communities. The MOU was signed in Lahore by Mr. Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, Minister for School Education, Higher Education, Youth Affairs, Sports, Archaeology and Tourism and by Vittorio Cammarota, Director UN Information Centre. The partnership will focus on two campaigns specially designed for the youth in the context of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations: the UN Wall campaign, through which schools and universities will be able to share core values and messages of the United Nations on a dedicated wall on their premises; and the UN Corner, which will provide university students with access to publications, reports and campaigns released by the UN Secretariat and by agencies, funds and programmes of the UN System on national, regional and global issues.

At the signing ceremony Mr. Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan assured his full support to a “fruitful venture for both the UN as well as the young citizens of Punjab.” Mr. Vittorio Cammarota stressed the importance of empowering the youth for promoting peace and harmony in the country and said: “The 70th anniversary of the United Nations is a great opportunity for having the youth of Pakistan showcase a positive image of their country through their active contribution as messengers of the core values of the United Nations in their schools and communities.”

National consultation on youth employment

UNDP and ILO held a national consultation to discuss issues faced by the youth in getting decent employment in Pakistan. The consultation is part of a series of consultations and surveys carried out by a team of experts engaged to develop the National Human Development Report 2015. The report focuses exclusively on the three drivers of youth empowerment – education, employment and engagement and aims to achieve better human development outcomes for young women and men across the country. In their opening remarks, Mr Francesco d’Ovidio, ILO Country Director and Mr. Marc André Franche, Country Director for UNDP reminded the audience about the importance of creating decent employment opportunities for the youth. Mr. Franche discussed important issues such as underemployment, vulnerable employment and dead-end jobs. Mr. d’Ovidio reinforced the need for concerted efforts to address the needs of young women and men as they transition from school to work and through life in general. Dr. Faisal Bari, co lead author of the report highlighted the relationship between educational outcomes and low quality jobs. He further stressed the very important issue of women facing gender discrimination and social barriers when entering the labour market. With 64% of Pakistan’s population under the age bracket of 29 years, youth will be a critical force for shaping human development in the country. One million young people enter the labour force every year, but the economy is not able to absorb them. Even the well-educated face challenges, given a lack of standardization and recognition of the quality of institutions. The challenge is not only to create more quality jobs, but a bigger challenge is to bring more people into the labor force to curb poverty and attain higher economic growth.
The year 2015 presents a unique opportunity for the global development community to build upon and strengthen the momentum initiated by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In September 2015, Heads of State will convene at the General Assembly of the United Nations to agree upon a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The first target of the first SDG proposed by the Open Working Group of Member States is to “eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere” by 2030. The second target is to reduce at least by half the proportion of people living in poverty according to national definitions. These are noble and historic targets for global progress but we must ask ourselves — how do we measure them and are they plausible?

Poverty lines at the national and local level are frequently revised upward. This approach, however, risks the possibility that steady development progress will not yield poverty reduction, simply because the poverty line keeps moving too. One thing is clear: if we are to “eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere” by 2030, we will have to use an entirely different approach to setting the planetary extreme poverty line than the one used by the World Bank in the past.

If we’re going to set a zero goal for global poverty in the post-2015 development agenda, it has to be an absolute goal, and not one set relative to national poverty lines, and the process of setting the new global poverty line should be open, transparent and participatory.

In order to meet the first two targets of the first of the Sustainable Development Goals, there is considerable work to do before September 2015. Before we set the goal, we should fix the goalposts!

---

**Goal 2 – Creating new paths for nutrition, agriculture and food systems**

Sustainable Development Goal 2 is to achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Nutrition has become a featured agenda item for the global development community. A number of international initiatives, multi-stakeholder processes and commitments are working towards achieving this goal.

One such initiative was the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), held jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in Rome, in November 2014. A key message from ICN2 was that recent trends in industrialization, globalization and commercialization have profound implications for what foods are being produced, the degree to which they are being processed, and how people are consuming them.

There is mounting concern over the impact and sustainability of current consumption and production patterns. Malnutrition is on the rise and today, most countries suffer from some combination of stunting, anemia, and/or obesity and overweight.

The negative environmental effects associated with these patterns of food system change include land degradation, unsustainable water use and heavy reliance on pesticides and fertilizers, to name a few. They present a major concern not only in regard to their obvious agro-ecological impact, but also with respect to increased risk of food insecurity and poverty, with subsequent insidious implications for nutrition and health.
As such, the quality of global, national and local food systems is increasingly considered reflective of the integral role played by agriculture in food security and nutrition outcomes. Consolidating nutrition, food security and agriculture into the same goal increases accountability with respect to health and environmental impacts of agricultural production practices and food system development. Given the experience and lessons learnt from the Millennium Development Goals, the coming years offer unprecedented potential for human development. SDG 2 offers a tremendous opportunity for holding agriculture and food systems to a higher, more health-centred standard.

Goal 3—A healthier 2030

Health is fundamental to human development and healthy people are critical to sustaining societies. The Millennium Development Goals have been successful at focusing global attention and resources on specific, pressing world challenges, including hunger, maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS and malaria. Even though there has been significant progress in this regard, there is still much to be done. Sustainable Development Goal 3 focuses on the promotion of well-being for all at all ages.

Medical research has shown that health issues once relegated to the back burner play a much larger role in our overall health and well-being. Mental health is one such issue. Addressing indoor and outdoor air quality, water quality, and other environmental determinants of health is another example. Tackling these issues is critical to safeguarding global health, and needs to play a larger role in the post-2015 agenda.

Additionally, access to treatment for HIV/AIDS needs to become more widespread, new cases need to be prevented, and stigma and discrimination reduced.

Furthermore, the global burden of disease has shifted greatly in the past 30 years, increasing the need for a focus on health systems. Non-communicable diseases such as stroke, cancer and diabetes are responsible for a growing share of mortality and morbidity in both developed and developing countries. We need a post-2015 agenda that can support countries in addressing these issues.

Perhaps the most revolutionary aspect of the current goal is the target on universal health coverage (UHC). UHC strives to ensure that all people have access to needed, quality health services without suffering financial hardship. A focus on UHC for the next 15 years could be truly transformative for both rich and poor countries in making sure that no one forgoes needed treatment due to cost.

In order to achieve this goal, governments, international organizations, and other actors need to work together and be pragmatic about how to implement policy and monitor progress. This is an opportunity to establish an ambitious, equitable development agenda for the next 15 years, which could be transformative for global health!
The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres is visiting Pakistan for a three-day Ramadan Solidarity mission during which he will express his appreciation and solidarity with the people and Government of Pakistan for having generously hosted the world's largest protracted refugee population for over 35-years. This is the seventh visit of the High Commissioner to Pakistan in the past 10 years of his tenure. His visit will enable him to get a first-hand look at the largest on-going repatriation operation in UNHCR’s history, meet with Afghan refugees and visit one of the Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) projects. During his stay, the High Commissioner is also expected to meet with the leadership of the country, the provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as the largest refugee hosting province, donors and UN and NGO partners.

Mr. Guterres will be discussing the way forward on lasting solutions and the management for Afghan refugees, in particular, prospects for their sustainable return and reintegration; an issue that is inevitably linked to Afghanistan’s absorption capacity and broader development.

Mr. Guterres’ visit comes at a time when fresh emergencies in the Middle East and Africa continue to engage global attention while the future of 2.6 million Afghan refugees who have been living outside their country for over three decades still hangs in the balance. Up to 92 countries have provided for Afghans in need of refuge, but around 95 per cent of the Afghan refugees worldwide are hosted by just two countries: Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Before coming to Pakistan, the High Commissioner paid a visit to Afghanistan in May, where he held fruitful and promising discussions with the country’s new leadership. While cognisant of the challenges, the High Commissioner is optimistic about the gradual stabilization in Afghanistan; it’s improving bilateral relations with Pakistan, as well as concrete steps taken by the new Afghan administration at the highest level to demonstrate ownership and genuine commitment to resolving the long-standing displacement situation.
UNHCR chief lauds Pakistan’s generosity

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres visited Peshawar as part of his Ramadan Solidarity mission to Pakistan. During his visit, he expressed his appreciation and solidarity with the Government and people of Pakistan for having generously hosted the world’s largest protracted refugee population for over three decades, in line with Islamic values of hospitality and generosity. Mr. Guterres was accompanied by the federal Minister of States and Frontier Regions, Lt. Gen. Abdul Qadir Baloch.

During his visit, the High Commissioner visited the UNHCR’s Voluntary Repatriation Centre in Chamkani and met with refugee families repatriating to Afghanistan. This year, so far, 42,000 Afghan refugees have voluntary repatriated under the UNHCR assisted voluntary repatriation programme, of which 22,000 went from the KP province. “Nothing is as gratifying as going back to one’s own roots and motherland after so many years in exile” said Mr. Guterres.

In the context of the post 16 December tragedy and the implementation of the National Action Plan the High Commissioner reassured the provincial government that UNHCR shares the legitimate concern of state to ensure that asylum is not misused, by those supporting or committing terrorist acts.

The High Commissioner and his delegation also visited Turkmen refugee village, where he met with Afghan carpet weavers and spent some time with them, inquiring about their wellbeing and the problems they face. Talking to Afghan refugee elders, Minister Baloch said, “Refugees are resourceful people and more should be done to empower them so they could play positive role for the development and reconstruction of Afghanistan.”

The High Commissioner is expected to meet with the top leadership of the country to discuss issues related to the protracted Afghan refugee situation and to reassure Pakistan of UNHCR’s commitment to assist Afghanistan and Pakistan in finding permanent solutions to the world’s most protected refugee situation.

UNHCR chiefs Ramadan solidarity visit to Pakistan

During the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres’ visit to Pakistan, he expressed his appreciation and solidarity with the Government and people of Pakistan for having generously hosted the world’s largest protracted refugee situation for nearly four decades.

Mr. Guterres and Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Lt. Gen. (retired) Abdul Qadir Baloch commended the ownership and commitment of the National Unity Government of Afghanistan, at the highest levels, on finding solutions to long-standing displacement issues. They called on the international community to redouble their engagement in Afghanistan and support the efforts of the National Unity Government at this critical juncture of its nation building and reconciliation processes. Complementary to robust community based development initiatives in Afghanistan, the introduction of an Enhanced Voluntary Return and Reintegration Package can help stimulate voluntary repatriation and support sustainable reintegration of Afghan refugees. As agreed at the 25th Tripartite Commission Meeting held in Islamabad in March 2015, the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, with the support of UNHCR, will continue jointly developing mutually reinforcing plans for phased voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees to their homeland and for their management in Pakistan in line with the absorption capacity in Afghanistan and the realities on the ground. The Joint Government-UN Refugee Affectation and Hosting Areas (RAHA) initiative has since its launch in 2009 provided vital assistance to 10.6 million individuals, including both Afghan refugees and their Pakistani host communities.

Furthermore, the decision of the Government of Pakistan to document unregistered Afghans on its territory, followed by the issuance of travel documents by the Government of Afghanistan, is an important first step aimed at ensuring identification and management of the unregistered stay of Afghans in Pakistan and complex cross-border population movements.

In line with UNHCR’s global efforts to raise the profile of the Afghan refugee situation higher on the agenda of the international community, the 2015 High-Level Segment (HLS) of the 66th Session of UNHCR’s Executive Committee will acknowledge the contribution of host countries and seek to garner enhanced political and financial support from the international community in support of host communities and towards the lasting solutions for Afghan refugees.
The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Mr. António Guterres inaugurated the newly constructed Emergency Assessment Unit (EAU) at the Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital in Peshawar. The new block will benefit around 9,500 patients per year, 25% of whom will be Afghan refugees. Mr. Guterres commended the unprecedented charitable work of the hospital in providing specialized medical care and free of cost treatment to thousands of underprivileged cancer patients in Pakistan, including Afghan refugees, for the past two decades.

The construction of the EAU is funded by the People of the United States of America through UNHCR and the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees under the joint Government and UN's Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) Initiative.

Dr. Faisal Sultan, Chief Executive Officer of the hospital stated that nearly 40% of patients being treated at the hospital in Lahore come from the KP province, northern areas and Afghanistan. He said that the construction of a comprehensive cancer diagnosis and treatment facility in Peshawar will not only provide state-of-the-art cancer treatment services to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, irrespective of their ability to pay, but also help raise healthcare standards and provide training and employment opportunities in the wider region.

The High Commissioner also appreciated the Provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for hosting nearly one million Afghan refugees in line with the Islamic values of hospitality and generosity. Mr. Guterres reiterated his agency’s commitment to burden sharing with Pakistan for hosting the world’s largest protracted refugee population for over thirty-five-years.
Talk show on World Environment Day and World Ocean Day

Radio Pakistan and UNIC joined forces to organize a series of special programs on climate change in the run up to COP 21. The first program was organized in conjunction with World Environment Day and World Oceans Day: experts from the French Embassy and from COMSATS University, went live together with a youth representative of National Assembly and UNIC Director. The conversation, focused on the UN is working with its member states and other counterparts in the run up to COP21 and on how Pakistani people and youth can play an active role with the support of their government in reducing air pollution, waste of precious natural resources and deforestation.

KAY2 TV: Sharing information on the United Nations

UNIC and AVT Channels established collaboration to expand outreach to the general public. The first program, Sahar Mishi Khan Ke Saath, focused on the role of the United Nations, the global campaign for the 70th anniversary and the main areas of work of the UN System in Pakistan. A 1-minute video on the work of the UN around the world was aired during the program. AVT Channels broadcast in Urdu and Pastho to an audience of 70 million people.

Radio Pakistan: addressing the challenges of child labour

To mark World Day against Child Labour, Radio Pakistan produced and broadcast an inclusive interview with Francesco d’ Ovidio, Country Director for ILO Pakistan and Miriam de Figueroa, Deputy Representative of UNICEF Pakistan. They discussed the main causes and issues related to child labour, which are depriving children of their most basic rights, such as the right to education. They stated that Pakistan was one of the first countries in the world to have ratified the Child Labour Convention in 1990, which demonstrates commitment to addressing the challenges of child labour, protecting their rights and promoting education.
The theme of this year’s International Day of Families – “Men in Charge?” – highlights the importance of gender equality and children’s rights in contemporary families. Let us resolve to change legal and social norms that support male control over women, reinforce discrimination and prevent the elimination of violence against vulnerable family members. As we shape a new sustainable development agenda and strive for a world of dignity for all, let us stand united for women’s and children’s rights in families and societies at large!
This is a milestone year – the 150th anniversary of the International Telecommunication Union and the 70th anniversary of the United Nations. The digital revolution has transformed our world. We communicate more easily than ever before. But we need to be more than connected – we need to be united. That is why the United Nations is mobilizing the world to forge a bold, new agenda for sustainable development. Let us work together to harness the power of technology for our common future!

International Day to End Obstetric Fistula
23 May 2015

We mark this International Day with the theme, “End fistula, restore women’s dignity”. To achieve this goal, every fistula-affected nation needs to develop an inclusive, costed and time-bound national strategy and action plan. The international community must also significantly intensify support to nations with the greatest need. We have a moral obligation, as a global community, to complete the unfinished agenda of eradicating fistula. Together, let us keep our promises to support universal human rights and ensure the health and dignity of women and girls everywhere. We can and must put an end to this needless suffering.

World Environment Day
5 June 2015

The theme of this year’s World Environment Day is “Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care”. Humanity continues to consume far more natural resources than the planet can sustainably provide. Many of the Earth’s ecosystems are nearing critical tipping points. It is time for us to change. Let us think about the environmental consequences of the choices we make. Let us become better stewards of our planet!

International Day for Biological Diversity
22 May 2015

The variety of life on Earth is essential for the welfare of current and future generations. The conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity can help solve a range of societal challenges. On this International Day for Biological Diversity, let us recommit to global action to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss, for people and for our planet!

International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers
29 May 2015

Through years of struggle and sacrifice, the iconic Blue Helmet has earned its place as a symbol of hope to millions of people living in war-ravaged lands. Today, we honour the memory of those who gave their lives to the cause of peace, and pay tribute to all men and women who carry on their legacy by serving in the field. As we commemorate seven decades of the United Nations, let us all do our part to ensure effectiveness of this flagship enterprise of the Organization!
Land degradation and desertification undercut human rights, including the right to food, water and human security. We need to change course and invest in land degradation neutrality. We must avoid degrading more land and, at the same time, rehabilitate all the degraded land that we can. This way, we will also be able to make rapid steps towards controlling climate change. Our lives and civilizations depend on the land. Let us invest in healthy soils to secure our right to food and freshwater!

On this International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, the United Nations advocates a careful re-balancing of the international policy on controlled drugs. We must consider alternatives to criminalization and incarceration of people who use drugs and focus criminal justice efforts on those involved in supply. No criminal should escape justice. We should also increase focus on public health, prevention, treatment and care, as well as on economic, social and cultural strategies to protect vulnerable groups and marginalized communities.

On International Widows’ Day, let us resolve to end discriminatory attitudes and take action to ensure that widows of all ages enjoy equal human rights, including the right to shape their own future and to participate fully in society. This will be an essential element in realizing our vision of a life of dignity for all!

The world is rightly shocked and horrified by the treatment of innocent civilians, especially women, at the hands of violent extremists. On this International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the United Nations calls on the world to stand in solidarity with all the affected people as well as their families and communities. We join our voices in a resounding cry against such abhorrent and inhumane practices. Let us use this day to mobilize help for them and action to prevent future cases. Assisting the affected individuals and stopping this crime will benefit whole societies and our collective future.

It is a disturbing and tragic fact that members of the older generation are too often neglected and abused. Resolved to shed light on this injustice, the United Nations General Assembly has designated 15 June as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Let us strengthen our resolve to end this problem and to create a life of dignity for all.
We the People

United Nations operations in Mozambique
05 April 1994

UN Asian Film Project
01 January 1960

United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC)
02 March 1993
We the People

UN Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA)
01 June 1953

The San Francisco Conference
01 June 1945
We the People

United Nations operations in Mozambique
01 April 1994

United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC)
We the People

Security and Safety at UN Headquarters
01 June 1969

Guided tours at UN Headquarters
01 October 1964
We the People

Safety and Sea through International Cooperation
01 January 1949

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
01 January 1949
We the People

Why does he use a hammer?
01 November 1948

Dog Sledding in Uummannaq, Greenland
26 March 2014
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.

For subscription please send us an email at: unic.islamabad@unic.org