Focus on
Youth Envoy visits Pakistan.
Youth empowerment: key to development.
Youth Envoy opens the exhibition “Art for Peace: The Young Pakistani Vision”.
Young entrepreneurs meet with Youth Envoy.
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Youth Envoy visits Pakistan

With a view to strengthening the UN programmes on youth, the UN Secretary General’s Special Envoy on Youth Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi visited Pakistan on June 16-18th, 2014. Whilst in Islamabad, Mr. Alhendawi met with the UN Country Team, government officials and donors. He urged the donor community to partner with UNFPA Pakistan and the Government of Pakistan in finalizing a policy framework and provincial work plans for youth development.

In Islamabad, he attended the UN Youth Forum, where he interacted with a diverse gathering of more than 200 youth participants from all parts of the country. Several thematic issues were discussed, including education for youth development, sexual and reproductive health issues, youth participation in policy making and peace building processes.

During his visit to Punjab on the last leg of his trip, Mr. Alhendawi met with the Provincial Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs and the Governor Punjab among others. He praised the Government of Punjab on its youth reforms effort and also appreciated the role of the Government of Punjab in trying to reduce the number of child marriages.

Mr. Alhendawi offered continued UN support to youth empowerment programs in Pakistan.
We are faced with a youthful planet today. Standing at a 1.8 billion strong, the world is home to the largest generation of young people in its history. Close to 90 per cent of them live in developing countries, where they tend to make up a large proportion of the population. This also holds true for the case of Pakistan.

Today many young people are still being denied the investments and opportunities that they need to realize their full potential. Many young people continue to experience limited access to quality education, health services, decent work and opportunities to participate in society, or live in areas affected by crises. The fact that United Nations Member States and the international community are currently debating and devising the Post-2015 Development Agenda offers a welcome opportunity to reverse the situation of the plight of youth worldwide. It will however depend on the willingness of member states to recognize that given the world’s demographic and development realities, the success of the Post-2015 Development Agenda will depend on protecting the human rights and meeting the development needs of all young people.

Young people around the world have demanded that their priorities be explicitly reflected in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, through the Global Youth Call: Prioritizing Youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda that was facilitated by my Office and presented during the recent ECOSOC Youth Forum at the United Nations headquarters in New York. The Global Youth Call represents an unprecedented emerging consensus among youth on concrete proposals and target areas that are important for youth in the post-2015 development agenda. Building on the top five thematic priorities of over 1.3 million young people who voted in the MyWorld2015 survey, education, employment and entrepreneurship, health, governance,
and peace and security, and with endorsements by over 1250 youth organizations from over 140 countries, major international youth organizations, UN agencies, Regional Intergovernmental bodies, and with the support of over 40 Member States, the Global Youth Call truly reflects the unified voice of young people. From numerous youth consultations and the ECOSOC Forum, one common thread emerges: the overwhelming desire for young people to be heard and to be in control of their own future. This very same issue also came to the forefront loud and clear in my interactions with young people during my recent visit to Pakistan, where I was honoured to join the UN Country Team for the UN Youth Forum, which brought together young people from all over country to discuss youth priorities. I was inspired by their enthusiasm and commitment. In addition I had the opportunity to meet with government officials both in Islamabad and Lahore to discuss the strengthening of the implementation and coordination of youth policies within the country. Moreover, I had the opportunity to meet with numerous youth organizations and representatives, including a group of enthusiastic and innovative young entrepreneurs, which left me memorable impressions of a generation that stands ready to move the development agenda forward at the national and local levels.

From all these interactions with various stakeholders during my recent visit, I have become convinced that for Pakistan to address some of challenges it is facing today as we move forward to the Post-2015 Development Agenda, that unleashing the potential of its young people is key, because youth are not only a demographic fact, they are the biggest asset and opportunity!

Ahmad Alhendawi
Secretary-General Youth Envoy
Youth empowerment: key to development

Pakistan’s working age population between ages 15-64 years has increased from 54 per cent in 1998 to 57 per cent in 2005. With fewer dependents to support, this creates a window of opportunity for economic growth and prosperity for the country. At this point in time, focused and strategic investments are required to promote the social, economic and political development of youth.

Currently the unequal distribution of resources, governance issues, gender and regional inequities have hampered Pakistan’s ability to achieve the MDG targets. The United Nations in Pakistan through its One Programme, is focusing on promoting access to quality health and education services, as well as skills development to prepare young people for entry into the job market.

Internally, the Resident Coordinator’s Office is working closely with UN agencies in Pakistan to strengthen the UN’s overall response to the special needs of youth, linking strongly with the UN Secretary General’s System Wide Action Plan (SWAP).

The United Nations will bring together a range of stakeholders including youth-led organizations; conduct assessments to understand the situation of young people and adolescent girls; identify the most marginalized and develop an advocacy agenda to promote their human rights and development in Pakistan.

Timo Pakkala
Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator,
United Nations Pakistan
Youth, as defined by the Ministry of Youth Affairs Pakistan, is the population that falls within the age bracket of 15-29 years. In Pakistan, 26% of the population falls within this bracket. This provides an opportunity to invest in the lives of youth and harness their potential to make them productive citizens of the society. Given the lack of any policy framework for youth development, UNFPA realized the need to strengthen the capacity of provincial Youth departments across Pakistan. A tri-partite effort by UNFPA in collaboration with Bargad (a youth-led organization) and all provincial Youth Affairs departments led the youth policy formulation process. The Government of Punjab has set a precedent in the history of Pakistan by successfully launching the Punjab Youth Policy by the Chief Minister of Punjab in May 2012. As an outcome of the Punjab Youth Policy, the government has committed to various youth development initiatives including: internship programmes; provision of interest free loans to young entrepreneurs and lap-tops scheme to students. Moreover, the government has allocated a minimum of 15% quota to the female youth in employment and has allocated an 8% quota to eligible youth in the upcoming local government elections. All other provinces completed the policy drafting process in late 2012. UNFPA aims to support the provincial Youth Affairs departments and strive for resource allocation for the implementation of policy framework.

Ann Keeling
Representative UNFPA Pakistan
The visiting United Nation’s Secretary-General’s Youth Envoy, Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi, was the chief guest at the “Art for Peace: The Young Pakistani Vision” exhibition at Satrang Gallery, Serena Hotel, Islamabad on June 16, 2014. The exhibition consisted of fifteen art pieces created by young Pakistani artists of all backgrounds who expressed their vision of peace at the invitation of the United Nations. The initiative has created a platform for the youth of Pakistan to spread the message of peace through visual art. “Peace and security is the foundation of the UN and it is wonderful to see the message of peace being represented through art by young Pakistanis ” said Mr. Alhendawi. Established Pakistani artists such as Xahra Hafeez, Imran Hunzai, Nazer Maggie, Quddus Mirza, Abbas Shah, Shahid Waheed and Shahid Yousaf supported the initiative by donating their own artwork to the exhibition. The plan is to further develop the collection and then auction it to fund scholarships for young Pakistani visual artists. The exhibition was attended by UN staff, various dignitaries including H.E. Alfredo Leoni, Brazilian Ambassador to Pakistan and Lavinia Filippi, both supporters of the project.
On June 17th 2014, over 200 Pakistani youth representatives from all over the country gathered at a Youth Forum, held in Islamabad with the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy on Youth, Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi.

The Youth Forum, sponsored by various UN agencies, featured three panel discussions focusing on: education for youth development; sexual and reproductive health of young people; youth participation in policy formulation and peace building processes at federal and provincial levels.

The youth participants, representing diverse social backgrounds, eagerly interacted with the Youth Envoy. They shared their views and perspectives on each of the panel discussion topics in a constructive and energetic debate.

Mr. Alhendawi, overwhelmed by the youth’s energy and vision, appreciated their strong desire to participate in policy making initiatives. Addressing the youth, he stressed the importance of young people contributing to future strategy and policy. “Young people are a source of ideas and inspiration. Pakistan will benefit from harnessing the talent of both its young men and women.”

The youth representatives presented a resolution to the Youth Envoy urging the Government to provide a framework for youth participation at federal and provincial levels.
Youth voices

ANAM RATHOR

“We are progressively experiencing the devastating effects of climate change. The people of Pakistan depend on the eco-system to survive. But now Pakistan’s climate-sensitive agrarian economy is facing greater risks from uncertainty in monsoon rains, floods and extended droughts. Young people need to channel their energy to find climate solutions.”

ASMA SALEEM

“My personal experience with the Secretary-General’s Youth Envoy was very thought-provoking. He left us with the very important message that we as a youth should be determined to change our fate. His emphasis on education suggested that our educational system needs serious reform. The youth of Pakistan has to choose a path of positivity.”

RABIA FARIDI

“The most special aspect of the event was that different student activists from different areas of Pakistan were seated alongside the Secretary General’s Youth Envoy to openly discuss youth challenges and the way forward. The visit was a compliment to all of us.”
“Engaging in healthy dialogue with the Secretory General’s Youth Envoy and my fellow youth has broadened my comprehension about the issues of my country from various perspectives. I am also glad to see the formation of a progressive movement from this platform of such diverse and like-minded colleagues.”

KIANAAT

“Education is the only ticket to freedom from poverty. Any effort that the Government makes to reduce poverty has to begin with providing education to the marginalized by universal education. It should also be mandatory for every business and office to provide on-the-job training to graduates.”

MARYAM SHAFI

“Provisions should be made for children with mild disabilities in Government schools. Specific learning disabilities like dyslexia and some mild emotional and behavioural difficulties should be assessed and tested in Government schools so that as many children as possible can be included in mainstream classes.”

SHAH RUKH

“Enabling young people to live up to their potential requires the youth to attain qualities that can only be achieved through a holistic approach to education. It needs to include not only academic instructions but also sports, democratic learning and exposure to different cultures in Pakistan.”

ZEBAA HUSAIN
Nestlé and the UN Information Centre co-hosted a dinner reception in honor of the Secretary-General’s Youth Envoy, Mr Ahmad Alhendawi. Having the Special Envoy engage with young entrepreneurs and business leaders was a crucial step, since 60% of Pakistan’s population consists of young people. The gathering included a diverse set of youth from a variety of backgrounds and included Waqas Ali and Sidra Qasim, the co-Founders of The Markhor, a footwear and accessories online company for men, Fariha Rashed, Founder and CEO of Pitch Media, a public relations firm, Omair Bangash, Founder of Tossdown.com, a food-rating website for Pakistani restaurants, Rameeza Nizami, Editor-in-Chief of The Nation, one of Pakistan’s largest circulating English language daily newspapers, Sanam Siddiqui, City Manager of Teach for Pakistan, Moin Khan, Founder of “A Different Agenda”, Faisal Malik, CEO of Haleeb Foods and Rakae Jamil, a prodigious musician and teacher, among others.
Community-led projects help tackle poverty in Pakistan

For decades Rukhsana Bibi lived the life of a housewife like most women in the village of Malikyar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. But everything changed when her husband unexpectedly lost his job. Rukhsana, who had never been to school or worked outside her home, was forced to look for work. As the whole family struggled to cope, Rukhsana learned about a vocational programme called “Roshni” which was supported by the UNDP’s Community Resilience Initiative and funded by Japan and the European Union. Rukhsana was selected as its first president and nominated to attend a three-month course in hand embroidery. The course taught her valuable entrepreneurial skills and led her to start a small business at home. “My monthly income increased from a paltry PKR 3,000 ($30) to PKR 10,000 ($100) allowing me to pay back our debts and my daughters are now going to college” she says. Roshni’s success has helped several other women through training and skill development programmes.
Sharing the joy and happiness of the office backyard garden

“I am amazed to see vegetables grown in a bag” said 15 year-old Asad Ullah, student of the Anjumun Faiz ul Islam Madrasa in Rawalpindi, about a homestead garden FAO grows on its premises in Islamabad.

Asad was one of ten madrassa students who came to visit the FAO office in Islamabad and met FAO Representative in Pakistan Mr. Patrick T. Evans. They joined the FAO team in harvesting the vegetables grown in the homestead garden. “We hope that these youths will return again and again to enjoy the harvest of other vegetables and fruits, as well as to learn how to grow a similar garden at their school” noted Patrick T. Evans.

FAO helps to introduce homestead gardens throughout Pakistan as a means to increased food security in some of the poorest communities of the country. Typically, homestead gardens require little purchased inputs and can be easily managed by household members. Using sturdy bags, the FAO team has grown tomatoes, cucumbers, gourds, okra, strawberries and other vegetables in a small space outside the office.

Each student picked at least 1.5 kilograms of vegetables— the total harvest is enough to provide a nutritious meal for about 200 children. “Today, we have learned how different ideas can be adopted and to set up a fruit and vegetable garden,” said their teacher, Mr. Shuaib.
“Walking for miles, at times carrying our children along, to fetch water from the canal was a tough and time consuming activity,” says 28 year old Parveen Saifullah, a resident of Village Abdul Majeed Utra in southern Punjab. During the period when the canal is dry, people use traditional ponds to store canal and rain water which is muddy, unprotected and used by animals and humans alike.

“We have supported these communities in building paved water ponds which have a sand filtration system” says Sabahat Ambreen, WASH Specialist, UNICEF. “Through hand pumps connected to these ponds, communities are now getting safe drinking water which prevents water borne diseases.” UNICEF, through its implementing partner, Qatar Charity, has helped communities to construct seven water ponds in Rajanpur district. Each of these ponds can store up to 154,000 gallons of water and benefit around 1,100 individuals directly. Rana Abdul Majeed has played a pivotal role in helping his people build the water pond. “We used our own hands and it is a blessing as we now get clean water and our children fall sick less often” he says. The awareness about hygiene and sanitation has also increased which will soon be covered by the Pakistan’s Approach to Total Sanitation (PATS) project for which UNICEF is a major partner to the Government of Pakistan.
The impact of investing in midwifery education

The State of the World’s Midwifery 2014: A Universal Pathway, A Woman’s Right to Health has been launched globally and nationally calling for urgent investment in high quality midwifery care to prevent about two-thirds of all maternal and newborn deaths. “When the normal process of childbirth does not follow a normal course, timely recognition of the complications and referral to appropriate facilities can become a matter of life and death” says Baitul-ul-Haram, student of Bachelor of Science in Midwifery at Aga Khan University. “Higher education in midwifery has changed my life. Now I am knowledgeable and competent to deal with normal childbirth independently and recognize obstetric complications, management of complications and when and where to refer” says Baitul-ul-Haram.

Baitul-ul-Haram belongs to the Swabi district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Her inspiration to join midwifery came as skilled female care providers in her community are rarely available. Male health care providers are not allowed to examine women but in emergencies only give injections to speed up the childbirth process. This can in some cases, lead to the rupture of a woman’s uterus. Therefore, women-centered midwifery care is important to deal with the sociocultural and health issues of women and communities.
Accessing the inaccessible – travelling to remote areas to inform Afghan refugees

Abdur Rehman, a 48-year-old Afghan refugee, lives on the mountain slopes of Bagh. His family is going to receive renewed Proof of Registration (PoR) cards, an important protection and identity document issued to registered refugees by the Government of Pakistan. The existing PoR cards held by Afghan refugees expired in December 2012. In July 2013, the Government announced the extension of the validity of the PoR cards until the end of 2015.

“This is great news. Now I can move freely without hurdles,” Rehman expressed his happiness after the Shura (council) meeting arranged by the visiting UNHCR team for Afghans in Kashmir.

“Mostly the information is about the voluntary repatriation procedures, or the provision of legal assistance. At present it is more focused on the renewal of the PoR cards,” said, Shahid Majeed, one of UNHCR’s field staff.

Shura meetings are one of UNHCR’s mass information tools to inform refugee communities about new developments relating to their stay in Pakistan. There are over 1.6 million registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan. To date, more than 1 million of them have already received their new cards.
Maternal health and family planning: facing challenges

Dr. Syeda Batool Mazhar is a renowned Obstetrician and Gynecologist, currently the Head of Department, Maternal and Child Health care at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences. An active advocate for maternal health programmes, she has earned domestic and international, academic as well as professional accolades.

In her 25 years of professional experience, Dr Mazhar has provided medical care to women of all backgrounds in Pakistan. “Almost 300 out of a 100,000 women die during childbirth. Deficiencies in midwifery services, lady health workers, lack of education and empowerment plus social attitudes are key reasons,” she explains. Furthermore, a number of child-bearing mothers seek medical care only at the last stages of pregnancy which contributes to high maternal mortality rates. Contraception is rarely used as even families with several children seek fertility help to produce more, regardless of their socio-economic status. Those who do seek contraceptives face multiple hurdles. “Malnutrition in rural families particularly complicates matters,” she adds. However, Dr Mazhar remains optimistic and concludes that the solution lies in social mobilization, education and advocacy of family planning via direct women-led interventions. “Females doctors make up 70% of medical school enrollment. And there is a new cadre of midwives as well. That is a good sign.”
8,000 refugees and Pakistanis to benefit from RAHA projects in Karachi

The Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) and the UN Refugee Agency inaugurated five projects in Sindh in the education and health sectors, under the government-led Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) initiative. The projects included rehabilitation of four government schools to benefit some 3,000 Pakistani and Afghan students and the upgrading of a Basic Health Unit in Tharoo Goth, Karachi. More than 5,000 Afghan and Pakistani patients will benefit from this improved facility in the port city of Karachi.

Neill Wright, UNHCR Representative in Pakistan, said, “Refugees constitute just a small proportion of the total 13 million people in Karachi but in their limited capacity they are contributing to support the economy of Pakistan. UNHCR is delighted to contribute to efforts to encourage peaceful coexistence through RAHA interventions aimed at supporting those communities that have so generously helped refugees for over three decades.”

Since 2009, UNHCR, other UN agencies in Pakistan, and government line departments, along with local and international NGOs, have completed some 2,089 projects in 41 districts across Pakistan, including five Agencies in FATA, benefiting more than 4.5 million Pakistanis and Afghan refugees. The programme’s interventions cover the sectors of education, health, water, sanitation and hygiene and livelihoods.
NADRA with support from UNHCR has delivered 50 per cent of the new Proof of Registration cards to Afghan refugees

The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) with the support of the UN Refugee Agency have successfully delivered new Proof of Registration cards with a validity date of 31 December 2015 to 50 per cent of the total 1.6 million registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Launched in February this year, more than 668,000 Afghan refugees have received their new PoR cards through a total of 34 distribution centres and Mobile Registration Vans operating across Pakistan. In the second phase of the project, from 2 July until the end of 2014, NADRA will register some 150,000 children born to registered parents in the past five years. Moreover, some 182,000 children who have reached the age of five years since the last exercise and who are already registered with their parents, will now receive their individual PoR cards.

Neill Wright, Representative of UNHCR in Pakistan, urged all registered Afghans who have not yet renewed their PoR cards to do so without further delay. Mr Wright lauded NADRA for implementing a smooth and efficient renewal project.

The role of civic education in strengthening democracy in Pakistan

Civic education, focusing on identifying gaps in the sector and discussing how to fill those gaps was the topic of a panel discussion hosted by UNDP and UNWOMEN Pakistan. Working with development partners and the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) with the support of the UN Refugee Agency have successfully delivered new Proof of Registration cards with a validity date of 31 December 2015 to 50 per cent of the total 1.6 million registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Launched in February this year, more than 668,000 Afghan refugees have received their new PoR cards through a total of 34 distribution centres and Mobile Registration Vans operating across Pakistan. In the second phase of the project, from 2 July until the end of 2014, NADRA will register some 150,000 children born to registered parents in the past five years. Moreover, some 182,000 children who have reached the age of five years since the last exercise and who are already registered with their parents, will now receive their individual PoR cards.

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The role of civic education in strengthening democracy in Pakistan

Election Commission of Pakistan, UNDP is preparing to formulate a national civic education programme. The series of seminars on civic education provides youth, women, religious representatives, political parties, civil society and the media with a forum in which to discuss what civic education means to them and to find ways to increase the reach of civic education programmes. In his introductory remarks, European Union Ambassador Lars Gunnar Wigemark commented, “Pakistan has a unique opportunity to take advantage of its burgeoning democracy, parliament, and youth; 197 of the Members of the National Assembly are under 40 and many of them are in the Parliament for the first time.” UNDP Pakistan Country Director Mr. Marc-André Franche remarked, “each year in Pakistan, millions of youth reach voting age. Nurturing democratic mind-sets among Pakistan’s youth through civic education initiatives will be fundamental to helping to ensure that the country’s ‘youth bulge’ is transformed into a dividend, rather than a toxic legacy.” UNDP will publish a booklet featuring the range of perspectives captured during the seminar series.
Pakistan’s youth take centre stage at the second UNDP-UN Women civic education forum

Pakistan is an exceedingly young country where half the population is estimated to be under the age of 20. Fifty-two of those young people met in Islamabad to voice their opinions and hear the views of other students on what it is that the youth of Pakistan need from civic education programmes.

Mr. Zafarullah Khan, Executive Director of the Centre for Civic Education observed, “You are the largest chunk of democratic consumers, which means that every policy should provide a large share to youth.”

Dr. Bernadette L. Dean, Director, VM Institute of Education explained, “We aren’t born with the skills needed to be citizens. We need to become more informed and responsible participatory citizens. Good citizenship education is good education.”

Using the “World Café” method, small groups of students are seated at a table with a facilitator where they discuss a specific topic for 20 minutes. Participants share their views after each conversation.

UNDP is preparing to formulate a national civic education programme. The series of seminars on civic education provides youth, women, religious representatives, political parties, civil society and the media with a forum in which to discuss what civic education means to them and to find ways to increase the reach of civic education programmes.

United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security project launched for the conflict stricken area of D.I. Khan

To improve human security by fostering peace and multi-sectoral development initiatives, the United Nations in Pakistan launched the Trust Fund for Human Security (TFHS) Project in Islamabad. The project will be implemented over a period of two years with cost of USD 2.1 million in Union Council Musazai Sharif of D.I.Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The project aims at improving human security of the rural and disadvantaged populations through various programmatic interventions in the domains of education, health, extracurricular, community mobilization, sustainable livelihood and culture for peace and conflict resolution in line with individual well-being and government’s priorities. The intervention will empower the target groups to take their own lives by improved access to basic services and better understanding of communication between different tribal groups through massive awareness programmes for transforming the mind sets of local people and promoting value of peaceful co-existence.

As lead agency for the Human Security Project, UNESCO Islamabad together with UNDP and WHO will work in collaboration with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), Provincial Reconstruction Rehabilitation & Settlement Authority (PaRRSA), National and Provincial Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Network (N/PHEPRN), Provincial and District Health, Education, and Information, Culture and Water Supply Departments to support the multi sectoral development initiatives.
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is supporting the local poultry industry to meet the challenges of Avian influenza said FAO representative Patrick T. Evans. Scientists from SAARC member states along with provincial participants took active part in the workshop. Pakistan is facing enormous challenges of the spread of infection in domestic poultry since the emergence of novel influenza strain A (H7N9) in Eastern China. Efforts are underway by FAO to share the information generated from investigations being carried out by the Chinese authorities to control the spread of this avian virus type H7N9 and reduce the threats both to poultry health and public health. A major challenge is an early detection and response to avian influenza because of its ‘silent’ infection in birds, as low virus does not produce clinical signs in infected birds. In this situation, at least one well-equipped national laboratory with trained manpower in each of the SAARC member state is a pre-requisite for developing a reliable and efficient diagnostic and surveillance set-up for this particular strain. The training at the workshop aimed to support and facilitate cross border activities among the SAARC countries, besides enhancing field and laboratory surveillance of low pathogenic avian influenza in poultry and other animals.
In 2015, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will come to an end. In their place will likely be a new set of goals, which are being debated across the globe under the label of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

In this connection, the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in collaboration with UNESCO, Pakistan and the Riphah International University organized an event featuring interactive sessions between youth and key representatives from the print and electronic media. University students of the mass communication department exchanged their views with a group of senior journalists and experts on the lack of interest found in society on reports on development issues. In the second foreign correspondent, Annabel Symington said that safety and security is an issue for female journalists who work in the field. However, other panelists from electronic media maintained that the situation has improved now and many Pakistani female journalists are making progress. Discussing the role of youth and media in the concluding session, panelists appreciated the active participation of youth through social and electronic media in highlighting the issues of human rights, gender discrimination, poverty, education and the environment.

World Press Freedom Day

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) organized an event to commemorate the World Press Freedom Day at Islamabad. This year the main theme of the World Press Freedom Day was Media Freedom for a Better Future: Shaping the Post-2015 Development Agenda with the sub theme “Rule of Law to Ensure Safety of Journalists and Combating Impunity”. The event was attended by Secretary for Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage, Director General National Police Bureau Islamabad, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Pakistan, legal experts, journalists, media students and development partners, Media Development Organizations and Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists.

World Press Freedom Day, which is commemorated every year around the world reminds us to undertake concrete steps for the fundamental principles of press freedom including defending media from attacks on their independence and paying tribute to the journalists who lost their lives in the exercise of their professional duties. A panel discussion also took place covering issues around institutional capacity, awareness raising, legislative framework and various government initiatives for the safety and security of journalists were discussed.
The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) handed over management of a Humanitarian Response Facility (HRF) to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Balochistan in Chashma Achozai, Quetta district. This is the second WFP-built facility to be handed over to the government.

Chief Secretary, Government of Balochistan, Babar Yaqoob Fateh Muhammad was the guest of honor on the occasion. Lola Castro, WFP Representative and Hashim Khan Ghilzai, Director General, PDMA signed the handing over documents. “Strengthening disaster preparedness and response capacity is a priority for WFP,” said Lola Castro. “By establishing these humanitarian response facilities, WFP and partners aim to form a humanitarian warehousing network in the country.”

The warehouse in Chashma Achozai will serve as a logistics base in the province of Balochistan, which has been hit by floods, earthquakes and droughts. It has an overall storage capacity of 4,000 metric tons and is in a 15-acre site provided by the Government of Balochistan. The project is valued at US$4 million. The facility includes permanent and pre-fabricated office space, storage facilities as well as a climate-controlled area for temperature-sensitive relief items. The structure is earthquake resistant and its construction also takes into account other environmental hazards.

$2.7million from Australia will help build resilience in Sindh

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomed a contribution from the Government of Australia of US$2.7 million for livelihood activities in Sindh. With this contribution, WFP will be able to assist 13,000 vulnerable families (80,000 people) through cash for work by engaging them in disaster risk reduction (DRR)/livelihood activities. The priority districts for assistance in Sindh are Tharparkar, Umerkot, Sanghar, Badin and Mirpurkhas. These areas have been identified as disaster-prone by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and are food insecure. “I am delighted with this contribution Australia is making to assist families affected by the drought in Southern Sindh. This contribution further cements the good relationship we have with the World Food Program and people of Pakistan,” H.E. Peter Heyward, Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan said. “WFP has been engaged in early recovery and disaster risk reduction interventions in the flood and drought-affected districts across the country for more than three years, through community-based interventions to restore livelihoods and build resilience against disasters,” said Lola Castro, WFP Country Director in Pakistan. In the short-term, people receive an incentive, with the provision of cash in return for their work. In the long run, the assets created through the projects build community resilience to future shocks and contribute towards livelihood improvement.

Photo source: www.abbtakk.tv
The Government of Pakistan donates 26,000 metric tons of wheat to WFP

The Pakistan Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) has announced the release of 26,000 metric tons of wheat for distribution in Pakistan by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). The contribution, valued at US$10 million, comes at a critical time when funding shortages are threatening WFP’s ability to provide emergency food assistance to almost 1 million people displaced by violence in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

“This contribution is greatly welcomed and will ensure that from May through August, we can continue to provide nutritious food to those in need” said Lola Castro, WFP Country Director and Representative in Pakistan. WFP requires US$5.6 million in additional donations to cover the cost of milling, fortifying and distributing the wheat. “The government of Pakistan continues to be a major and consistent donor to WFP for its operations in the country. This could serve as a model for other governments looking for ways to support people in need,” Castro added. WFP aims to provide food assistance for 8.3 million people in Pakistan between 2013 and 2015 at a total cost of US$565 million, with projects to improve economic opportunities and promote social inclusion in FATA, boost community resilience in disaster-prone areas, and address nutrition and education needs in the country.

Drug Use in Pakistan 2013 Survey reveals high levels of drug use and dependency

The Drug Use in Pakistan 2013 Survey Report reveals how Pakistan’s population aged 15 to 64 suffers from the devastating consequences of substance abuse. The report estimates that 6 percent- or 6.7 million adults in Pakistan-used drugs in the last 12 months, the highest number in Punjab. Although 4.25 million individuals are thought to be drug dependent, treatment and specialist interventions are in short supply. Moreover, not all structured treatment is free of charge so the barriers preventing access to it are exceptionally high.

Mr. Cesar Guedes, Representative UNODC, stated that the survey has been conducted for the first time in Pakistan at provincial levels and it provides comprehensive data on drug use and its implications on HIV transmission. The Drug Use in Pakistan Survey Report is the result of a collaborative research effort between the Narcotics Control Division, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics and UNODC. It aims to provide baseline information on the prevalence and patterns of drug use among the population aged 15 to 64. The survey will inform Government, civil society and private-sector organizations in designing and implementing effective prevention, treatment and care services across the country.
Sharing the Brazilian Zero Hunger experience with Pakistan

From 27 May to 6 June, a delegation from Pakistan was in Brazil for a study visit organized by the Centre of Excellence against Hunger. The focus of the visit was to get to know the Brazilian experience and the programmes related to the Zero Hunger strategy in Brazil, since Pakistan is implementing its own National Zero Hunger Programme. The delegation was led by Mr. Sikandar Hayat Khan Bosan, minister of National Food Security and Research.

During the first week of the visit, the delegation was given a presentation about the work of the Centre of Excellence and an overview of food security in the world. The delegation presented an overview of food security in Pakistan, highlighting the main challenges for the implementation of its National Zero Hunger Programme.

The delegation also participated in the meeting of the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA), composed by members of the Brazilian government and civil society. In his speech Minister Sikandar Hayat Khan Bosan highlighted the importance of agriculture to the Pakistani economy, including employment, income generation and international commerce. He also emphasized the importance of the work conducted by the Centre of Excellence for the promotion of social development in developing countries.
Brazilian strategies for food security

Malik Zahoor Ahmad, Director General NAPHIS and Chief Coordinator, Zero Hunger and Family Farming Programme.

“Brazil’s giant leap to the world’s stage is not less than a miracle. What I term as “miraculous” is grounded in the fact that in a short span of time Brazil pulled around 70% of its poor out of the poverty and created a spot for them in the lower to higher middle class. Brazil did not follow the orthodox path of heavy reliance on subsidized credit, prices guarantees and other traditional instruments. Its strategy is two pronged such as cash transfer through Bolsa Familia Programme and food assistance either through school meals or direct distribution such as PAA. This trip was of a substantially high value and can be very instrumental for Pakistan to connect Zero Hunger and Family Farming through a mechanism enabling access to food, strengthening family farmers’, income generation with social mobilization and accountability to ensure effective monitoring system.”

H.E. Mr. Alfredo Leoni, Brazilian Ambassador to Pakistan.

“Brazil is ready to work together with Pakistan in different fields. Brazil has a large experience in social programs, especially in food security and poverty alleviation. I do believe that Pakistan will have a lot to benefit from the Brazilian experience in these important areas. This is why I find of great importance the recent visit to Brazil of a high-level delegation of the Pakistani Ministry of National Food Security and Research. I am very optimistic and positive about the outcome of this visit.”

Lola Castro, WFP Pakistan Country Director.

“Household food security is an issue of concern in Pakistan, which in turn is reflected in significant malnutrition in the country. In order to address the situation, the Pakistani government has taken several initiatives and established important partnerships with various countries and UN agencies, particularly, WFP, UNICEF and FAO in addressing food and nutrition security. The integration of small farmers in safety nets, the engagement with education and health sectors and with social transfers is crucial to ensure access to all of adequate food.”
UN Cares orientation session for UN staff

On 22 May 2014, the UN Cares inter-agency team organized “HIV and AIDS in the Workplace Orientation Session” for UN Staff at Islamabad. Learning facilitators and UN Cares country focal points from UNICEF, WHO and UNAIDS facilitated a training session for the staff working with UNICEF. A brief introduction of “UN Cares 10 Minimum Standards” was part of the orientation session. Throughout the session, lively, open, stimulating and interactive discussions took place over different HIV-related topics. Furthermore, a significant amount of time was dedicated to clarify the HIV-related stigma and to present UN Cares initiatives and resources. Both the structure of the training and the information provided were highly appreciated by the participants. In addition to the material supplied by UN Cares, very practical information was shared, such as a list of VCT Sites, PPTCT centers and list of HIV treatment centres. This initiative is certainly another step in helping UN staff members to attain their right to have access to more information about HIV and to work in a stigma-free environment. This was the first of the series of training sessions to be organized throughout this year.

Hazard-resistant building and environment-friendly education and health facilities for FATA

UN-Habitat has been building hazard-resistant and environment-friendly education and health facilities for FATA under the RAHA Programme funded by the Government of Japan. UN-Habitat reconstructed the Government Girls Primary School of Sultan Khail tehsil in Landikotal according to local, cultural and environmental requirements. From a two-classroom, brick structure prior to it being completely destroyed by a bomb blast, the reconstructed school now consists of three classrooms, a veranda, a staff room, and a latrine, as well as basic furniture. The reconstruction took 5 months and was based on in-built hazard resistant design using local materials with confined masonry. This is a low cost technique as compared to the conventional earthquake resistant designs, easy to adopt, does not require sophisticated tools and technology, and can be replicated easily. The school is now operational with five classes for 260 enrolled female students. UN-Habitat, with the support of FATA Secretariat, also provided alternate energy solution for three departments (labour room, casualty, x-ray room) of the Civil Hospital of Tehsil Jamrud through installation of solar panels. With the installation of solar panels, the now fully-functional facility provides round the clock diagnoses and treatment services to more than 100 patients per day.
IOM’s Humanitarian Communications Programme is ensuring that populations affected by insecurity in the northwest of the country can access critical, life-saving information regarding the available humanitarian assistance. The programme utilizes formal and informal modes of communication and operates through media campaigns, awareness raising sessions and Humanitarian Call Center (HCC). Messages convey information on available assistance and apprise the humanitarian community and government authorities on the latest needs and situation on ground. Recent initiatives include providing support to humanitarian clusters and disaster management authorities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) through timely dissemination of information regarding on and off camp assistance and procedures for return. More than 1,700 awareness raising campaigns on mine risk education and civil documentation have reached 18,287 beneficiaries to date. A voluntary Humanitarian Network in target districts continues to grow, facilitating the transmission of important messages to communities. Public Service Announcements (PSAs) aired through radio campaigns communicate details on food assistance and relocation of hubs, address protection issues, civil documentation, grievance desks and return plans.

Shelter support allows affected population of North Sindh to build back safer

IOM’s Early Recovery Shelter Programme is presently supporting vulnerable households in flood-affected districts of North Sindh, including Kashmore, Jacobabad, Shikarpur, Badin, Tando Muhammad Khan and Umerkot. As part of the programme, approximately 15,000 One Room Shelters are under construction. The programme is supported by a number of donors including DFID, OFDA, CIDA and the government of Czech Republic.
Leading international Islamic scholars from several countries have called on the entire Muslim World to unite behind polio eradication and declared polio vaccination a parental and community responsibility. The call was made in a declaration issued at the conclusion of a two-day conference in Islamabad, Pakistan.

The parley, which brought together leading Islamic clerics from countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Nigeria was convened by the International Advisory Group for Polio Eradication (IAG) and co-organized by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA) in partnership with the Pakistani Government.

The declaration by Ulama was made against the backdrop of a disproportionate number of children affected by polio from Muslim communities. Those attending called on parents and community leaders to immunize their children against all vaccine-preventable diseases and stated that polio and other vaccines are safe and effective and that they fully conform to Islamic principles.

Participating scholars were welcomed at the conference by Pakistan’s Minister of State for Health Ms. Saira Afzal Tarar, who said “Muslim scholars to have a key role in advocating for polio eradication and in inspiring people to take action and protect their children from the crippling disease.”

UN Women Pakistan supports the campaign for the Nigerian girls

On Children’s Day in Nigeria, 27 May 2014, UN Women’s Pakistan Office along with their Regional Director, Ms. Roberta Clarke, joined UN Women offices worldwide in wearing red to take a stand on the global day of solidarity to #BringBackOurGirls. UN Women works on several fronts towards ending violence against women and girls, which includes tackling its main root: gender inequality. Efforts are multiplied through advocacy campaigns and partnerships with governments, civil society and the UN system. National initiatives range from working to establish legal frameworks and specific national actions, and support prevention at the grassroots level. UN Women also plays an active role in supporting the UN Secretary-General’s ‘UNiTE to End Violence against Women’ campaign, which has proclaimed every 25th of the month as “Orange Day” – a day to take action to raise awareness and prevent violence against women and girls.
The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is rapidly scaling up food distributions aiming to reach approximately half a million recently displaced people from North Waziristan. Since the start of food distributions on Sunday, 22 June, WFP has provided 15-day food rations to over 4,600 families in Bannu and Lakki Marwat districts. “We are working closely with the national and provincial authorities and civil society and our utmost priority is to provide food to all displaced people in the shortest possible time,” said Lola Castro, WFP Pakistan Country Director. According to the Disaster Management Authority in the area, around 36,000 families have been registered as displaced so far following an operation by Pakistani security forces in North Waziristan. The Government of Pakistan has announced an additional contribution of 25,000 metric tons of wheat to WFP to continue providing food rations to all displaced people in KPK, including the families from North Waziristan. With this contribution, WFP will be able to continue its relief assistance until early September. Assistance is being provided from humanitarian hubs established in Bannu and in Lakki Marwat. Plans are underway to establish further hubs and to operate from additional distribution points for NWA families in D.I. Khan and Tank.
Fostering regional cooperation for decent work

ILO Islamabad provided technical support to the Government of Punjab, Labour & Human Resource Department in organizing a 3-day ‘South Asia Labour Conference’. The conference discussed seven thematic areas of common interest for South Asian countries. More than 300 delegates from Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan participated.

The conference in Lahore proposed SAARC Secretariat to include labour and labour related issues in its mandate and called upon both the SAARC Secretariat and the International Labour Organization (ILO) for technical support in enhancing regional cooperation to develop a plan of action to implement the Joint Statement.

The conference was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Punjab and observed participation by the President of Pakistan, Mr. Mamnoon Hussain in the concluding ceremony. The Chief Minister stressed upon a joint strategy for capacity building of workers, enhancing production capacity and finding job opportunities for South Asian labourers in the international market. Ms Tine Staermose, Director, ILO Decent Work Team for South Asia, said the evidence based research had shown that if countries increased their compliance with core labour standards, opportunities for employment generation, social protection, improved productivity and competitiveness were greater.
Gifted hands: the GE4DE story

The International Labour Organization (ILO) hosted a talent show, under its project for Promoting Gender Equality for Decent Employment (GE4DE) titled ‘GE4DE- A Celebration of Talent’ in Karachi. The event featured works from artisans from eight different areas of Pakistan, including four indigenously created fashion collections. This fashion show was funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD). The aim of organising this fashion show was the exhibition of the training invested in underprivileged men and women residing in different rural and peri-rural regions across Pakistan, ranging from Thatta in Sindh to Baltistan in the north. The GE4DE event was a gentle reminder to those who brush off the fashion industry as trivial that they fail to take into account the opportunities it creates and contributions made to the economy. Many life-changing stories were shared during the course of the event, of women who were finally empowered to financially contribute to their homes and make better lives for themselves and their families.
International Day to End Obstetric Fistula

The “Second International Day to End Obstetric Fistula” was held in Pakistan on May 23, 2014. The UNFPA in collaboration with its partners and the Government of Pakistan announced ambitious plans to address the socially neglected health problem of obstetric fistula. This International Day aims at taking steps to eradicate this preventable condition, which affects an estimated two million women in developing countries. It is estimated that 3,500 known cases of obstetric fistula occur annually in the rural areas and urban slums in Pakistan. The impact of untreated fistulae on the lives of women is devastating. Women are left with incontinence, chronic pain and sexual dysfunction which often lead to social isolation and stigma. Preventing and treating obstetric fistulae is a priority issue for UNFPA as part of its commitment to sexual and reproductive health and rights through three key strategies of prevention, treatment and social reintegration. Over the last five years the collective efforts of the UNFPA’s campaign have treated 3,423 fistula cases, rehabilitated 239 fistula patients and trained 379 health professionals to address fistula and postpartum complications in Pakistan. The day’s events included press conferences in six cities, live tv interviews and a stage play at Art Council Karachi.

The International Conference on Millennium Development Goals

The International Conference of the South Asian and Regional Countries on Millennium Development Goals 4, 5 and 6 was held between June 11-12 at the National University of Science and Technology, Islamabad, Pakistan. It was organised by the National Institute of Population Studies and United Nations Population Fund in collaboration with partners. Delegates from various countries and from the Government of Pakistan including key ministers participated. Multiple aspects of the population growth rate and its related consequences on communities were discussed. Particular emphasis was laid on family planning and maternal mortality rate. Elaborate workshops and technical sessions each led by domestic and multi-national experts continued throughout the two day event. The event was a platform for officials and experts from regional countries to share their respective experiences in order for Pakistan to benchmark and execute best practices in this regard.
The population of Pakistan has grown from 37 million in 1950 to over 180 million today. At the current population growth rate, it’s estimated the country could have over 300 million inhabitants by 2050. Pakistan’s contraceptive prevalence rate remains very low even compared to neighbouring countries. ‘Culture’ is often cited as the reason yet 20% of married couples report they are unable to access the contraceptives they want to plan their families. Meeting this unmet demand for family planning would result in healthier mothers and stronger newborns. It would also reduce the tragic death toll of mothers and infants in pregnancy and childbirth.

In the last 25 years, Pakistan has made progress on reducing maternal mortality and increasing contraceptive prevalence. But progress slowed in the last decade and the maternal mortality rate at 276 per 100,000 live births remains unacceptably high. 14,000 mothers die in pregnancy or childbirth every year. Almost all of these deaths are preventable. Frequent childbearing exacerbated by the poor nutritional status of mothers are major causes of death in pregnancy and childbirth. There is nothing natural or inevitable about women dying in childbirth. It is rare in wealthy countries and rare amongst the wealthy in Pakistan. It is critical to empower the health workers working on maternal and reproductive health, particularly community midwives and lady health workers who are on the front line of health care in many rural areas. And making effective, modern contraceptives available to couples who want them would reduce maternal and infant deaths, protect the health of future generations and help population growth keep pace with Pakistan’s resources.

Ann Keeling
Representative UNFPA Pakistan
Delivering as One in Pakistan
An Interview to Timo Pakkala,
Resident Coordinator
and Humanitarian Coordinator

1. What does “Delivering as One” actually mean? What does it mean in Pakistan?
The ethos of Delivering as One is simple: harnessing the energy of the entire UN system to provide the people with better support more efficiently. It stands for working together as a UN system; it means working in true partnership with the government. Delivering as One was launched back in 2007 as a special initiative of the UN Secretary-General to bring the various moving parts of the UN system together to ensure they function in synergy. It puts the government firmly in the driver’s seat, making it a true partner in the UN programme. Starting with eight pilot countries (of which Pakistan was one) the approach is now implemented in well over 32. In Pakistan, the One Programme was developed in complete partnership with government from determining strategic priority areas to coordinating its implementation. It weaves together the work of the 19 UN agencies, funds and programmes and tailors them to better respond to the different needs at different times, from humanitarian to development. Delivering as One means that the UN speaks in one voice. Delivering as One ensures the effective synchronisation of the UN’s work with the devolution of power to the provinces.

2. What do you see as the top 3 benefits of Delivering as One in Pakistan?
Firstly, it allows the UN to exploit its true comparative advantage – the range of mandates of the UN organisations. Articulating common goals and jointly tracking progress towards them facilitates the UN to continuously adapt its overall support to meet the evolving needs of the people. Secondly, this common approach ensures that initiatives are not duplicated and that we can respond to multi-dimensional development challenges in a holistic and comprehensive way. Thirdly, it streamlines the implementation of UN initiatives rendering them more efficient and effective. Joint logistics and office services help us to save money and put more into the programmes reaching the people.

3. What exactly is the UN One Programme II and how is it implemented?
The second generation One Programme, which spans over five years, was launched in January 2013. The actual work of the UN agencies is the picture in the frame. These priority areas have been further broken down into bite sized pieces in the “flagship” programmes. These illustrate how the UN system works together to address different challenges in a sector in which we have a comparative advantage, to achieve a single goal, such as combating malnutrition. Where it makes sense to do so, actual joint programmes, with a common workplan, budget and timeline are in place.
Pakistan and the post-2015 agenda

With the deadline of 2015 fast approaching, the new development agenda to succeed the MDG framework is shaping up. Five principles are guiding the post 2015 agenda: universality but integration, equality and inclusion, human rights, sustainability and data revolution. The Sustainable Development Goals, are different from the MDG framework on at least three counts. First, the inclusivity of the process through which millions of the people contacted and consultations held in more than 100 countries including Pakistan. Second, Sustainable Development Goals are more holistic in scope and integrates some of the areas left out by the MDG framework. Third, the Sustainable Development Goals will also provide recommendations for Mean of Implementation (MOIs) – how could the Sustainable Development Goals be achieved. In Pakistan, UNDP led the first phase of national consultations in which inputs from more than 21000 people were gathered. Participants of Pakistan’s consultations put peace and security, good governance and inclusive economic and social development on the top of the priority list. A second round of national consultation has been started in selected countries including Pakistan to collect feedback on MOIs around six thematic areas. In Pakistan, the second round of consultations (June – October 2014) will provide recommendations with regard to “Capacities and Institutions” for the effective implementation of Sustainable Development Goals.

One UN Polio Plus: rehabilitation of polio affected people living with disabilities

Under the aegis of the One UN Polio Plus initiative, UNIDO has successfully established a Fruit Preservation Unit in the rural community of Kuchlak, Balochistan, in collaboration with the National Institute of Science & Technology of the University of Agriculture Faisalabad & the Small Industries Department of the Government of Balochistan. A pioneering initiative designed to bolster non-farm livelihoods for Polio disabled and other Persons with Disabilities, the Fruit Preservation Unit will also help raise awareness of the social and economic impact of debilitating diseases & disabilities, and provides an opportunity to generate goodwill and community support for the ongoing polio eradication drive in Pakistan. With a goal to be a fully independent and self-sustaining fruit preservation facility, the Fruit Preservation Unit is currently being linked by UNIDO to major procurers of fruit pulp and nectars in the province of Balochistan. The project offers a significant economic reward to community members. The equipment, the training exercise and the actual working of the fruit preservation has been sensitively prepared to enable ease of use for the disabled. Additionally, the trained participants will also support the Government’s polio drive as key speakers in the different polio prevention social mobilization activities. The project is a major step towards rehabilitating polio affected and people with disabilities, enabling economic empowerment.

One UN polio-plus pilot initiative

Polio eradication in Pakistan has been high on the UNCT agenda for the past few years, ever since the resurfac- ing of the polio virus. While WHO and UNICEF are the lead technical agencies supporting the Government on polio eradication, the UNCT Pakistan decided to pilot a few inter-agency initiatives to support polio eradication from a multi-stakeholder and an integrated programming perspective. Research evidence in Pakistan and also global polio reporting clearly highlights the need for non-health based entities (be it in the government, multilateral/bilateral, civil society and the private sector) to contribute towards the polio efforts and fill in the gaps. The global Independent Monitoring Board emphasizes the need for using creative ways for effective communication, social mobilization and raising awareness in high-risk polio areas. The polio plus projects clearly support this alternative solution strategy.
Drug and crime prevention

In an interview for PTV World’s programme “Diplomatic Enclave” with Omar Khalid Butt, César Guedes, Representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Pakistan talked about the UNODC’s Country Programme for Pakistan. He explained that UNODC manages three sub-programmes: Illicit Trafficking and Border Management; Criminal Justice and HIV/Aids and Drug Demand Reduction.

Moving the agenda of gender equity forward

UNWOMEN’s Regional Director for Asia Pacific, Roberta Clarke shared her views on moving the agenda of gender equity forward. She joined the conversation on Radio Pakistan and PTV World with Khawar Mumtaz, Chairperson, National Commission on the Status of Women and Shaista Pervaiz, Secretary, Women’s Parliamentary Caucus.

The discussion revolved around the issues of gender equality, women’s empowerment and eliminating all kinds of violence against women.

WFP welcomes wheat donation by government of Pakistan

Lola Castro, Representative, WFP in Pakistan lauded 26,000 tons of wheat donation by the Government of Pakistan in an exclusive interview with Radio Pakistan on May 7, 2014. She said that the contribution, valued at $10 million, comes at a critical time when funding shortages are threatening WFP’s ability to provide emergency food assistance to almost 1 million people displaced in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Ms. Castro said this contribution is greatly welcomed and demonstrates Government’s commitment to ensure the continuous food security of vulnerable Pakistanis.
Polio vaccination

On 8 May, JAVED JADOON, Controller News at Radio Pakistan interviewed Dr NIMA ABID, Representative WHO and Dr. MUFTI ZUBAIR on polio vaccinations and recent recommendations related to traveling abroad. Both the WHO’s officials shared useful information and explained guidelines about polio vaccination in English, Urdu and Pash-to languages.

Maternal health care in Pakistan

Ann Keeling, Representative UNFP Pakistan talked about the maternal health care situation in Pakistan, in a programme “World This Morning” hosted by Shazad Khan and Maha Makhdum on PTV World. She shared the latest statistics and the role of the United Nations assistance programmes on mother and child health, on reproductive health and on family planning. Ms Keeling also stressed the need for public awareness and education on these issues.

Advocating for United Nations in Pakistan

On 7 June 2014, OMAR KHALID BUTT interviewed the Director of the United Nations Information Centre to Pakistan, Mr. Vittorio Cammarota for the program “Diplomatic Enclave” on PTV World. Mr Cammarota talked about the co-operation between Pakistan and the United Nations Information Centre. He shared details about the public information and communication initiatives and up-coming activities, undertaken by the United Nations Information Centre.

UN Pakistan’s Humanitarian Coordinator on IDP’s situation

The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan, Mr. Timo PAKKALA talked about the concerns related to the IDPs influx from North Wazistan and the humanitarian assistance for them. It was part of an exclusive interview with Stephanie March of ABC News on 25th June 2014.

Mr Pakkala said that most of the people who have left their homes are women and children. So that raises some concerns, especially regarding safety and protection. The situation where these people are moving is quite difficult. It’s very hot in Pakistan and they require immediate food, water and sanitation assistance. The United Nations and humanitarian community is assisting the Government’s efforts in helping to meet the needs of the IDPs in this time of crisis.
Guterres spotlights needs of Afghan refugees in Pakistan; urges donor help

UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres called on the International Community to continue supporting Afghan refugees and needy Pakistanis in host communities.

On the last day of a three-day visit to Pakistan, Guterres also stressed the importance of ensuring continued protection for Afghan refugees in Pakistan amid political and security problems in their homeland. Pakistan currently hosts 1.6 million refugees, more than any other host country in the world.

On a visit to Loralai district of south-west Pakistan’s Balochistan province, Guterres paid tribute to the generosity of Pakistan in providing refuge to so many Afghan civilians over the past three-and-a-half decades. “This is something that should be recognized by the international community, and the best way to do that is to support the most vulnerable Pakistani communities in the poorer areas of the country, who have hosted so many Afghans.”

The High Commissioner told the local authorities that UNHCR would continue to support displaced Afghans in Balochistan through the refugee-affected and hosting areas (RAHA) initiative.

While in Pakistan, the High Commissioner also launched several projects under the 2012 Solutions Strategy. He held talks on the situation of the refugees and their hosts with President Mamnoon Hussain and other top officials.
Today I travelled to Jalozi camp in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and listened to people’s harrowing stories of loss and suffering. To think that these people fled their homes three or four years ago, and are still waiting to return home is heart-rending. At the same time, I was encouraged to see the progress made by the Government to meet the urgent needs of the communities affected by insecurity. Some 76,000 displaced families in KP and FATA have returned home in the past six months. This is commendable but more than 90 per cent of the displaced people in the areas are still living in off-camp locations and with the communities hosting them. It is imperative that the humanitarian partners continue to work with the Government and support efforts to address the needs of displaced and host communities, as well as continue to help displaced people return home.

I remain concerned for communities affected by drought and chronic malnutrition in Tharparkar, Sindh Province. While it is encouraging to see that the Government is mobilising resources to address the needs of the people, officials must work together with the humanitarian community to reduce the suffering and find long-term solutions to the crisis.

Aid organizations have so far only received about $100 million of the estimated $283 million required to maintain essential humanitarian services in KP and FATA this year.

I hope our donors will be as generous as they have been in the past and continue to support the Pakistani people, whose courage and resilience is outstanding even during times of tragedies and crises. Their strength and will to survive is truly inspiring.
Addressing gender inequality challenges in Pakistan

Ms. Roberta Clarke, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, and Representative in Thailand who oversees work in twenty countries across the region underlined that “gender inequality concerns in Pakistan share commonalities with other countries in the region, even those with developed economies. While comparing Pakistan to the region, at times we go forward, at times we go back.” Ms. Clarke commended the achievement that 19% of seats in parliament are occupied by women where the global average is 20%. UN women is credited for the work with the Elections Commission and UNDP that increased voter turnout in the last elections appreciably.

During her trip Ms. Roberta met with a number of women, formerly home-based workers who reflected that lack of access to education (especially after Grade 5) and the limitations on women’s mobility and autonomy undermine their empowerment.

The stoning to death of a young pregnant woman in the name of ‘honor’ during Ms. Roberta’s visit reiterated that incidents of violence cannot be kept in the dark as private affairs and legal cover to protect such cases was the need of the hour.

Ms. Roberta pointed out that women need to be seen as active contributors to the political economy, stereotypes need to be understood and socialization of families and societies through education and passing of policies for equal treatment of men and women can make a difference.
Small island nations share a common understanding that we need to set our planet on a sustainable path. This demands the engagement of all sectors of society in all countries. On World Environment Day, millions of individuals, community groups and businesses from around the world take part in local projects—from clean up campaigns to art exhibits to tree-planting drives. This year, I urge everyone to think about the plight of Small Island Developing States and to take inspiration from their efforts to address climate change, strengthen resilience and work for a sustainable future. Raise your voice, not the sea level. Planet Earth is our shared island. Let us join forces to protect it.

The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers

Today, more than 116,000 UN personnel from more than 120 countries serve in 16 peacekeeping operations. At great personal risk, these military, police and civilian personnel help stabilize communities, protect civilians, promote the rule of law and advance human rights. Last year, 106 Peacekeepers perished carrying out their duty under the UN flag, bringing the total number of lives lost in the history of peacekeeping to more than 3,200. We mourn the passing of every one of these courageous individuals. We grieve with their friends and families and we recommit ourselves to ensure that their contributions to the cause of peace will never be forgotten.

World Environment Day, “Raise Your Voice, Not the Sea Level”
United Nations Public Service Day

The annual observance of Public Service Day highlights the invaluable contributions of public servants and administrators in our efforts to build a better world for all. At a time of complex and interdependent global challenges, effective governance and efficient public administration are central to meeting our development goals. They will also be vital for implementing the post-2015 development agenda.

World Press Freedom Day

Free media, traditional and new, are indispensable for development, democracy and good governance. They can promote transparency about the new goals that Member States will adopt – progress as well as shortfalls. Social media and mobile technologies offer new tools for accelerating citizen participation and economic and social progress. The media’s watchdog function is essential for holding Governments, businesses and others to account. On this World Press Freedom Day, I call on all Governments, societies and individuals to actively defend this fundamental right as critical factors in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the post-2015 development agenda. Freedom of expression, independent media and universal access to knowledge will fortify our efforts to achieve lasting results for people and the planet.

International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

Drug abuse and illicit trafficking have calamitous consequences for the world’s efforts to deliver greater prosperity and equality for all. There are up to 200,000 preventable deaths each year from overdoses. Illicit drugs spawn criminal violence and weaken a state’s essential institutions. On the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, I urge the international community to strengthen its efforts to confront illicit drugs as an integral element in building a safe and sustainable future.
World Refugee Day

On World Refugee Day, 20 June, we honour the strength and resilience of the more than 50 million people around the world who have fled war, persecution and human rights abuses. Let us renew our commitment to end armed conflict, and to help the people who have been forced to flee their homes. Even one family torn apart by war is too many.

United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

The prohibition of torture is absolute. The Convention against Torture states unequivocally that the use of torture is illegal under any circumstances, including armed conflict, the fight against terrorism, political instability or other emergency conditions. All 155 States that have ratified this treaty have committed to fight impunity by thoroughly investigating and prosecuting violations and bringing perpetrators, no matter their level of office, to justice. They have also accepted the obligation to provide redress to the victims and their families.

I urge States that have not yet done so to ratify the Convention against Torture, which this year marks 30 years since its adoption. As we honour the victims on this International Day, let us pledge to strengthen our efforts to eradicate this heinous practice.
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.

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