Focus on
Peace and stability
through UN Peacekeeping.


Peacekeeping is not the job for soldiers, but only soldiers can do it.

First international UN military observer course.

From traditional to multidimensional peacekeeping.
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Peace and stability through UN Peacekeeping

The United Nations Charter places peace and security at the core of the Organization. The United Nations, in collaboration with international partners, uses a variety of approaches, tools and mechanisms to pursue peace and stability. Peacekeeping operations remain one of the most critical activities of the United Nations. With almost 113,000 personnel serving in 16 peacekeeping operations, these are also amongst the most visible undertakings of the organization.

The fact that Pakistan is currently the largest contributor of peacekeeping troops to United Nations Peacekeeping mission demonstrates Pakistan’s commitment to international peace and security.

UN peacekeeping missions are diverse in nature as they are established in order to respond to a unique situation and environment. Activities vital to maintaining international peace and security include monitoring ceasefires; stabilizing post-conflict environments; disarming and reintegrating ex-combatants into civilian life; strengthening governance and rule of law, promoting dialogue and reconciliation; protecting civilians and helping to facilitate the democratic process.

As peace operations continue to evolve encompassing larger and more complex mandates, the United Nations, working in close partnerships with Member States, regional organizations, national authorities and other stakeholders, strives to adapt its peacekeeping and peacemaking tools to address new, ever-growing challenges and additional demands.

Most UN peace operations around the world are now integrated UN missions ensuring that the entire UN system, humanitarian and development agencies, work together with the political and/or military missions in order to consolidate peace and security while strengthening progress towards socio-economic development goals.

The UN Military Observers’ Course at NUST Center for International Peace and Stability is an excellent example of increased focus on training to prepare peacekeepers for these new, demanding challenges.

Having recently attended the closing ceremony of the UN military observers’ course at NUST, the first of its kind with international participation, I am reminded of the words of the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon at the inauguration of the Center in August 2013: “This Centre demonstrates Pakistan’s determination to be a force for peace by drawing on its experiences, sharing its knowledge and deepening its contribution. Training is a strategic investment in peacekeeping and here you will build the skills in preparing peacekeepers to take on a new generation of challenges.”

The UN Military Observers’ Course has been an excellent opportunity to prepare peacekeepers from Pakistan and other countries for the many challenges and complexities that peacekeeping missions are confronted with, and is one of the many tools used to advance one of the core principles of the UN Charter – peace and stability.
United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan

The United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), the second oldest among the UN peacekeeping operations, is a military observer mission that has its origin in the conflict between India and Pakistan over the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. UNMOGIP operates as a UN Military Observer Mission and works under an open-ended mandate of the UN Security Council. The terrain in UNMOGIP area of operations is very rugged and UN Military Observers have to travel through very vast and dispersed areas. It features four mountain peaks above 8000 meters and large patches of inhabitable land. The climatic conditions are extreme for most part of the year, with frequent landslides and heavy snowfall in the winter. The Military Observers travel by land routinely through the dangerous mountain passes. The region has a history of devastating earthquakes.

The Mission is headed by a Chief Military Observer who is also the Head of Mission. UNMOGIP reports to the Secretary-General through the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. UNMOGIP’s task is to observe and report on developments pertaining to the strict observance of the 17 December, 1971 ceasefire. UNMOGIP Headquarters directs and controls the activities of Field Stations and reports regularly to the UN Peacekeeping department at the UN Secretariat in New York.

Currently eleven countries contribute a total of 44 military observers to UNMOGIP which are Chile, Croatia, Finland, Ghana, Italy, Philippines, Switzerland, South Korea, Sweden, Thailand, and Uruguay. UNMOGIP deploys Military Observers in UN Field stations on both sides of the Line of Control and Working Boundary. Military Observers conduct observation posts, field trips, area reconnaissance and investigations of alleged ceasefire violation complaints and Working Boundary incidents as received. UN Field Stations in Pakistan are located Skardu, Gilgit, Domel, Rawalkot, Kotli, Bhimber and Sialkot. In India, UN Field Stations are in Poonch, Rajouri and Jammu and there is Liaison Office established in New Delhi.
Peacekeeping is not the job for soldiers, but only soldiers can do it

A number of states around the globe are efficiently and effectively contributing towards peace and stability by sending their troops in UN peacekeeping missions. United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations is holding the role of peacekeeping as “a unique and dynamic instrument developed by the Organization as a way to help countries torn by conflict to create the conditions for lasting peace.”

Commendably, among the international community Pakistan is the leading country in contributing troops for UN peacekeeping missions. Pakistani Armed forces have a splendid history for their valor and bravery in international peacekeeping. This spirit de corps stems from the notion given by Qaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to actively participate in international peace and prosperity as a nation.

Women make up a large number of the UN peacekeeping efforts. Pakistan is already contributing female officers of the military for medical support in UN peacekeeping. However, in October 2014 a decision was made to send female officers of the Pakistan Army to Force Command Headquarters at UN peacekeeping missions. I feel honoured and privileged to be one of the first ever selected Lady Officers of the Pakistan Army as Legal advisor to the Deputy Force Commander in UN peacekeeping mission (Liberia).

Women make up half the total population of this country and play an active role in the development and prosperity of the nation. The share of their contribution goes from the household to flying a fighter jet. Most importantly, women in uniform are playing a key role and now the new horizons of the UN will give them the opportunity to express their skill and talent all over the globe.

Major Nagina Kausar
The Centre for International Peace And Stability was commissioned to conduct peacekeeping training for UN peacekeepers. It was formally inaugurated by UN Secretary General Mr Ban Ki-moon on 13 August 2013. Since then 28 peacekeeping courses have been conducted and over 300 peacekeepers trained. In October-November 2014, the first course for international participants was held. Besides 21 Pakistani officers including two females, one foreign military officer each from Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Lebanon, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Zimbabwe and Zambia attended the course. The trainers included veterans from UN peacekeeping operations and subject matter experts from UN and international relief agencies operating in conflict zones. The training included not only lectures but practical and scenario based mission specific training. Participants were given demonstration on hostage rescue operations, defusing of IED, negotiation with locals/elders and dismounted patrolling. Participants were put through the drills of patrolling, raid, ambush and hostage taking activities participants in mission area like environment. A variety of scenarios depicting mission specific situations were created. To add value to the training, the prospective military observers were taken on a visit the headquarters of UN-MOGIP (UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan) in Islamabad.

The UN Peacekeeping Course was a success and I benefited from the content which was rich and broad. The issue of humanitarian operations and protection of civilians in any peacekeeping operation was emphasised. The professional interaction with NUST Staff, Pakistani Armed Forces Senior Officers, United Nations Country Team representatives and Non-Governmental Organisations representatives benefitted the class a lot and drastically changed my perception of UN Departments and NGOs. My closing remark is that the success of any UNSCR and the mandate of a mission is dependent on the co-ordination of all the stakeholders and working towards gaining the legitimacy and credibility of a mission.

Lt. Col Maxwell Masuku
Vocational training for adolescents to brighten their future

16 year old Muhammad Roshan is a hard working young man with a keen interest in fixing electric appliances. He is one young person who has completed his training as part of the ‘Building Young Futures’ (BYF) programme developed under a global partnership between UNICEF and Barclays Bank. UNICEF is supporting the Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTC) and the Department of Youth Affairs, Sports, Archaeology and Tourism (YASAT) to implement the project in 17 districts of Punjab province.

The project aims to help adolescents from the most socially excluded and vulnerable backgrounds to fulfil their potential by giving them confidence to start their own business or get employment opportunities.

More than ten thousand adolescents will benefit from vocational training opportunities. Sixty one per cent of the graduates from the first batch are now either employed or have started their own businesses; students from the second batch are nearing the end of their studies, whilst the third and final group are still undergoing training.

The UNICEF-Barclays partnership has also improved the way vocational training is delivered across Punjab province. An Enterprise Resource Planning system is being developed which will enhance PVTC’s capacity to deliver and report on vocational training for marginalized and vulnerable adolescents.

www.unicef.org/pakistan/real-lives_9025.htm
On a foggy morning on the edge of Lahore, a gathering of Afghan refugee women and girls were chatting and giggling. Gul Meena, a young woman in her early twenties, held her three-year-old daughter Gulalai. Gul Meena’s husband sold his minor daughters Laila, aged seven, and Gulalai, for Rs. 250,000 (USD 2500) each. Both the girls will be formally married off at the age of 10, according to their mother.

“My husband is a drug addict, I don’t have a son to earn,” Gul Meena told a visiting UNHCR team. “We have no option but to marry our daughters to buy food and have a roof over our head.”

Gul Meena’s story emerged during a visit by UNHCR female staff to assess their needs through participatory assessments and discussions. Women and girls constitute 47 per cent of the total refugee population in Pakistan, whose voices are often unheard when it comes to decision making. Of them, 23 per cent girls are under the age of eighteen.

Gulalai’s story is nothing unusual in the Pashtoon community where marriages under 16 are widespread. In addition to cultural reasons, another major contributing factor of child marriage is poverty, which induces parents to give their daughters in exchange of debts or to settle family or tribal feuds. In the worst situations, drug addict fathers and brothers sell their daughters and sisters for a large sum of money to elderly men like Gul Meena’s husband.

UNHCR in Pakistan has developed a three year, multi-layered community development plan focused on two areas: provision of better livelihood opportunities, so that people do not have to sell their daughters, and sensitization of communities on the harmful impact of cultural practices and their gradual eradication. The aim is to curtail these practices by 2017.
Half of Pakistan’s 1.6 million Afghan refugee populations have been born in exile, as second and third generations grow up in the world’s most generous refugee hosting country. For many of the youngest among Afghanistan’s 5 million returnees, their ‘return’ was the first time they saw their homeland.

“Afghanistan is now my home. I am happy and I will never leave,” declared eight-year-old Hasanat, whose extraordinary return journey from Pakistan began when he made his own decision to repatriate, after hearing that his father in Afghanistan had fallen ill and his refugee mother refused to return.

“I was selling fruit and vegetables in front of the market in Karachi [in southern Pakistan],” he explained. “When I saw some trucks loaded with Afghans, I begged them so they let me get on the truck.” At the border with Afghanistan, Hasanat went to fetch water from a river and when he got back, the truck had gone. Panic-stricken and traumatized, Hasanat survived the next two days by begging for food and sleeping on the streets of Surobi in eastern Afghanistan.

A kind shop keeper became a caring foster father to Hasanat and contacted UNHCR to trace the boy’s family. “It is imperative that the needs of second and third generations of refugees who have been born in exile – education, jobs, land and housing, in addition to security – are addressed to create pull factors for their return home in safety and dignity, as citizens of their own country,” says UNHCR’s Representative in Pakistan, Maya Ameratunga.
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Pakistan organised a National Conference on e-Learning for Pakistan’s Law Enforcement. Commemorating the 100,000 hours of training milestones, the conference highlighted the role of the e-Learning platform in broadening the knowledge and field effectiveness of law enforcement personnel; while emphasizing the need for further expansion of the programme, and of all-encompassing ownership for long-term sustainability and to recognize outstanding leadership in Pakistan’s law enforcement community.

With 92 e-Learning courses offered by UNODC, delivered across 40 e-Learning centers in the training establishments of law enforcement in Pakistan, the breadth of knowledge and scope of delivery has ensured maximum attendance and knowledge gains. Since 2010, UNODC’s e-Learning platform has delivered training to more than 15,000 law enforcement personnel in Pakistan. This amounts to more than 100 thousand hours of training on core law enforcement functions including: searches and interdiction techniques, evidence collection and preservation, detecting and investigating transnational organized crimes, criminal intelligence, and crime scene investigations. In this endeavour twenty Pakistani law enforcement agencies partnered with UNODC for training of their personnel.

National conference on e-learning for Pakistan’s law enforcement: commemorating 100,000 hours of training milestones

Lady health workers trained on community-based disaster risk management by NHEPRN and WHO

A three-day training course on Community Based Disaster Risk Management was organized by the National Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Network with the support of World Health Organization in Islamabad recently. Dr Safi Malik representing the Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination explained that Lady Health Workers are an integral part of the health system and as community representatives can be used for creating awareness regarding disasters and emergencies. Such training is important for the preparedness of the community workers.

Dr. Fawad Khan, Emergency Coordinator, WHO said that the larger aim is to prepare the community for health emergencies and equip the workers with the best of the expertise and knowledge.
Pakistan’s seed industry experts discuss new policy to revive the industry

The Ministry of National Food Security and Research presented a draft policy for Pakistan’s Seed Industry at a workshop organized with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization. Seed is a strategic input for the agriculture sector, however, current supply satisfies only 23 percent of the country’s need and quality seed does not reach poor farmers. While the local availability of certified seed for wheat, rice, cotton and maize is satisfactory, most of the seed needs for vegetables, fodder and oil seed crops, are met by imports. Pakistan’s seed industry includes 760 private-sector seed companies and employs approximately 50,000 people. The sector faces a number of challenges, from insufficient supply of early generation seed by the public sector, to outdated laws limiting the role of the private sector, lack of skilled professionals and poor collaboration between the public and the private sector players.

The workshop serves as a forum to gather views and recommendations of the key stakeholders on the draft National Seed Policy. The draft policy proposes measures for improving the quality and quantity of seed for various crops and for creating an enabling environment for all the stakeholders in the seed industry; it also aims to ensure that the quality seed of new varieties reaches the resource poor farmers promptly and efficiently.
Lack of toilets dangerous for everyone, according to UNICEF

Some 2.5 billion people worldwide do not have adequate toilet facilities and among them 1 billion defecate in the open – in fields, bushes, or bodies of water – putting them, and especially children, in danger of deadly faecal-oral diseases like diarrhoea. Pakistan stands third as contributor to this large number, with 41 million people defecating in the open, after India and Indonesia at first and second place. In 2013 more than 340,000 children under five died from diarrheal diseases due to a lack of safe water, sanitation and basic hygiene. These include 53,300 Pakistani children.

The call to end the practice of open defecation is being made with growing insistence as the links with childhood stunting become clearer. In Pakistan a mass media campaign has been announced to be launched in January 2015 collectively by the government, parliamentarians, WASH sector UN agencies, NGOs and media partners aimed at ‘societal change in social norms related to open defecation’.

The Netherlands contributes to improve law enforcement and criminal justice in Balochistan

The Netherlands Government has contributed USD 2.5 million in a four-year programme with the Government of Balochistan targeting drugs and crime issues, with UNODC as the implementing partner.

UNODC’s Country Programme (2010-15) was developed in particular to support the implementation of the drug control strategy of the Government of Pakistan. It targets three critical and interdependent areas of development assistance: (i) trafficking and border management, (ii) criminal justice and (iii) drug demand reduction and HIV/AIDS prevention. In order to counter trafficking and strengthen border management, UNODC works with the Government to empower Pakistani law enforcement and regulatory agencies to reduce trafficking and improve the management of borders.

During the stay in Quetta, the Dutch Ambassador H.E. Marcel De Vink along with UNODC Country Representative met with Prosecutor General, Government of Balochistan and also visited the Continuous Learning Center for the Prosecution Department which is also funded by the Dutch Government.

To enhance the knowledge of the prosecutors, UNODC has delivered training on Crime Scene Investigation to these officials in Balochistan. UNODC has also developed a specialized module on Police and Prosecutors Cooperation. UNODC is also planning to establish e-Learning centre for prosecutors through which the officials will be able to participate in the interactive e-learning modules and enhance their skills.
Haier Pakistan donated PKR 2 million to the World Food Programme to support its nutrition efforts for the 2014 flood affected families in Punjab. The funds provided by Haier will be utilized to procure 7 metric tons of a nutritious product “Acharum” to treat approximately 1,100 young malnourished children. “The private sector has an increasingly greater role to play in our efforts to scale up nutrition interventions in Pakistan, especially in disaster affected areas, as people struggle to regain their lives and livelihoods. We strive to ensure that families receive the required nutrition to assist them in these trying times” said Lola Castro.

The humanitarian role of Haier Pakistan has been recognized and appreciated by the Government of Pakistan and it received the Sitara-e-Esaar award for their role during the devastating earthquake that hit the northern areas in 2005. The WFP Community Management of Acute Malnutrition programme aims to support children under the age of 5 as well as nursing women, especially those crisis affected, who are suffering from undernutrition.

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

The Drug Use in Pakistan 2013 Survey Report launched in Quetta reveals how Pakistan’s population aged 15 to 64 suffer from the devastating consequences of substance abuse. The report estimates that 6 per cent - or 6.7 million people, age 15-64 years in Pakistan used drugs in the last 12 months.

Although 4.25 million individuals are thought to be drug dependent, treatment and specialist interventions are in short supply, available to less than 30,000 drug users a year. Moreover, not all structured treatment is free of charge. In a country where almost a quarter of the population is estimated to be living on less than US$ 1.25 a day, the barriers preventing access to structured treatment are exceptionally high.

Mr. Cesar Guedes, Representative UNODC, stated that National Drug Use Survey 2013 is for the first time conducted in Pakistan at provincial levels and it provides a comprehensive data on drug use and its implications on HIV transmission. The information contained in the report will form the baseline for future planning and designing of drug prevention and treatment programmes in Pakistan.
Government and FAO are working together for rights to access land and other natural resources for the people of Pakistan

The Food and Agriculture Organization and the National Centre for Rural Development held a three-day workshop on the international Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Land Tenure in Islamabad. The Voluntary Guidelines represent an unprecedented international agreement on the governance of tenure, which places secure access to land, fisheries and forests firmly in the context of food security. They provide the first global consensus on universally applicable standards for the recognition and protection of tenure rights. Workshop participants discussed how the Voluntary Guidelines could be implemented in Pakistan to ensure a more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable way to manage the land, fisheries and forests of the country. “Land ownership is very uneven in Pakistan; most farms are very small and split into several pieces of land. More than 60% of the rural households are landless farmers who work as tenants or labourers for owners of large landholdings. Without secure access to land and other natural resources, people are forced to live a life of hunger and poverty. In contrast, secure tenure rights may help vulnerable families to produce food for their consumption, and to increase their income by producing a surplus for sale in markets, and a valuable safety net in times of hardship.”

Assessing the vulnerability in the Jafferabad and Naseerabad districts of Balochistan

The devastating floods of 2010 and repeated floods of 2011 and 2012 left huge human, economic and physical losses. UN-Habitat and Provincial Disaster Management Authority Balochistan conducted a vulnerability assessment in Districts of Jafferabad and Naseerabad with policy implications for managing repeated disasters. The Stakeholders’ Workshop was widely attended by the provincial government, local administration, community representatives from Jafferabad and Naseerabad and representatives of civil society. The workshop was also attended by Mr. Naseeb Ullah Bazai, Secretary to Government of Balochistan, Irrigation Department. The local administration representatives stressed the need to establishing an early warning and rescue system. The communities expressed their concerns about limited resources at the local level and offered that during floods they could be used as early earning, rescue and rehabilitation outreach by the government. The communities were willing to provide assistance after due training. UN-Habitat representative made a presentation of the study findings with the stakeholders and after that very intense and interactive session was held. The policy recommendations would be incorporated into the draft document and along with risk atlas would be released soon.
Study on Slums – Focusing on Afghan refugees in the Islamabad Capital Territory and in Kohat City, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

A Dissemination Seminar on the Study on Slums was held focusing on Afghan Refugees in Islamabad Capital Territory and Kohat City in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. Mr Abbas Khan, Commissioner for Afghan Refugees highlighted the importance of this study as ‘ground breaking’ in terms of triggering issues of Afghan Refugees. He recognized how urbanisation is irreversible and that the managing bodies must address issues of Afghan Refugees living in the urban areas.

The proposed study was carried out from July 2013 to Jan 2014. It attempts to highlight the spatial and socioeconomic trends of urban slums of the two areas with special focus on Afghan refugees with the objective of assessing and improving their living conditions as well as the hosting communities. Study of all the refugee slums was impracticable due to time and resources. Considering these factors and also taking into consideration ground realities; the team thus made the decision in agreement with UN-Habitat to cover 5 slums (2 in Kohat and 3 in Islamabad). A comprehensive methodology was also developed to carry out field survey. More than 1000 field questionnaires were collected in addition to 6 focus group discussions.
As Pakistan continues to face the effects of complex emergencies and natural disasters, very little importance has been given to the role of women in the process of social reconstruction. This was highlighted by several speakers during the launch of UN Women’s program on “Women Leadership in Social Reconstruction”, which is being financially supported by the Government of Denmark. Addressing the participants, Danish Ambassador Mr. Jesper Moller Sørensen stated that “every time there is a disaster or conflict, it is the women who immediately come on the frontline to take care of their families. They need the most support.” The Danish Ambassador also highlighted that in vulnerable countries such as Pakistan, it was even more critical to understand the gender implications during and after natural disasters and crisis.

Dr. Mehar Taj Roghani, Special Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Social Welfare and Women’s Empowerment stated that serious gaps existed in emergency preparedness and disaster risk management capacities. The funding from the Danish Government will be utilized to support UN Women’s program to work with the Government of Pakistan and key partners in enhancing synergies so as to facilitate regional networking and partnerships; support advocacy for in-country and cross regional programming on integrating gender concerns in peace initiatives; undertake Training for Trainers on Gender and Peacekeeping.

UNHCR urges Afghan refugees to renew their PoR cards to retain refugee status

The UN refugee agency urges all Afghan refugees, who hold Proof of Registration (PoR) cards that have expired by 31 December 2012 and who have not yet collected their renewed PoR cards, to approach their nearest registration centre, before the deadline of 31 December 2014. In order to continue to be considered as refugees, Afghans with PoR cards must renew their cards by this date.

During the PoR card renewal exercise that was jointly conducted by the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) and UNHCR, to date more than 90% of Afghan refugees have received their new PoR cards. However, NADRA have confirmed that 120,639 PoR cards have not yet been collected. From January 2015, UNHCR will only consider Afghan refugees holding the new PoR cards with the validity date of 31 December 2015 for any services provided by the agency and its partners, including assistance for voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan. Afghans still carrying the old PoR cards with the validity date of December 2012 will no longer be entitled to any assistance provided by UNHCR and its partners.
UNHCR and partners launches “16 Days of Activism” campaign against gender violence

As the world marks the “International Day to Eliminate Violence against Women” the UN refugee agency pledges a renewed commitment to address the continuing problems faced by refugee women and girls in Pakistan.

This international event falls under the theme “Protecting Rights and Preserving Childhoods: Working Together to Address Child Marriage”. Through the 16 Days of Activism this year, UNHCR will focus specifically on the risks and adverse effects of children marrying at a young age.

UNHCR offices with the help of partner organizations around the country will mark the 16 Days of Activism with a wide range of events and activities to demonstrate their commitment to the elimination of sexual and gender-based violence. These events include football match between Somalis and Afghans refugees, cultural dances on the theme by school children, drama performance, storytelling with puppet show for the Afghan and non-Afghan children, mime performances, folk marriage songs, exhibition, sports and other events.

UN Cares orientation session for UN Staff

The UN Cares inter-agency team in collaboration with UNAIDS and UNFPA organized “HIV and AIDS in the Workplace Orientation Session” for UN Staff at Islamabad. 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. 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.
Occupational safety and health

In response to a fatal factory accident in September 2012, ILO facilitated the Government of Sindh, Employers Federation of Pakistan and the Pakistan Workers’ Federation to develop and sign a Joint Action Plan for Promoting Workplace Safety & Health in Sindh which was signed in October 2013. The Joint Action Plan comprises of a set of 23 actions categorized in three areas, i.e. OSH, Labor Inspection and Social Protection - planned over a period of 3 years to establish a strong foundation for an institutional arrangement of OSH Management System in Sindh Province. Mr. Francesco Country Director ILO stated the facts and figures related to the workplace accidents worldwide and stressed the importance of implementing the policies of occupational safety and health in Pakistan. He said that accidents usually happen as it is a common phenomenon but if there is no action against the accidents, then it becomes a recurrent challenge.

The Ambassador of Embassy of Netherlands Mr. Marcel de Vink said that safe working conditions were not only important for Sindh but all other provinces of Pakistan who should also adopt the same policies. Ambassador de Vink also stated the importance of Pakistan’s ability to compete with other countries through the implementation of OSH initiatives in order to attract more investment.

World Teachers Day 2014: Investing in quality education and teachers crucial to progress and a better society

World Teachers Day 2014 theme was “Invest in the future, invest in teachers”. The conference was organized by UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO and WFP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training in Islamabad. Representatives of the different UN agencies, emphasis the need for more joint efforts towards achieving Millennium Development Goals through investment in teachers and quality education and a more conducive learning and encouraging environment, as well as efficient use of teachers particularly in disadvantaged areas, by offering incentives. Secretary Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training also launched the Pakistan Education for All Review Report 2015 that aimed to ensure systematic monitoring of the progress towards achieving Education for All goals. Students and teachers, on the occasion of World Teachers Day 2014 paid tribute to the important role and value of teachers for the development of the country.

Enabling universal access to information and knowledge: policies and legislation for persons with disabilities

To empower persons with disabilities by enabling them access to information and knowledge platforms, UNESCO Islamabad in collaboration with Special Talent Exchange Programme, organized a media sensitization workshop in Islamabad.

The workshop aimed at bringing together various stakeholders to raise awareness and learn about ways of improving accessibility to information and knowledge platforms and disability-friendly warning systems through information and communication technologies, sign language, policy, technical and design modifications with a particular focus on barriers faced by persons with hearing and visual impairment.

The workshop attendants stressed the importance of creating an enabling environment perspective rather than focus on how to “fix” persons with disabilities. An interactive dialogue segment focused on the importance of and need for the development of sign language for the private and public media; captioning and subtitling (open and wide) for deaf people; braille newspapers and signs; screen readers; screen magnification as well as use of web page layout and browsers that can enable the blind or visually impaired to access websites as easy to implement solutions.

Key suggestions and recommendations were shared by the participants, which will be incorporated in a study on barriers faced by persons with disabilities in Pakistan to access information and knowledge to be published soon.

http://unesco.org.pk/ci/media_sensitization.html
UNESCO in partnership with Comsats Institute of Information Technology, launched a four day training workshop on understanding and mitigating the impact of bio-growth on Taxila World Heritage Site here in Islamabad. The training workshop enhanced capacity building of relevant institutions including academia and the Department of Archaeology Punjab through scientific study of the bio-growth, its impact on the site and conservation measures against the bio-deterioration. The training workshop was conducted for the first time in Pakistan and will be imparted to twenty five government officials and academic practitioners.

Taxila is one of the six World heritage sites of Pakistan inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1980, with a vast complex of archaeological heritage. Bio-growth is one of the major issues of the site that not only affects the visibility and appearance but also causes structural damage to the site.

UNESCO Islamabad has planned to carry out four scientific surveys of the bio-growth appearing during various seasons during the year to explore the types of bio-growth and its impact on archaeological structures. First survey has already conducted during August this year to find the type of vegetation during monsoon season. The team of plant scientists visited the site and collected about 50 plants. Based on the finding of the surveys, conservation guidelines will be developed to mitigate the impact of the bio-growth.
In connection to the World Science Day for Peace and Development 2014, celebrated on 10 November annually, UNESCO Islamabad organized two different events in Islamabad. The first event was organized by UNESCO in collaboration with Pakistan Science Foundation and COMSATS Institute of Information Technology.

In the second event, a seminar was organized in Islamabad by Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South and ECO Science Foundation in collaboration with UNESCO.

Remarks and discussions during the seminars deliberated upon improving the standard of education and research in the country; new trends in life sciences; interdisciplinary and entrepreneurial nature of modern science education; ensuring ethical disposition; quality teaching; as well as, challenges of providing quality science education in schools of Pakistan.

At the concluding sessions of both the events, awards and cash prizes were distributed among students and researchers for preparing posters on illustrating the role of science for a progressive society with respect to various themes, included agriculture, health, biosciences, nanotechnology and computational sciences.

The International Day for Disaster Reduction is celebrated every year on 13 October, on how people and communities are reducing their risk to disasters. It’s also a day to encourage every citizen and government to take part in building more disaster resilient communities and nations.

Representatives and officials of the government, government institutions and the United Nations in Pakistan in their separate remarks emphasized on the joint efforts along with communities, academia and experts for sustainable development. They also emphasized the need for timely preventive measures as well as taking measures to reduce the vulnerability to hazards of elderly people despite of limited resources and other key challenges. The event also featured awareness raising lectures. An advocacy walk and technical work group sessions were also organized to take inputs from the partners and stakeholders on disaster risk management’s challenges and opportunities, which will help towards the formulation of Balochistan Provincial disaster management policy in the future. Moreover UNESCO in collaboration with the University of Balochistan have started awareness raising sessions for students, teachers, NGOs and government officials in the province. In total there will be 20 sessions organized and special emphasis has been given to the maximum participation of women in these sessions.
School care and maintenance in Swat

The Swiss Development Cooperation sought the help of the United Nations Information Centre for the development of a communication programme to manage care and maintenance of the schools they rebuilt in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the aftermath of the devastating floods in 2010 and 2011. The programme aimed at building a strong sense of ownership among teachers and students through a specially designed manual on sustainable care and maintenance manuals for teachers and a set of jumbo-sized illustrated posters with key information for students. The programme included training sessions for both students and teachers on the basic principles of maintenance of their schools. In order to energise the process, the programme introduced the role of students with overseeing the maintenance and care process. Teachers were also sensitised on the importance of involving the local community in maintaining the schools to increase the overall sense of ownership. The initial response was very encouraging and additional training sessions will be carried on in 2015.
Realizing the need and importance of wastewater treatment, UNESCO Islamabad in collaboration with NUST Institute of Civil Engineering executed the project, “Application of FILTER Technology for Wastewater Treatment - Pilot Study at NUST Islamabad Campus” in 2013. The main objective of the project was to demonstrate the use of FILTER Technology for wastewater treatment and re-use it at NUST Islamabad Campus under a Pilot Study.

The wastewater being generated from offices, student hostels and staff residential colony located at NUST Islamabad Campus was directed towards a Sedimentation Tank and after settling of solid waste & scum was discharged into a Constructed Wetland divided into eight compartments. The treated wastewater is being used for horticulture & replenishing underlying groundwater aquifer, thus not only conserving fresh water being presently used for horticulture but also raising the water table of the local area. A set of piezometers are also planned to be installed to monitor the flow towards drains. The solid waste collected from the Sedimentation Tank is dried up and used as fertilizer for trees & plants, thus converting the whole project into “Zero Waste”.

Waste water management system developed in collaboration with National University of Science and Technology
Handover ceremony of 10 rugged terrain vehicles to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police

UNODC continues to work in partnership with Government of Pakistan to improve the technical capacity of its law enforcement agencies in areas of illicit trafficking and border management, criminal justice system and drug demand reduction with focus on the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police. This important initiative of support was made possible with the funding of Canada and Denmark.

UNODC in recognition of this phenomena feels that all agencies involved in the combatting of the scourge of drug trafficking whether through the specific counter narcotics mandate vested in them or through a de facto position of dealing with the effects of drug trafficking in others spheres of criminality, should be empowered through adequate resources.

UNODC will continue its efforts and share commitment for our long-term support with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police.

A building to build relationships

“The new building enables us to work as one team,” says FAO Representative, Patrick T. Evans about the new office building FAO completed last year within the premises of the National Agricultural Research Center on the outskirts of Islamabad.

The new building significantly expanded FAO’s office space, enabling consolidation of FAO staff from four locations in Islamabad. Some 70 FAO staff and the office of the International Fund for Agriculture Development now share the space.

The building boasts environmentally-friendly design: large windows to maximize natural light, LED lights, solar panels to heat water and insulated walls and roof, all of which significantly reduces energy consumption. Outside, the FAO team established a kitchen garden following a food security technique that FAO promotes. The kitchen garden produces a variety of vegetables that FAO donates to a local boarding school. “We are happy to share our work with students,” says Mr Evans.

Being located just out of town, the office serves as an alternative workspace for some of the UN agencies in Islamabad, while the building’s state-of-the-art 50-seat conference room serves as a favorite meeting facility for the entire UN and donor community.
Sustainable development: the promise of technology for the persons with disabilities

This year, the theme of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities was “Sustainable Development: The Promise of Technology.” WHO representative Dr Michel Thieren said that the theme of will work to harness the power of technology, to promote advantages of using assistive technology and accessible information in ensuring full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in society and in shaping the future of sustainable development for all.

Dr Maryam Mallick, Technical Advisor WHO, said that being the lead agency in disabilities in the UN system, WHO has taken many concrete steps for mainstreaming disability in the developmental process. WHO in collaboration with Government of Pakistan and Disabled People Organizations has formulated the first comprehensive Disability Bill in line with the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The Bill is in the process of enactment at the federal and provincial Levels.

WHO in collaboration with Government of Pakistan will soon be launching Urdu version of World Disability Report, Community Based Rehabilitation Guidelines and UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). International Day of Persons with Disabilities underscores the need for disability-inclusive society in the post-2015 setting by breaking down barriers and creating opportunities so that everyone can live their lives with equal rights and equal opportunities.

SACAM network: the impact of climate change on natural ecosystems

To enhance knowledge sharing and best practices for the projected impact of climate change on weather, economies, agriculture, wetlands, biodiversity, natural resources and ecosystems, UNESCO Islamabad, in collaboration with Pakistan Science Foundation and UNDP jointly launched the sixth international meeting of the South and Central Asia Man and Biosphere Network. The meeting focussed on bringing urgent and serious attention to climate change mitigation and response. The SACAM platform would provide an opportunity to develop collaboration among scientists and government officials to develop better strategies to cope with the burning issue of climate change and its adverse impact on almost all the physical and biological components of planet Earth.

During the three day meeting, participants shared experiences such as on the harmonization of community livelihoods with biodiversity conservation, new trends in biosphere reserves and their future plans. The Meeting will include a networking session and group discussions on how to strengthen the SACAM network.
Drug Use in Pakistan 2013 Survey reveals high levels of drug use and dependency

The Drug Use in Pakistan 2013 Survey Report launched in Karachi reveals how Pakistan’s population aged 15 to 64 suffer from the devastating consequences of substance abuse. The report estimates that 6 per cent - or 6.7 million adults in Pakistan - used drugs in the last 12 months. Although 4.25 million individuals are thought to be drug dependent, treatment and specialist interventions are in short supply, available to less than 30,000 drug users a year. Moreover, not all structured treatment is free of charge. Mr. Cesar Guedes, Representative UNODC, stated that National Drug Use Survey 2013 is for the first time conducted in Pakistan at provincial levels and it provides a comprehensive data on drug use and its implications on HIV transmission. The information provided in the report will form the baseline for future planning and designing of drug prevention and treatment programmes in Pakistan. 1.7 million people used illicit substances in the province in the past year whereas 96,000 drug users are estimated to be injecting drugs. Cannabis was found to be the most commonly used drug (4.3%). Vulnerability to HIV and other blood-borne diseases through injecting drug use is also considerable due to injecting drugs.

Promoting decent work for a sustainable textile industry in Pakistan

The Government of the Netherlands, the International Labour Organisation and the International Finance Corporation in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan have joined efforts to uphold international standards and practices in Pakistan’s textile and garment sector by organizing the first Buyers’ Meeting in Islamabad. Pakistan is the 4th largest producer of cotton with the third largest spinning capacity in Asia after China and India, and contributes 5% to the global spinning capacity. With the European Union approval of preferential access for Pakistani products to the EU market, under the Generalized System of Preferences, there is a great opportunity for Pakistan to further increase their exports to the EU and meet the quality, environmental, labour and health & safety standards required. The event brought together a number of buyers and brands including GAP, Wal-Mart, Target, H&M, Adidas who expressed their commitment to sustainable practices, improving compliance and reporting on environmental, labour and health & safety standards and their implementation in the textile and garment sector in Pakistan. The engagement of buyers, brands and all relevant stakeholders is paramount to build the path towards improved workers safety and better compliance with labour standards in Pakistan’s textile and garment industry, ensuring the sector remains attractive to international buyers.
This year, South Asia’s migrant workers have good reason to celebrate International Migrants Day on 18 December. In a landmark commitment, the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation countries agreed at their recent summit to work together to improve conditions for their migrants. The latest government data place the total annual outflow from five countries in South Asia at close to 2.5 million migrant workers per year. India is the largest migrant sending country with 747,000 workers, followed by Pakistan with 623,000 workers and Nepal with 454,000 workers. While migrant workers from South Asia can be found in almost every region of the world, the main flow is into the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states. About 96 per cent of all migrant workers from India and 94 percent from Pakistan take jobs in a GCC country. In Asia and the Middle East admission and employment systems generally offer relatively liberal entry procedures, restricted rights and limited duration of contracts and visas. This model is increasingly being criticised for inflicting poor living and working conditions on many migrants. Domestic work, mainly involving women, is perhaps the area with the highest incidence of labour abuses in the Middle East. In many countries domestic work is not currently covered by national labour laws. Construction is another sector dominated by migrant workers, and one where occupational safety and health is a serious concern.

The ILO believes that the Saarc can play a key role in dealing with these issues, helping to develop a common position, sharing expertise and information, and providing mutual assistance. The fact that Saarc have now agreed to collaborate on migration brings hope for the future. Decisive action by these states will ensure that millions of migrant workers, and their families and societies, get the fair deal they deserve.

By Yoshiteru Uramoto / Francesco D’Ovidio
A Sanitation Festival was organized by the WASH sector partners to commemorate World Toilet Day on November 19th, 2014 at Lok Virsa Museum, Islamabad. This was the first ever public event in continuation to the last year’s celebrations of World Toilet Day. This year it was celebrated at a large scale and people from all walks of life attended to be an important agent of change for the country and join the global movement “Call to Action on Sanitation” raising awareness on the importance of sanitation & hygiene and helping keep the family safe, happy and disease free.

The event was a collaborative effort of the leading and prominent development partner organizations and private sector, with the key objective of creating mass awareness and highlighting priority to the sanitation and hygiene sector in Pakistan.

UN Habitat aims to continue such causes and is proud to have involved the youth of Pakistan at this initiative, following this landmark UN Habitat has started planning on finding grounds to empower the youth of the country in making change possible.
UNV Pakistan marked International Volunteer Day 2014 with several programs. UNV Pakistan organized official ceremony jointly with UNAIDS and ILO to commemorate International Volunteer Day and World AIDS Day. The event aimed to recognize the contribution of UN Volunteers and encourage people to get engaged volunteerism in Pakistan. It also discussed about the needs of legal reframe work on volunteerism through sensitizing the policy makers, local representatives and other key stakeholders with building partnerships.

UNV Pakistan also organized ‘Town Hall and Get Together of UNVs’ which aimed to set common understanding about volunteering activities, sharing the knowledge amongst serving UN Volunteers, knowing each other, updating admin and operational issues, and exchange of sharing best practices.

UNV Pakistan held an Essay Competition among youngsters of Pakistan on the occasion of International Volunteer Day 2014. The title of the Essay Competition was “Peace, Volunteerism and Youth: Perspectives Pakistan” and we received about 200 Essays from the youngsters. The essays portrayed with encouraging statements and valued recommendations in regards to fostering volunteerism in Pakistan.
International Pashto Poetry Festival promotes peace in Swat

The first International Pashto Poetry Festival was held in Swat on 21 November. The event was jointly organized by the Swat district administration, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority, Provincial Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Settlement Authority and UNDP Pakistan. The festival brought together more than 55 renowned poets from Afghanistan, Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates and all of Pakistan’s provinces. Interest in the event was overwhelming, with the venue filled to capacity with more than 1500 people. The poetry session provided an opportunity for Pashto poets to come together and promote messages of peace and stability through music and literature. It was also a rare opportunity for young and aspiring poets and authors, including women, to listen to and meet with some of the most acclaimed Pashto poets of the region.

As a result of the 2008-09 militancy and floods in 2010, the Swat Valley has suffered massive human displacements and most of its infrastructure has been destroyed. This has also affected social and cultural activities in the region. UNDP’s Community Resilience project works with the provincial government in crisis affected areas of the province by restoring public buildings and parks and by supporting community activities for men and women, young and old.

Switzerland and UNDP partner to support FATA’s displaced people

Matthias Weingart, the director of Cooperation Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in Pakistan, and Marc-André Franche, UNDP Pakistan country director, signed an agreement for US$1.05 million to improve the living conditions and livelihoods of 200,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and the IDP hosting communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The partnership between SDC and UNDP will build resilience through both community and institutional level interventions in support of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The measures will directly benefit the most vulnerable groups, both among the displaced persons and in the host communities, to improve access to basic services and improve livelihood opportunities. The acquired skills, both at institutional and community levels, will make the displaced persons more self-reliant during the displacement period and give them the means to sustain those gains during the return and rehabilitation phase. According to the FATA Disaster Management Authority (FDMA), the official number of registered displaced people as of December stood at almost 288,000 families. Most of the displaced people have taken refuge in the bordering districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The worst affected and most vulnerable groups are women and children, representing more than 70 percent of the displaced persons.
Swat to have a fully functional forensic science laboratory in June 2015

“The establishment of forensic science laboratory at Swat will mean a lot for enhancing quality of investigation by the police. It will help us analyze local evidence at the regional level, thus minimizing the time taken for investigation of cases and decreasing the workload of the laboratory at Peshawar.”

Thoughts expressed by the Additional Inspector General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police, Mian Muhammad Asif, while speaking at the ground-breaking ceremony organized to initiate civil works of the Regional Forensic Science Laboratory at Landakay in Swat. Under this phase, the laboratory building, provided by the KP Police, will be fully refurbished to ensure that it confirms with international standards of safety and functionality for such facilities.

The KP Police Department is initiating administrative measures for sustainable operation and maintenance of this facility, after it’s handing over by UNDP in June 2015. 22 of the future staff members of the forensic science laboratory are undergoing a six-month training at the Punjab Forensic Science Agency through UNDP’s support.

UNDP’s rule of law program in the region was initiated as an all-inclusive engagement with both formal and traditional justice mechanisms to ensure comprehensive and enduring reforms in the criminal justice system of the province, with a special focus on Malakand Division.

Multi-dimensional Poverty Index: concept, measurement and policy relevance

The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics and UNDP jointly organized the Mahbub-ul-Haq memorial lecture at the 30th Annual Conference of the Pakistan Society of Development Economists. The year’s theme was Poverty, Inequality and Economic Growth. The memorial lecture takes place every year in recognition of the work of the renowned economist, Dr. Mahbub-ul-Haq who introduced the concept of human development in the first UNDP Human Development Report in 1990.

The Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) identifies the poor by analysing the range of deprivations, the incidence of poverty, and the intensity of poverty. It is flexible and can incorporate a wide range of dimensions, indicators, cut-offs and weights.

As with many other poverty measurement methodologies, the quality of MPI and its trustworthiness depend on the availability and quality of data. Most often, data on key indicators is not available at the sub-national level. In Pakistan, data on some important indicators like health and consumption is also not available at the district level. Substantial improvements in the existing survey tools are essential to a reliable MPI. To ensure the sustainability and use of MPI over time, it is important to include a few, but powerful, indicators for constructing MPI to keep data collection tools manageable and cost effective.
Groundbreaking short films featuring people living with HIV in Pakistan

In the first project of its kind undertaken by UNAIDS in Pakistan in partnership with UNICEF, UNFPA and UNIC, a series of groundbreaking short video interviews were commissioned profiling people living with HIV across the country for World AIDS Day. The UN agencies were given unprecedented access to members of the most at-risk communities. The personal testimonies were narrated directly by each individual which made them unique, powerful and hard-hitting. Acknowledgement and awareness of HIV across the country is comparably low because of social stigma and misinformation on how it can be spread. Pakistan has a “low level” epidemic nationally, however there are large numbers of HIV infections in key populations in certain geographic regions, namely intravenous drug users. If steps are not taken to control the epidemic it is possible the virus will spread to the wider population. These films are thus timely and an important tool in the battle to eradicate HIV and AIDS. They were picked up by a broad range of national and international media including Geo TV, Dawn News, Radio Pakistan, Voice of America and BBC Urdu. An educational video is due to be released for university visits too.
As part of the activities of commemoration of World AIDS Day 2014, a national level commemoration event was organized. Experts and representatives of affected communities met for an interactive discussion on how efforts can be combined to end the AIDS epidemic by “Closing The Gap” between people who have access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services and people who are being left behind.

The event was kicked off by the launching of a research study report on “HIV and Workplace”. The study on prevalence of policies and institutional arrangements to support People Living with HIV at workplace level in Pakistan, is one of the joint interventions that ILO and UNAIDS in Pakistan designed and implemented together. It indicates the need for further collaboration among the two agencies to actively mobilize and support Government, Employers and Workers organizations to take policy and institutional actions for removing this stigma and support the patients of this stigmatic disease.

At the end of the event a tribute was given to those community representatives who participated in the filming project supported by UNICEF, UNFPA, UNAIDS and produced by UNIC. The UN agencies were given unprecedented access to members of the most at-risk communities regarding HIV and AIDS in Pakistan. There is still a great deal of stigma associated with the virus, so each interviewee was brave enough to speak openly about their experiences. These short videos are unique, hard-hitting and very powerful personal testimonies.
Japan assists Pakistan, strengthens KP and FATA

Health sector

Under the framework of the One UN in Pakistan, RAHA is a joint program component within the UN “Delivering as One”. The inception of RAHA in 2009 owes to the presence of three million Afghan Refugees in Pakistan in the preceding three decades, resulting in social, economic and environmental consequences.

Dr Michel Thieren, WHO Representative in Pakistan extended his gratitude to the Government and people of Japan for supporting the RAHA interventions through which WHO has been able to achieve the desired outcomes. WHO being specialized agency in health has enthusiastically participated and contributed in strengthening the health system delivery. The medical equipment provided will enhance the capacity of basic health units, hospitals and rural health units and ambulances would strengthen the referral system of the area.

WHO, in the end, presented the Way Forward under Pakistan Government and UNHCR Solutions Strategy in which WHO is supporting a share of interventions under WHO RAHA Program for FATA and Balochistan refugee affected areas. Donors’ support is required for continuation of RAHA programme.

New information management system for refugee affected and hosting areas programme

In an effort to ensure more sustainable transparency and accountability in Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas projects, the United Nations and the Government of Pakistan inaugurated the newly-developed Management Information System.

Developed with the financial support of the European Union, the new system provides a comprehensive database that contains quality assured information on more than 3,000 projects carried out within the RAHA programme since it started in 2009 until now, with donor contributions of some USD 175million. To date, more than 4.2 million Pakistanis and 0.8 million Afghan refugees have benefited from RAHA projects.

The newly-developed MIS is a user-friendly online database where information related to projects is listed under different categories including statistics related to beneficiaries, financial summaries, detailed locations and sectoral breakdown of projects for each province.

A key component of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees, the RAHA programme has been designed under the leadership of the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) at the Federal level. At provincial level, it is supported by Line Ministries and Departments including the Commissionerates of Afghan Refugees.
One UN Provincial Communication Workshops

The UN Communications Group recently launched communication workshops aimed at strengthening relations with its province-based stakeholders through a better understanding of the work of the United Nations at global and country level. The first two workshops were held in Gilgit in November and in Peshawar in December. The workshops were specially designed for enhancing the common understanding of the role and functions of United Nations and its unique positioning as an international partner providing development and humanitarian assistance in Pakistan. In Gilgit, the UN Communications Group team, led by UNIC director Vittorio Cammarota, met with representatives from the provincial government, from the media and with some 150 students from the Karakoram International University. The UN team also had one-to-one meetings with Ms. Sadia Danish, Minister for Tourism, Sports, Culture, Youth Affairs & Women Development, with the Vice Chancellor and the Dean of the Karakoram International University and with the Secretary, Ministry of Planning and Development. In Peshawar, the UN Communications Group team met with a large group of students from the department of Journalism and Mass Communications, University of Peshawar, with representatives from the media, with officials from the Provincial Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and with colleagues from several UN agencies based in the province. The workshops provided an unprecedented opportunity for engaging key audiences such as university students, media representatives and government focal points for public information in an interactive dialogue on the functions of the main organs of the United Nations, on the specific plans and modus operandi in Pakistan and on the projects of the 19 United Nations agencies programmes and funds currently operating in the individual provinces. The workshops offered also an opportunity to explore collaboration on joint communications projects in a variety of areas, including the upcoming UN 70th anniversary celebrations and to strengthen the One Voice component of the ONE UN Programme 2013-17. Mahira Afzal, FAO, Duniya Khan, UNCHR, Zarar Khan, United Nations and Amjad Jamal, World Food Programme contributed to conducting the workshops in both English and Urdu on the basis of the programmes developed with the contribution of the UN Communications Group team.

2nd Sindh OP II Steering Committee Meeting

The second One UN Programme Sindh Steering Committee meeting was held in Karachi. The meeting focused on reviewing the achievements resulting from the UN’s support in Sindh in 2014 in the six Strategic Priority Areas and discussing the challenges of implementation.

In the course of the discussions, the government representatives expressed their priorities regarding UN support in 2015. The Government of Sindh would like to deepen the partnership with the UN in disaster risk reduction and building resilience, as well as in social inclusion. It was highlighted that Sindh province is subject to all manner of natural disasters, with urban sprawl further compounding vulnerability. More also needs to be done to promote gender equality and insure the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, it was felt that sustainable development results could be optimised through improved coordination between all development partners. A more holistic and integrated programming approach should be adopted in all sectors, such as nutrition, livelihoods, etc. as well as in specific target areas such as Tharparkur and Umer Kot districts. Similarly, joint government-UN monitoring and evaluation of initiatives should also be strengthened. The next Steering Committee meeting will take place in late January – early February in order to discuss the 2015 workplan for Sindh.
1 December 2014: Roze TV broadcast a special talk show to raise awareness about stigma and discrimination issues faced by people living with HIV in society. Dr. Javed Akram, Vice Chancellor, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, Ms. Farzana Bari, Civil Society Rights Activist, Mr. Asghar Satti, National Coordinator, The Association of People Living with HIV and Ms. Fahmida Iqbal, Country Community Mobilization and Networking Advisor, UNAIDS were among the panelists who took part in the discussion.

The role of opinion/religious leaders and getting some basic information on HIV awareness/prevention into the curriculum were also stressed by the speakers.

4 December 2014: Radio Pakistan held a special panel discussion on the occasion of the International Volunteers Day with the officials of the United Nations Volunteer Programme in Pakistan. Md. Aktar Uddin, Programme Officer, UNV Pakistan, Asela Bandara, International UN Volunteer, UNDP and Ms. Fatima Raza, National UNV took part in the discussion.

The panelists talked about the significance of the Day and highlighted UNV’s contributions towards peace and development by advocating for recognition of volunteers, working with partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming and mobilizing an increasing number and diversity of volunteers, including experienced UN Volunteers, throughout the world.

Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation and the United Nations Information Centre held a special radio talk show to commemorate one year of partnership, established in December 2013 with the objective of increasing the use of radio for sharing key information related to development and humanitarian projects with listeners. During the last year, around 35 radio programmes were co-produced and broadcast by Radio Pakistan on humanitarian and development issues including education, health, nutrition, climate change, polio, HIV/AIDS, women’s empowerment, drugs trafficking, and the overall work of the UN in Pakistan. Ms. Samina Parveiz, Director General, Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation, Mr. Vittorio Cammarota, Director, United Nations Information Centre, Ms. Vibeke Jensen, Director, UNESCO, young bloggers and radio broadcasters took part in the discussion. Ms. Samina Pervaiz conveyed her satisfaction over completion of an active and successful collaboration between the UN Information Centre and the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation.

Mr. Vittorio Cammarota commended the role of Radio Pakistan in disseminating the message of United Nations across the country in different languages. He said: “Effective delivery and broader outreach of the professionally produced programmes by Radio Pakistan has greatly helped in bridging the gap between the United Nations and the people of Pakistan.” He said that the United Nations is looking forward to continue its partnership with Radio Pakistan in future.
PTV World: panel discussion on HIV and AIDS

27 November 2014: As part of the activities of the commemoration of World Aids Day 2014, a HIV Awareness Programme was aired on PTV World. Panelists including Dr. Abdul Baseer Khan Achakzai, National Programme Manager, National AIDS Control Programme, Ms. Mussarat Jabeen, Counsellor, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, Mr. Sajjad Akbar, CEO, AMAL Human Development Network, Dr. Sareer Ara, Board Member, AMAL Human Development Network, Dr. Rajwal Khan, Strategic Information Advisor, UNAIDS. They discussed the AIDS epidemic and shared recommendations for “Closing The Gap” between people who have access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services and people who are being left behind.

Geo TV: Awareness on HIV

1 December 2014: A brief HIV awareness talk was on aired on 1st of December 2014 where Fahmida Iqbal, Country Community Mobilization and Networking Advisor, UNAIDS talked about the misconceptions and myths associated with HIV and AIDS. She stressed on raising awareness about HIV and giving up discriminatory attitude towards people with HIV.

PTV World: talk show on World Aids Day, 2014

4 December 2014: Mr. Marc Saba, UNAIDS Country Director for Pakistan and Afghanistan and Mr. Asghar Satti, National Coordinator for the Association of People Living with HIV participated in a live show on PTV World. They shared their views about the HIV epidemic and its spread in Pakistan. They talked about the challenges the HIV community is facing and suggested how different partners in society can play their role in addressing these challenges.

BBC Urdu: radio programme on HIV, transmission and prevention

1 December 2014: Ms. Fahmida Iqbal, Country Community Mobilization and Networking Advisor, UNAIDS participated in a BBC Urdu programme and shared information about basic mode of HIV transmission and the ways to prevent transmitting the virus. She also mentioned the psycho-social issues faced by people living with HIV in Pakistani society.
Ensuring the goal of UN security management system

The visit of Mr. Peter Thomas Drennan, USG UNDSS, to Pakistan was held between 1-4 December 2014, wherein the program provided an opportunity to the USG to meet the UN Designated Official, the Security Management Team, UNDSS personnel, Security Cell, alongside with senior officials from Government of Pakistan.

During the meeting with the senior officials of the host government, the USG thanked and voiced appreciation to the Government for all the support provided to ensure safety and security of UN personnel as well as NGO partners.

Likewise, the USG expressed his appreciation for the work provided in ensuring the safety and security of staff and programme delivery. The USG mentioned that under Framework of Accountability, all Heads of Agencies now have hands on responsibility and accountability for safety and security of their own agency staff as well as other UN staff and also a ‘duty of care’ for their respective Implementing Partners.

The Chief Security Advisor briefed the USG about the strategic intent of UNDSS Pakistan, wherein focus is on security culture, decentralized security risk management with delegated authority, full spectrum of alternate work modalities, appropriate balance between programme and security imperatives, and working closely with agencies and diplomatic/international community to ensure safety, security and well being of all UN personnel in the country.
As the world rightly copes with infectious diseases such as influenza, malaria and, especially recently, the Ebola virus, World Diabetes Day is a reminder that non-communicable diseases pose an even greater threat to human health.

Diabetes affects more than 350 million people in the world. Many will suffer from its debilitating complications and die prematurely. Cardiovascular disease kills half of all people with diabetes, which is among the leading causes of kidney failure.

This year, World Diabetes Day focuses on healthy eating as an important component of both preventing and treating diabetes. Healthy eating and regular exercise can prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes and are important in managing all types of diabetes.

Let us make World Diabetes Day meaningful by committing to practicing healthy living ourselves and making it possible for others to do the same.
World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims 16 November 2014

I am continually inspired by the potential of youth to transform society. The World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims is a sobering reminder that crashes are the leading cause of death for people 15 to 29 years old. Road traffic crashes also claim many younger victims, with more than 500 children killed each day as they travel to and from school, playgrounds and the homes of family and friends. Millions of other people of all ages are seriously injured. This Day is about compassion and prevention. We mourn those who have perished on the roads. We console grieving families and friends. We raise awareness of the economic hardship so often faced by the bereaved.

Working with partners, the United Nations is carrying out a number of initiatives, including preparing to convene the Second Global High-Level Conference on Road Safety to be hosted by Brazil in November 2015. On this World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, let us re-commit to making roads that are safe for all.

World Toilet Day 19 November 2014

One out of three women around the world lack access to safe toilets. As a result they face disease, shame and potential violence when they seek a place to defecate.

A staggering 1.25 billion women and girls would enjoy greater health and increased safety with improved sanitation. Evidence also shows safe and clean toilets encourage girls to stay in school. We have a moral imperative to end open defecation and a duty to ensure women and girls are not at risk of assault and rape simply because they lack a sanitation facility. That is why the theme for this year’s World Toilet Day focuses on “Equality, Dignity and the Link Between Gender-Based Violence and Sanitation.”

On World Toilet Day let us spare no effort to bring equality, dignity and safety to women and girls around the world.

Universal Children’s Day 20 November 2014

The one thing all children have in common is their rights. Every child has the right to survive and thrive, to be educated, to be free from violence and abuse, to participate and to be heard. But until 1989, these rights were not formally articulated in a legally binding instrument, nor were governments fully accountable to advance these rights for every child. This all changed 25 years ago, on Universal Children’s Day, when the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It rapidly became the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history.

We cannot say that the rights of all children are fulfilled when, despite our progress, some 6.3 million children under 5 years of age died in 2013, mostly from preventable causes; when 168 million children aged 5 to 17 were engaged in child labour in 2012; when 11 per cent of girls are married before they turn 15.

To make the vision of the Convention a reality for every child will require innovative solutions, a major increase in resources, and political will to invest in children and put their wellbeing at the centre of the political, economic and social agenda.
International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women 25 November 2014

Sexual and gender-based violence is the most extreme form of the global and systemic inequality experienced by women and girls. It knows no geographic, socio-economic or cultural boundaries. Worldwide, one in three women will suffer physical or sexual violence at some point in her life, from rape and domestic violence to harassment at work and bullying on the internet.

This year alone, more than 200 girls have been kidnapped in Nigeria; we have seen graphic testimony from Iraqi women of rape and sexual slavery during conflict; two Indian schoolgirls were raped, killed and hung from a tree; and in the United States, there have been high-profile cases of sexual violence on sports teams and university campuses.

Women and girls experience violence in all countries and neighbourhoods but these crimes often remain unreported and hidden. We must end the silence. That is why this year's International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women is centred on a grassroots effort to raise awareness called Orange Your Neighbourhood. Around the United Nations in New York, the Secretariat building and the Empire State Building will be lit orange, and many other events are planned across the world and on social media. We all have a role to play, and I urge you to play yours. If we stand together in homes, communities, countries and internationally, we can challenge discrimination and impunity and put a stop to the mindsets and customs that encourage, ignore or tolerate the global disgrace of violence against women and girls.

World AIDS Day 1 December 2014

On this World AIDS Day, I welcome the tremendous progress the world is making in responding to the AIDS epidemic. This year, world leaders made a commitment to end AIDS by 2030. The Fast Track approach launched last week will enable us to reach this goal.

Almost 14 million people worldwide are now accessing HIV treatment. We have reduced new HIV infections by 38 per cent since 2001. We have prevented 1.16 million infections among newborn babies by providing essential antiretroviral medicines. We are on track to provide antiretroviral therapy to 15 million people by 2015 and to eliminate mother-to-child transmissions within the next few years. Thanks to the dedication and energy of many partners including those in civil society, we continue to tackle and remove laws that stigmatise and discriminate. Progress is accelerating. But the gains remain fragile. There are 35 million people living with HIV today, and some 19 million of them do not know they have the virus. There are important gaps in our response to key groups of people. Two out of three children who need treatment do not get it. Young women are particularly vulnerable in many countries with high HIV prevalence. The AIDS epidemic is increasing in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East, fuelled by stigma, discrimination and punitive laws. And the essential work of community systems and support organisations often lacks support. We must leave no one behind.

On this World AIDS Day, I call on world leaders to unite in our common cause. We have started to turn the tide. We have set a bold target. Let us end AIDS together by 2030.
International Day for the Abolition of Slavery 2 December 2014

The United Nations estimates that there are more than 18 million people kept as slave labourers. Each day, women are trafficked, sold and locked in brothels. Every day, young girls are forcibly married, sexually abused or exploited as domestic workers. Twenty-five years after the adoption of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, boys and girls are still working in appalling conditions. Men, separated from their families, are still being locked in clandestine factories, working in situations of bonded labour with negligible wages and remote chances of ever repaying their debts.

I urge Member States, businesses, foundations and other donors to support the UN Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery so that civil society can carry out essential projects for the rehabilitation and redress of victims. We also need clear-sighted strategies, strong national legislation and a commitment to coordinate the fight against this crime. I urge all States to ratify and implement the relevant instruments of international law -- in particular the new Protocol drawn up by the International Labour Organisation, which is designed to strengthen global efforts to eliminate forced labour.

Together, let us do our utmost for the millions of victims throughout the world who are held in slavery and deprived of their human rights and dignity.

World Soil Day and the Launch of the International Year of Soils 5 December 2014

Today marks the first observance of World Soil Day and the launch of the International Year of Soils (2015). Soil is also the largest pool of organic carbon, which is essential for mitigating and adapting to climate change. In an era of water scarcity, soils are fundamental for its appropriate storage and distribution. However, soil degradation is a rapidly increasing problem in all parts of the world. Some 33 per cent of global soils are already degraded through urbanization. Soil erosion, nutrient depletion, salinity, aridification and contamination are additional threats.

I welcome the establishment of the Global Soil Partnership by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. FAO’s World Soil Charter recommends a number of key measures to encourage investment in sustainable soil management as a sound and affordable alternative to restoration and rehabilitation. On World Soil Day, let us pledge to do more to protect this important yet forgotten resource. A healthy life is not possible without healthy soils.

International Volunteer Day 5 December 2014

An ambulance rushes a wounded child to a hospital. A hungry family receives a warm meal. A battered woman finds free shelter. In scenes of human suffering around the world, hope comes thanks to volunteers who give their time, skills and resources to others in need.

International Volunteer Day is a chance to thank the many individuals who act with this spirit of giving, and to encourage others to follow their example.

When an earthquake destroys homes, volunteers prove that human solidarity is shatterproof. When looters aim for cultural property, volunteers safeguard community treasures. When development is lagging, volunteers help enable people to lift themselves out of poverty. I also pay special tribute to the many volunteers responding to the Ebola crisis. UN volunteers and their counterparts are helping to address the outbreak through prevention, awareness-raising and treatment activities.

On this International Volunteer Day, let us be inspired by the many individuals who selflessly serve others, and let us resolve to do our part to contribute, freely and proactively, to change conditions now towards a better future for all.
International Anti-Corruption Day 9 December 2014

Corruption is a global phenomenon that strikes hardest at the poor, hinders inclusive economic growth and robs essential services of badly needed funds. From cradle to grave, millions are touched by corruption’s shadow.

On this year’s observance of the International Anti-Corruption Day, we call again on people everywhere to get involved in “Breaking the Corruption Chain”.

Next year the world will agree a new post-2015 sustainable development agenda. Our aim is to empower individuals and catalyse governments, the private sector and civil society to help lift millions out of poverty, protect the planet and achieve shared prosperity and dignity for all. Eliminating corruption and its harmful impacts will be crucial to our future well-being. I call on everyone to help end corruption, and come together for global fairness and equity. The world and its people can no longer afford, nor tolerate, corruption.

Human Rights Day 10 December 2014

On Human Rights Day we speak out. We denounce authorities who deny the rights of any person or group. We declare that human rights are for all of us, all the time: whoever we are and wherever we are from; no matter our class, our opinions, our sexual orientation. This is a matter of individual justice, social stability and global progress.

I call on States to honour their obligation to protect human rights every day of the year. I call on people to hold their governments to account. And I call for special protections for the human rights defenders who courageously serve our collective cause.

Let us respond to the cries of the exploited, and uphold the right to human dignity for all.

International Migrants Day 18 December 2014

On International Migrants Day, we call for the fulfilment and protection of the human rights of the world’s 232 million migrants.

Far too many migrants live and work in precarious and unjust conditions. Many risk their lives at sea, attempting to seek sanctuary. They and their children are extremely vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Many are deprived of their liberty, rather than met with empathy and necessary protection.

I call on all States to ratify and implement all core international human rights instruments, including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, as well as relevant instruments of international labour law. I also urge States to adopt comprehensive and human rights-based migration policies that promote legal migration channels.
This year’s observance of International Human Solidarity Day comes as the world shapes a new sustainable development agenda to succeed the Millennium Development Goals, the largest anti-poverty campaign in history, by 2015. Member States, the United Nations system, experts, representatives of civil society, business executives and millions of individuals from all corners of the globe, have come together with a shared sense of purpose to make the most of this once-in-a-generation opportunity. The new agenda will centre on people and planet. It will be underpinned by human rights and supported by a global partnership determined to lift people from poverty, hunger and disease. It will be built on a foundation of global cooperation and solidarity. On International Human Solidarity Day, I call for a renewed commitment to collective action. Let us act together as one to end poverty, achieve shared prosperity and peace, protect the planet and foster a life of dignity for all.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities 3 December 2014

This year’s International Day of Persons with Disabilities focuses on the theme, “sustainable development: the promise of technology”. Technology has changed the world, bringing knowledge within reach and expanding a range of opportunities. Persons with disabilities can benefit enormously from such advances, yet too many lack access to these essential tools. As the international community works to develop an ambitious and inspiring post-2015 development agenda that leaves no-one behind, we must harness the power of technology for development for all. Let us spare no effort to ensure that policies, programmes, guidelines and 21st century technologies are accessible to persons with disabilities, and sensitive to their perspectives and experiences. Together, let us work for a better future that is inclusive, equitable and sustainable for all.
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.