

Media Update

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UNODC

PRESS RELEASE

Strengthening LEAs response to COVID-19 in Pakistan

Islamabad – 23 Jul 2020: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Country Office Pakistan, in collaboration with the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) under the framework of Pakistan's Action to Counter Terrorism (PACT) project handed over 25,000 Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) kits to National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). These kits were procured with the generous financial support of the European Union. A ceremony was held at NDMA in which representatives from UNODC, EU and NACTA attended. Each kit includes a protective suite, KN-95 mask, latex gloves, face shield and a hand sanitizer in addition to a guideline note for its use.

With restrictions being eased across the country, there has been an increase in COVID-19 cases in the last few months which is posing challenges for the front-line responders including law enforcement agencies as they remain involved in both prevention and response through law and order duties, data collection, testing, tracing, and enforcing quarantine measures. Due to limited preventive gear and lack of awareness amongst Police officials in provinces we are witnessing an increase in number of confirmed cases and deaths amongst them.

As a response to COVID-19, UNODC prioritized support to the law enforcement agencies in the two provinces in agreement with NACTA and the EU. With the delivery these kits, UNODC would simultaneously launch a targeted awareness campaign to sensitize the law enforcement and criminal justice stakeholders on the risks and prevention measures against COVID-19 through printing of posters, delivery of information, education material for police stations, general public and courts, short animated videos and public service messages on social media platforms and radio stations.

In his opening remarks of the handover ceremony, Dr. Jeremy Milsom, UNODC Country Representative said that with the emergence of COVID-19 the law enforcement agencies in the country are facing unique health related challenges unlike ever before and we are pleased to have partnered with the EU and NACTA for delivering this meaningful support at this critical juncture. He also highlighted that UNODC has developed a comprehensive COVID-19 support policy document for Pakistan based on principles of partnership, inclusiveness, gender mainstreaming and promotion of human rights to ensure “no-one is left behind”.

Ms. Anne Marchal, European Union Chargé d’Affaires a.i., added that this action illustrates the EU support to Pakistan in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and its agility in repurposing on-going projects to meet the needs of the hour. In total, the EU has mobilized some 150 million Euros (26 billion PKR) to address the short and medium term response to the Pandemic in Pakistan, by strengthening the preparedness of Pakistan’s people for its social and economic impact, with a specific focus on the most vulnerable.

As a longstanding friend and partner of Pakistan, the European Union stands side by side with Pakistan as the country faces the extraordinary challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. The EU is convinced that the global pandemic requires global solidarity and cooperation.

Mr. Asif Saifullah Paracha, Member Policy, NACTA in his remarks acknowledged the value of today’s contribution and reiterated NACTA’s commitment in facilitating such support for law enforcement agencies in the future. He also lauded the efforts of NDMA in coordinating and delivering support across the country to overcome the challenges posed by COVID-19.

At the end of the handing over ceremony, Lieutenant General Muhammad Afzal, Chairman NDMA appreciated the support of EU and UNODC and highlighted upon the steps which NDMA is taking to curtail the spread of COVID-19 in the country in partnership with federal and provincial stakeholders. We are glad to receive the kits here today and without any delay NDMA would ensure delivery of these kits to identified recipients in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh.

In consultation with NACTA it was agreed to distribute 10,000 kits Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police, 7500 kits to Sindh Police, 2500 kits for the prosecution and judicial officials in Sindh while the remaining 5000 to NDMA.

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