

# Media Update-2

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## UN Women

PRESS RELEASE

### UN Women, NCSW launch Young Women in Pakistan: Status Report 2020

*Empowering young women key to Pakistan's sustainable social and economic development: Usman Dar*

ISLAMABAD (July 27, 2020): "Empowering young women is key to Pakistan's sustainable social and economic development," said Usman Dar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Youth Affairs, while addressing at the virtual launch of Young Women in Pakistan: Status Report 2020 as the chief guest here on Monday.

The report has been launched by UN Women Pakistan and the National Commission on the Status of Women with support from the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Pakistan. Center of Gender and Policy Studies (CGaPS) provided technical support in conducting research and compiling the report. The report seeks to address knowledge gaps by identifying needs, priorities and action for empowerment of young women, and support advocacy for increased investment in young women. It looks at the status of young women in Pakistan and shows how strategic investment will accelerate progress and actions to empower them.

"The report is a great initiative for all of us to understand the challenges young women face and seek advice for informed policies and actions to address those challenges. Our government is committed to empower youth, with special focus on young women, so that the targets of Sustainable Development Goals are achieved," said SAPM Dar while highlighting how government was determined to empower young women through a range of initiatives including Kamyab Jawan Programme, Youth Councils and Hunarmand Pakistan.

“We look forward to working in close collaboration with UN Women to ensure young women have equal access to skill development opportunities and resources,” Usman Dar said.

Khawar Mumtaz, Senior Researcher and Activist and former Chair NCSW, said, “Female youth in Pakistan has not received much policy attention and as citizens of tomorrow merit due place in policy discourse — a nation cannot hope to achieve its objectives by leaving large segment of its population behind. This report seeks to see where the issues are, as we need to have an analysis of issues first to find befitting solutions and develop frameworks to ensure young women unleash their full potential.”

Secretary NCSW Humera Azam Khan, in her remarks, said, “It is indeed a quintessential research report relevant to the present-day context, analytical in profile and insightful in its recommendations.” She thanked UN Women for supporting this very important initiative.

Earlier, Aisha Mukhtar, Country Representative a.i., UN Women Pakistan, in her opening remarks, said that Pakistan is a country with a youthful demographic profile. As a signatory to several international gender equality commitments including CEDAW and SDGs, Pakistan has a huge opportunity as well as an obligation to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment agenda and for that targeted investment in young women is critical to fully capitalize on Pakistan’s youth bulge. “In a world where youth leadership and activism are gaining importance, UN Women’s Generation Equality campaign provides a unique opportunity to youth activists and advocates in promoting a gender equal world,” Aisha Mukhtar said.

Country Representative a.i. UNDP Pakistan Aliona Niculita said, “The socioeconomic benefits of educated, healthy and empowered women are well documented but women in Pakistan are consistently at a disadvantage compared to men. The National Human Development Report of 2017 reveals that young women have very limited access to open spaces, engagement opportunities and have low labour force participation rate. Young women are in fact untapped potential of the country and we need to empower them to reduce deep-rooted inequalities which not only limit their participation in the society but also keep the country from prospering.”

Aida Orgocka, Technical Adviser UNFPA Pakistan, said, “Educating girls and getting women into the labour force will not translate into goals being met unless attention is paid to women’s reproductive health and rights and ending

harmful practices, especially child marriage.” She added that UNFPA is looking forward to making use of this report for evidence-based programming.

## Report Findings:

The analysis in this status report is done along three components, i.e., a) enabling environment that supports young women's economic empowerment, security, and rights through laws and policies and their reinforcement through institutions; b) enhanced economic opportunities that support young women's access to decent work, increased incomes, financial inclusion and entrepreneurship; and c) strengthening women's agency by supporting their access to decision making and their ability to address discriminatory social and cultural norms.

- According to the report, 48 percent of young women aged 15-24 are not in education, employment or training as compared to 7 percent men. Less than 2 percent young women own physical assets. Of all young women (married or unmarried), only 3 percent own agricultural land and 2 percent own a house.
- On decision making and empowerment, 24 percent young women made decisions about their education and employment, only 1 percent could decide on their marriage alone, while 16 percent are being consulted by the family. One fourth of young women need permission to seek healthcare, while another 71 percent do not want to visit a health facility alone. Less than one-third can decide about purchasing food and clothing. 49 percent of ever married employed women reported control over their cash earning, while only 9 percent have a say in how earning of spouse is used.
- 29 percent young women experience controlling behaviors by husbands, while 44 percent of young married women and men see no harm in wife beating. 15 percent of young women experienced physical and 4 percent experienced sexual non-spousal violence, while 14 percent of currently married young women reported physical and 4 percent reported sexual spousal violence in last 12 months.
- Only 23 percent survivors sought help and 16 percent just informed close friend or family but did not seek help. 3 percent of survivors informed the police, lawyer or other help mechanisms.

- The report highlights alarming figures on child marriage. Overall more than one-fourth (28 percent) girls are married before 18 years of age. 16 percent of the young women became mothers before the age of 18 years.
- The employment status of young women tells that only 6 percent own-account workers, work in agriculture and 9 percent in non-agriculture sectors, 32 percent are paid worker, and 52 percent young women are unpaid family workers.
- 61 percent young women work in agriculture forestry and fishing, 21 percent in manufacturing industry, and 16 percent in community, social and personal services. When we talk about employment by occupations, 11 percent work as professionals, 2 percent are services and sales workers, 52 percent skilled agricultural and fishery workers, 19 percent in craft and related trades, and 13 percent young women work in unskilled occupations. 68 percent young women – 2 in 3 – are part of vulnerable employments.
- 80 percent women work without contracts.
- 75 percent of young paid female workers are earning less than minimum wage. The median wages per month are PKR 7,000 for young women, and PKR 14,000 for young men.
- Wage gap between the wages of men and women is 80 percent, one of the highest, for skilled agriculture workers, 65 percent in manufacturing industry, and 17 percent for those with BA and above education.

The report findings suggest that there is overall limited access to knowledge and skill development opportunities for youth, especially young women. Youth concerns have not been translated into comprehensive policies as most of the policies are gender blind, lacking a clear strategy to address various issues around equal economic opportunities, social development, and political participation.

The report recommends integration of sectoral policies and programmes and removal of barriers in implementation of laws and policies on women rights; recognition and registration of agricultural workers, daily wagers and domestic workers, home based workers and self-employed females; inclusion of women's productive and reproductive work in labour force statistics; to ensure higher completion rates for secondary and tertiary education; support girls and

women to acquire non-conventional skills; focus on STEM fields; 33 percent women's seats in local government to promote entry of young leadership from the grassroots; 33 percent women on all public and private sector boards and women's quotas; and recognition of women 18 years and above as adults with full citizenship rights.

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