

# Media Update

12 August 2020



## United Nations Pakistan

PRESS RELEASE

### United Nations in Pakistan celebrate International Youth Day 2020

**Islamabad, 12 August 2020:** Today the United Nations in Pakistan commemorated International Youth Day by hosting an online seminar focusing on “Breaking Barriers for Meaningful Youth Engagement”. The event was attended by representatives of youth, the Government and development partners.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs, Mr. Usman Dar, said: *‘Youth form the biggest asset of the country and given the ongoing pandemic, they can play a crucial role in COVID response and recovery. To ensure their meaningful engagement, the Government has established Tiger Force to involve young people across Pakistan to fight against the coronavirus. Through their participation and hard work, we have been able to spread and reiterate SOPs across the country.’* He further added, *‘Our young people possess the energy and ability to contribute positively to the development of the nation. We just need to keep giving them the opportunities and right platforms.’*



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This year's theme, 'Youth Engagement for Global Action' highlights the ways in which the engagement of young people at the local, national and global levels can enrich national and multilateral institutions and processes.

Ignacio Artaza, Resident Representative, UNDP Pakistan, said, *'I am extremely happy to open today's session on behalf of the UN agencies in Pakistan who are working jointly to support the empowerment of youth and adolescents. It's indeed a pleasure to see several UN agencies, who have been working closely to support a joint UN engagement of youth and adolescents in the COVID response, coming together today to advocate for greater youth engagement.'*

The [United Nation's Youth 2030](#) strategy, which places young people at the center of the Development Agenda, is especially relevant in Pakistan, where more than two-thirds of the population is under the age of 30. With a decade remaining to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the participants stressed that it is a critical time to build momentum and invest in young people so that they can realize their capabilities to pursue gainful and decent employment, education opportunities, health and wellbeing, as well as civic and political empowerment. Meaningful youth engagement remains instrumental for development, in particular in view of the current COVID-19 crisis.

Recognizing the importance of meaningfully engaging with this demographic, several UN agencies in Pakistan including UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNESCO and UNDP have combined efforts to draft a Youth Engagement Strategy, which aims to educate and engage Pakistan's adolescents and young people to play a positive role in response to the coronavirus COVID-19.

The key highlights of the panel discussion were taken as action points by Government and the development organizations representatives. They will help address some of the barriers to meaningful youth engagement so that young people in Pakistan can have a greater say in their future.

The UN General Assembly designated 12 August as International Youth Day in 1999. It is an annual celebration of the role young women and men play as essential partners in promoting human rights and development.

**For additional information, please contact:**

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