

# Media Update

21 August 2020

## United Nations

SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

### THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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### MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY COMMEMORATING THE VICTIMS OF ACTS OF VIOLENCE BASED ON RELIGION OR BELIEF 22 August 2020

The right to freedom of religion or belief is firmly entrenched in international human rights law and is a cornerstone for inclusive, prosperous and peaceful societies.

Yet across the world, we continue to witness deep-seated discrimination against religious minorities, attacks on people and religious sites, and hate crimes and atrocity crimes targeting populations simply because of their religion or belief.

While societies have shown resilience and strength in the face of COVID-19, the pandemic has also been accompanied by a surge in stigma and racist discourse vilifying communities, spreading vile stereotypes and assigning blame.

As we commemorate the victims, we must do more to address the root causes of intolerance and discrimination by promoting inclusion and respect for diversity. We must also ensure that the perpetrators of these crimes are held accountable.

States have the primary responsibility to protect the right to freedom of religion and belief. I have also made this a priority through initiatives such as a Call to Action for Human Rights, a Strategy on Hate Speech and a Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites.

This extraordinary moment calls on all of us to work together as one human family to defeat a disease and put an end to hate and discrimination.

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# FAO

PRESS RELEASE

## **Inception workshop held to launch the “Transforming the Indus Basin with Climate Resilient Agriculture and Water Management” Project in Sindh and Punjab**

A two-day provincial inception workshop for the six-year ‘Transforming the Indus Basin with Climate Resilient Agriculture and Water Management’ project was held virtually in Sindh and Punjab provinces. The workshop provided a multi-stakeholder platform for an in-depth discussion on the proposed project implementation strategy, possible challenges and mechanisms for community engagement.

‘Transforming the Indus Basin with Climate Resilient Agriculture and Water Management’ project funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and co-financed by the provincial governments of Sindh and Punjab aims to increase resilience to climate change among the most vulnerable farmers in the Indus basin and to strengthen the Government of Pakistan’s capacity to support communities in adapting to climate change.

The project will help shift Pakistan and the Indus Basin agriculture from its current situation of high vulnerability towards an alternative paradigm wherein better information and farming practices will significantly increase resilience to climate change and economic improvements. To support this, the project will develop the country’s capacity to get and use the information it needs to cope with the impacts of climate change on agriculture and water management by putting in place state-of-the-art technology and innovation. About 1.3 million rural people (in 200 000 households) will directly benefit while another 16 million people (including 7.9 million women) may indirectly benefit from the project.

Jointly implemented by the federal Ministry of Climate Change, and the Governments of Sindh and Punjab and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the project will cover three district in Sindh including, Sanghar, Badin and Umerkot and five districts of Punjab including Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi Khan, Khanewal, Lodhran and Multan.

The inception workshop brought together officials from the Governments of Sindh and Punjab, development partners, research and academia, public and private institutions, UN agencies representatives, government line department and the civil society.

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## UNDP

### PRESS RELEASE

## UNDP Pakistan held the first ever virtual Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Incubation Liaison Conference 2020

**21 August, 2020, Peshawar**—Organised by UNDP Pakistan, the first ever virtual Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Incubation Liaison Conference (KP-ILC) 2020, concludes today. The main objective of the conference was to connect five public sector Business Incubation Centres (BICs) from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with each other, and with relevant stakeholders— for meaningful engagement, and cross-learning. As part of the initiative, Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) were signed between National Incubation Centre (NIC) Peshawar, and five public sector universities from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, namely— University of Haripur, Haripur; Institute of Management Sciences, Peshawar; University of Malakand, Malakand; UET, Peshawar and Abdul Wali Khan University of Mardan.

Along with young entrepreneurs from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Senior officials and representatives from the five public sector universities, NIC Peshawar, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board (KPITB) participated in the conference.

*“Our focus is primarily on youth employment and empowerment. The NIC Peshawar, Durshals and incubators in universities are working closely on promoting entrepreneurship for youth”,* said Mr Zia Ullah Khan Bangash, Advisor to Chief Minister on Science and Information Technology, while

speaking on the occasion. *“The Prime Minister’s Kamyab Jawan programme is playing a vital role in serving as a strong launchpad for start-ups and new ventures.”*

*“Pakistan is one of the youngest countries in the world today with over two-thirds of its population below the age of 30”, said Laura Sheridan, Programme Specialist, who is heading the Youth Empowerment Programme (YEP) at UNDP Pakistan. “Harnessing and catalyzing the excluded youth's potential is necessary through employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. The young entrepreneurs from different universities in Pakistan form an integral part of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Their energy and their ideas need to be fostered as they will be the business leaders of tomorrow. Cross pollination of startups and of the incubators that host them is vital to the growth of the startup ecosystem.”*

A panel discussion “Future and sustainability of incubators” was also organised in which representatives from KPITB, UNDP and NIC participated along with the Vice Chancellors of public universities present. The conversation focused on the role of incubators in the national economy, the culture of entrepreneurship in universities, best practices of incubators, and the impact and sustainability of this initiative. The role of incubators and their effectiveness was discussed in great detail. All of the members agreed that supporting and nurturing the budding incubation and entrepreneurial culture and ecosystem is essential for sustainable development.

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