

Media Update

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UNICEF

PRESS RELEASE

UNICEF Hands Over ADB Funded Oxygen Concentrators to the Government

Islamabad, 5 February 2021 – Funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), 220 Oxygen Concentrators worth \$331,000 were handed over by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (MoNHS,R&C), in Islamabad yesterday.

An Oxygen Concentrator is a life-saving device used for treating patients suffering from coronavirus infection, birth asphyxia and complicated pneumonia. Recently procured Oxygen Concentrator have been shipped to seven major cities in the country including Islamabad, to be installed in public health facilities.

“Our nationally coordinated efforts have indeed helped Pakistan to effectively tackle the Pandemic so far. I am thankful to all stakeholders and partners including ADB and UNICEF who joined hands been since the pandemic landed in Pakistan,” said Dr. Rana Muhammad Safdar, Director General (Health), MoNHS,R&C. “We are vigilantly monitoring the evolving disease patterns as well as our health systems capacity and have mechanisms in place to best use the available resources for the purpose. Oxygen Concentrators shall upbuild the capacity of our health facilities to effectively manage moderately symptomatic patients close to their place of residence and thus help in reducing load on major hospitals.

In addition to the initial grant of \$500,000 which has been utilized for acquiring Personal Protective Equipment and Oxygen Concentrators, ADB has also provided an additional \$20,00,000 to help Pakistan strengthen its efforts to

combat COVID-19 pandemic. These funds will be used to acquire life-saving medical supplies, diagnostic and laboratory facilities, and other critical equipment for communities affected by the pandemic.

“Since the outbreak of COVID-19, ADB moved swiftly to support the people and the government of Pakistan in responding to the challenge,” said ADB Country Director Xiaohong Yang. “The provision of oxygen concentrators to health centers across the country will help save lives and support the poor and vulnerable, who are particularly dependent on public sector health facilities. We will continue to work closely with UNICEF and other development partners to help Pakistan overcome the challenges.”

Since the outbreak of COVID19 in Pakistan, ADB and UNICEF have been collaborating to support the MoNHS,R&C by providing funds and technical assistance in procurement of PPEs and other medical supplies to counter the spread of coronavirus in the country.

“Funds from ADB have helped us provide the most needed assistance to the Government of Pakistan in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Aida Girma, UNICEF Representative in Pakistan. “Realising the importance of Oxygen Concentrators as lifesaving devices, UNICEF had earlier provided 525 Oxygen Concentrators worth over \$1 million to the MoNHS,R&C.”

“As the largest single vaccine buyer in the world, UNICEF has a unique and longstanding expertise in procurement and logistics. Besides procurement of PPE, UNICEF and its COVAX partners – Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, WHO and CEPI – are now procuring COVID-19 vaccine doses as the largest vaccine procurement and supply operation in world history. We are determined to work with EPI and MoNHSRC to quickly acquire adequate COVID-19 vaccine for people on Pakistan and roll out inoculation to priority populations in phased manner, said UNICEF Chief”

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