

Media Update-2

8 March 2021

FAO

PRESS RELEASE

Food Systems and Women in Leadership: International Women's Day 2021

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations organized a webinar to mark the International Women's Day; addressing food systems and women in leadership while achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world. The event was attended by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Chairperson of Benazir Income Support Program, Dr. Sania Nishtar and speakers from WFP, IFAD, UN Women, Japan International Cooperation Agency, CIMMYT, Foreign Commonwealth Development Office and Pakistan Agriculture Research Council.

Food systems are gaining importance globally and in Pakistan, especially with the upcoming Global Food Systems Summit during this year. Transforming our food systems is central to our efforts for achieving Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the fragility and inequalities of our food system, which is affecting women and girls.

Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, in her keynote address presented the Ehsaas program vision which is benefiting millions across the country with special focus on women and girls. She said that more than 50% Ehsaas programs are benefiting women and girls. A new initiative is also approved under Ehsaas to give graduation stipends to girls who graduate from fifth grade which aims at improving retention of girls in schools. Talking about Ehsaas ecosystem and how it deals with agriculture and food systems, she stated that the Ehsaas policy framework and strategy explicitly recognizes the work of rural women involved in agriculture. There are specific welfare initiatives to improve the livelihoods of tenant farmers. There is another policy

under the Ehsaas framework that aims to build agriculture value chain that was prepared in consultation with FAO, she said.

FAO Representative a.i in Pakistan stated that communities within food systems are critical to global development and development within Pakistan. Financial equality, equality of empowerment, equality of opportunity and the equality of the right to benefit from the outputs of food systems is necessary for development impact and achievement of the SDGs. She further stated that 2021 is the year of transformation and we need collective efforts to empower women socially, financially, economically and nutritionally. We need support to throughout this year to champion women's role in food systems within the country and globally as well, she said.

FAO together with partners is marking the International Women's Day by highlighting the role of rural women in agriculture Sector in Pakistan, the systems set in place that support them, and the policy work that needs to be done to ensure implementation of policies and reforms.

For queries, please contact at Seema.Ghazi@fao.org

FAO

PRESS RELEASE

Japan International Cooperation Agency and FAO join hands to enhance food and nutrition security of locust-affected smallholder farmers and control operations

ISLAMABAD 08 March 2021: Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has announced a contribution of USD 1.3 million to work by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to not only support pest control operations but also enhance the food and nutrition security of locust-affected smallholder farmers.

The announcement was made at a ceremony held in Islamabad. JICA Chief Representative in Pakistan, Furutu Shigeki, and ad interim Food and

Agriculture Organization (FAO) Representative, Rebekah Bell, signed the project agreement.

To support the livelihoods of desert locust-affected farming communities and enhance the food security of smallholder farmers' households, the project will work in Kharan district in Balochistan and Umerkot district of Sindh province. These districts were identified based on consultation with provincial agriculture departments and findings of Food Security and Livelihood Assessments.

This 13-month project will focus on enhancing food and nutrition security of vulnerable rural households with pregnant and lactating women through an integrated approach, which seeks to increase the quantity, quality and diversity of household food production, and includes an experiential nutrition education programme. About 18,370 people will directly benefit.

Meanwhile, locust surveillance and control activities will focus on building the capacity of the Department of Plant Protection to help it identify and control future locust outbreaks.

“As have East Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, Pakistan too has suffered the damage caused by desert locust swarms. JICA recognizes the need for immediate assistance to Pakistan and implemented an emergency support to livelihoods of farmers affected by locust in October last year. In order to continue its assistance, JICA endeavors to restore livelihood support for farmers. We expect to strengthen locust control capacity and resilience in the medium to long term and the collaboration with FAO will contribute to achieving that goal,” said Furutu Shigeki.

JICA is currently promoting cooperation with development partners, and this project will further strengthen the FAO-JICA Memorandum of Cooperation, which was concluded in 2017. JICA is currently implementing agricultural and livestock technical cooperation project in Balochistan and Sindh provinces. Also, JICA has funded an agriculture and livelihood project being implemented by FAO in ex-FATA (Federally Administrated Tribal Areas) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. JICA intends to continue its work with FAO and other development partners to contribute to the development of the Pakistani agricultural sector by taking the best of its strengths.

Thanking JICA for its financial assistance and long-term partnership, FAO Representative a.i in Pakistan, Rebekah Bell said: "Through our collaboration with the governments of Balochistan and Sindh, this project will make a

significant contribution to address food and nutrition insecurity of vulnerable rural households. Our research suggests that by increasing the quantity, quality and diversity of household food production that families are able to consume a healthier diet that will hopefully, in the longer term, contribute to the prevention of child stunting and wasting and improved food security. FAO has remained at the forefront of support to the Government of Pakistan in combating the desert locust invasion and strengthening the capabilities and capacities of institutions in desert locust surveillance and control operations.”

For queries, please contact at Seema.Ghazi@fao.org

UNICEF

PRESS RELEASE

10 million additional girls at risk of child marriage due to COVID-19 – UNICEF

With 25 million child marriages averted in the last decade, UNICEF issues warning on International Women’s Day that these gains are now under serious threat

Photos and video available to download [here](#)

NEW YORK, 8 March 2021 – Ten million additional child marriages may occur before the end of the decade, threatening years of progress in reducing the practice, according to a new analysis released by UNICEF today.

[COVID-19: A threat to progress against child marriage](#) – released on International Women’s Day – warns that school closures, economic stress, service disruptions, pregnancy, and parental deaths due to the pandemic are putting the most vulnerable girls at increased risk of child marriage.

Even before the COVID-19 outbreak, 100 million girls were at risk of child marriage in the next decade, despite significant reductions in several countries in recent years. In the last ten years, the proportion of young women globally who were married as children had decreased by 15 per cent, from nearly 1 in

4 to 1 in 5, the equivalent of some 25 million marriages averted, a gain that is now under threat.

“COVID-19 has made an already difficult situation for millions of girls even worse. Shuttered schools, isolation from friends and support networks, and rising poverty have added fuel to a fire the world was already struggling to put out. But we can and we must extinguish child marriage,” said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore. “International Women’s Day is a key moment to remind ourselves of what these girls have to lose if we do not act urgently – their education, their health, and their futures.”

Girls who marry in childhood face immediate and lifelong consequences. They are more likely to experience domestic violence and less likely to remain in school. Child marriage increases the risk of early and unplanned pregnancy, in turn increasing the risk of maternal complications and mortality. The practice can also isolate girls from family and friends and exclude them from participating in their communities, taking a heavy toll on their mental health and well-being.

COVID-19 is profoundly affecting the lives of girls. Pandemic-related travel restrictions and physical distancing make it difficult for girls to access the health care, social services and community support that protect them from child marriage, unwanted pregnancy and gender-based violence. As schools remain closed, girls are more likely to drop out of education and not return. Job losses and increased economic insecurity may also force families to marry their daughters to ease financial burdens.

Worldwide, an estimated 650 million girls and women alive today were married in childhood, with about half of those occurring in Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, India and Nigeria. To off-set the impacts of COVID-19 and end the practice by 2030 – the target set out in the Sustainable Development Goals – progress must be significantly accelerated.

“One year into the pandemic, immediate action is needed to mitigate the toll on girls and their families,” added Fore. “By reopening schools, implementing effective laws and policies, ensuring access to health and social services – including sexual and reproductive health services – and providing comprehensive social protection measures for families, we can significantly reduce a girl’s risk of having her childhood stolen through child marriage.”

#####

Notes to Editors

The projections presented are the result of a statistical model that is built on existing information on the rates and demographics of child marriage, as well as historical information on the effects of educational disruption, economic shocks, and programme efficacy in countries where most child marriages worldwide occur. For further details on the data, see the technical notes in the report [here](#).

For further information, please contact:

Helen Wylie, UNICEF New York, Tel: +1 917 244 2215, hwylie@unicef.org

About UNICEF

UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places, to reach the world's most disadvantaged children. Across more than 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone.

For more information about UNICEF and its work for children visit www.unicef.org

Follow UNICEF on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#)

UNODC

PRESS RELEASE

Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Ghada Waly:

Message for International Women's Day
8 March 2021

KYOTO, 8 March (UN Information Service) – To achieve justice for women, we need more women in justice.

Increases in women’s representation and leadership in law enforcement and the judiciary have been linked to more investigations into crimes against women, better policing outcomes, and successful victim-centred approaches. They have also enabled systemic changes, including lower rates of violence, and greater integrity through diversity, which is key to disrupting corrupt practices.

These are major victories for public trust and effective institutions. When women lead, we all win.

But around the world, women are outnumbered by men in the justice and security sectors, accounting for as little as 6 per cent of law enforcement officers in some regions.

The COVID pandemic has shown us that entrenched inequalities make our societies more vulnerable in a crisis.

It is time for a reset. We need to empower more women to lead.

In the UN Crime Congress Kyoto Declaration, governments have pledged to remove impediments to the advancement of women within criminal justice systems.

To put this commitment into action, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime is working with women judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officers in close to 60 countries, helping build networks of women professionals and supporting their growth.

We provide targeted training and mentoring to the next generation of women leaders in criminal justice institutions.

UNODC also assists Member States in addressing challenges that are holding women and girls back, from gender-based violence and human trafficking risks, to a lack of access to drug use prevention and treatment. We promote gender-responsive approaches in tackling organized crime and corruption, preventing terrorism, and ensuring the rights and rehabilitation of people in prison.

Within our own Office, I am proud that we achieved overall gender parity last year, and are working towards parity at all staff levels, in line with my personal commitment as an International Gender Champion.

On International Women's Day, I stand with women, and fight for women, so they can rise and lead in all areas, to build forward from the COVID crisis, for justice, and a fairer future for all.

* * * * *

For further information please contact:

Sonya Yee

Speechwriter and Spokesperson, UNODC

Mobile: (+43-699) 1459-4990

Email: [sonya.yee\[at\]un.org](mailto:sonya.yee[at]un.org)

END

For further information or media enquiries please contact:

Ms Rizwana Rahool

Communication Officer

Telephone: +92-301-8564255

Fax: + 92-51-2601469

Email: rizwana.asad@unodc.org

WFP

PRESS RELEASE

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME AND THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Lasbela, Balochistan – To celebrate the International Women's Day, WFP, in partnership with the Government, is organizing more than 20 events across Pakistan under this year's theme, Women in Leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world.

In Balochistan, in collaboration with the government, partners and communities, WFP has been supporting the most vulnerable people to get through the pandemic. In districts Lasbela and Panjgur, WFP has assisted 6,987 vulnerable households, out of which 4,937 households have received Rs. 7,500 per month for six months under the unconditional cash transfer programme; and 2,050 households have received an essential food basket. The support has helped poor households, especially women and children, meet the basic food and nutritional needs.

During a visit to projects in Lasbela District, WFP Country Director Chris Kaye observed; “Hunger and malnutrition is on the rise across the world as COVID-19 is compounding vulnerability of the most marginalized. The situation in Pakistan is no different and it is women who are disproportionately affected and are expected to carry the burden. In 2020, WFP assisted 2 million Pakistani people suffering from hunger and malnutrition, 55% of whom were women/girls.”

Addressing the frontline female health workers at the site a newly established Nashonuma Facilitation Centre at Jam Ghulam Qadir Government Hospital Hub Lasbela in Balochistan, the WFP Country Director applauded the tireless efforts of the female doctors and nurses in the COVID-19 pandemic response. “The contributions made by frontline health workers have been instrumental in the country’s fight against the pandemic. While serving their communities, they put their own health and wellbeing at risk. This Women’s Day, let’s recognize their sacrifices and applaud their dedication and achievements” he declared.

As the implementing partner for the Government’s Ehsaas Stunting Prevention Project, WFP is supporting the establishment of Nashonuma Facilitation Centers to help combat chronic malnutrition (stunting) in women and children. By the end of February 2021, 50 facilitation centers will be operational across 10 districts in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK), Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Punjab. The centers will provide pregnant and lactating women training on breast feeding, hygiene practices, immunization, antenatal/postnatal care and the importance of diversified and nutritious diets. The woman will receive locally produced specialized nutritious food to boost the nutritional status for themselves and for their babies.

The WFP team also met with the local women beneficiaries in Uthal Village in district Lasbela. The women spoke about how WFP’s assistance had helped them overcome the burden caused by COVID-19 and enabled them to access the food needed to support their families.

Supporting women is essential element in the fight against hunger and poverty. When women and girls have better access to education, information, resources, services, decision-making and economic opportunities, the result is increased food security and improved nutrition for themselves, their families, their communities and their country. WFP is committed to playing a role in promoting equal and meaningful participation of women in decision-making processes at all levels.

The United Nations World Food Programme is the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. We are the world's largest humanitarian organization, saving lives in emergencies and using food assistance to build a pathway to peace, stability and prosperity for people recovering from conflict, disasters and the impact of climate change.

Follow us on Twitter @WFPPakistan

For more information, please contact:

Ms. Mahira Afzal, WFP Communications Officer. Islamabad, Mobile: +92 345 8559333, mahira.afzal@wfp.org