

Media Update

21 May 2021

United Nations

SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY
FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

22 May 2021

A healthy planet is critical for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Yet biodiversity is declining at an unprecedented and alarming rate, and the pressures are intensifying.

We are depleting resources faster than nature can replenish them.

COVID-19 has further reminded us of the intimate relationship between people and nature.

The current crisis provides an opportunity to recover better.

We need to protect nature, restore ecosystems and establish a balance in our relationship with the planet.

The rewards will be tremendous.

By reversing biodiversity loss, we can improve human health, realize sustainable development and address the climate emergency.

Solutions exist to protect our planet's genetic diversity on land and at sea.

Everybody has a part to play.

Sustainable lifestyle choices are the key.

The choice to live sustainably must be made available to everyone, everywhere.

That means better policies that promote government, business and individual accountability.

We all need to be part of a movement for change.

This year, governments will meet in Kunming, China, to agree on an ambitious new global framework for biodiversity.

Let us support their mission by advocating for nature.

On this International Day for Biodiversity, let us all be part of the solution.

[END]

Video Link:

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<https://s3.amazonaws.com/downloads2.unmultimedia.org/public/video/evergreen/MSG+SG+/SG+Intl+Biodiversity+Day+10+May+21+/MSG+SG+Intl+Biodiversity+Day+10+May+21+CLEAN.mp4>

Audio file mp3,

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/downloads2.unmultimedia.org/public/video/evergreen/MSG+SG+/SG+Intl+Biodiversity+Day+10+May+21+/MSG+SG+Intl+Biodiversity+Day+10+May+21+audio.mp3>

English sub-title,

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/downloads2.unmultimedia.org/public/video/evergreen/MSG+SG+/SG+Intl+Biodiversity+Day+10+May+21+/MSG+SG+Intl+Biodiversity+Day+10+May+21+EN.mp4>

ILO

PRESS RELEASE

Launch of the Mazdoor Ka Ehsaas report- A social protection programme for workers in the informal economy

The Ehsaas Delivery Unit at the Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division and the ILO have jointly organised a webinar on May 1st, 2021 for the launch of MKE Report. The purpose of the webinar is to share steps taken for the actualisation of the MKE initiative and discuss its key recommendations.

ISLAMABAD (ILO News): Labour Day (May 1st, 2021) saw the launch of the Mazdoor Ka Ehsaas (MKE) report. MKE is among the 268 priority areas of Pakistan's largest poverty alleviation programme (EHSAAAS) launched by the Prime Minister of Pakistan in 2019.

Mazdoor Ka Ehsaas translated as "compassion for workers" was formulated by a Tripartite Labour Welfare and Social Protection Expert Group (LWSPEG) supported technically by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and co-chaired by Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division (PASSD) and Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and HRD (MoOPHRD). The LWSPEG was established in May 2019.

For the launch of the MKE report, the Ehsaas Delivery Unit at the PASSD jointly with the ILO organised a webinar on May 1st, 2021 during which steps taken for the actualisation of the MKE initiative were shared as well as its key recommendations.

The launch featured opening addresses from Senator Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to PM (SAPM) on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety (PA&SS) and Mr Zulfiqar Bukhari, Special Assistant to PM on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (SAPM-OPHRD).

Dr Sania Nishtar, SAPM (PA&SS) applauded the efforts of the contributors and the rich insights of experts that made the MKE report a possibility.

Mr Zulfiqar Bukhari, SAPM (OPHRD) shared the initiatives taken to expand social security within the formal sector and others innovative approaches through which further extension is being carried out to cover those working in the informal economy.

Ms Ingrid Christensen, Country Director, ILO said that the EHSAAAS programme launched in 2019 was a promise and a commitment of the Government towards social protection for all. The Mazdoor Ka Ehsaas is an important initiative that will require collaboration of tripartite stakeholders including Government at all tiers and Workers and Employers Representative organisations.

Ms Mariko Ouchi, Senior Social Security Specialist, ILO DWT, New Delhi, stressed on the need for coverage to be extended to workers in the informal and formal economy. She shared examples from other countries such as Tunisia, Ecuador and Bolivia where agricultural workers, self-employed workers and others have been brought into the ambit of social security through own contribution and cross subsidization of general insurance schemes.

Dr Aliya Khan, Labour economist and also the Chairperson of the MKE Core Group, referred to the recommendations of the MKE report on creating fiscal space. She said this could be done through a number of tools/packages including contributory schemes, creation of social insurance fund and contribution from expatriates and Pakistani diaspora. She also mentioned that the MKE report recommended the design of a communication and advocacy strategy to mobilise resources and expertise.

Ms Melis U. Guven, Senior. Social Protection Economist, shared that during the pandemic, \$600 million financing for the Crisis-Resilient Social Protection Program (CRISP), was approved by the World Bank. She said that it was aimed to support Pakistan to expand EHSAAAS, and to protect vulnerable households in increasing their resilience to economic shocks. She also stressed that two shifts are necessary; universal coverage and responsive social protection systems.

Ms Alia Shahid, Joint Secretary Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and HRD commented on the importance of interprovincial coordination among social security institutions. She said legislative, administrative reforms and institutional strengthening will guarantee the success of the vision towards universal social security.

Mr. Zahoor Awan, Chairman - Steering Committee, Pakistan Workers Federation said that a large number of workers are excluded from social security with in the formal sector owing to the nature of their contracts. Unless third party contractual workers are not brought into the remit of social security the coverage will remain low.

Mr. Fasih Karim Siddiqi, Senior Advisor, Employers Federation of Pakistan suggested that a possible way to gradually expand to universal coverage is to expand provision of benefits from most critical to a larger range; it can start with health benefits, injury benefits and pension . These Small measures can ensure welfare of workers and economic competitiveness of private sector

Concluding the event, Dr Lubna Shahnaz, representative LWSPEG, thanked the participants, and acknowledged the commitments of the PASS Division and the MoOPHRD in taking the MKE programme forward.

The webinar was financially and technically assisted under the Project, 'Achieving SDGs and Ending Poverty through Universal Social Protection', supported under the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund by the Government of China and jointly implemented by UNDESA and the ILO.

UNICEF-WHO

PRESS RELEASE

Joint Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore and WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes

NEW YORK/GENEVA, 21 May 2021 – “In 1981, health officials from around the world gathered at the World Health Assembly to address aggressive marketing tactics by the infant and young child feeding industry, which was promoting formula feeding over breastfeeding and causing a dramatic

increase in infant morbidity and mortality. The result was the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (the Code), a landmark policy framework designed to stop commercial interests from damaging breastfeeding rates and endangering the health and nutrition of the world's youngest inhabitants.

“In the last four decades, there has been a 50 per cent increase in the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding. As a result, an estimated 900 million infants globally have enjoyed the survival, growth and development benefits of exclusive breastfeeding in infancy.

“Breastfeeding is vital to a child’s lifelong nutrition, health, and wellbeing. It reduces costs for families, health facilities, and governments. Breastfeeding protects children from infections and saves lives. It supports emotional bonding between mothers and babies, along with other mental health benefits.

“Yet aggressive marketing of breastmilk substitutes continues to discourage women from breastfeeding, putting both children’s and women’s health at risk.

“The 40th anniversary of the adoption the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes is an opportunity to mark the significant progress made in protecting and promoting the incomparable benefits of breastfeeding, but also a reminder of the work still to be done.

“A majority of countries have enacted legislation to implement at least some provisions of the Code. But unfortunately, only 25 countries have implemented measures that are substantially aligned with the Code.

“The Code remains as relevant today as it was 40 years ago. Last year, some marketers of baby foods exploited the COVID-19 pandemic to promote their products by invoking unfounded fears that breastfeeding could transmit COVID-19. WHO and UNICEF guidance is clear: mothers suspected or known to have COVID-19 should continue breastfeeding.

“On the 40th anniversary of the Code, UNICEF and WHO call on governments, health workers, and the baby food industry to fully implement and abide by the Code requirements:

- Governments must enact and enforce legislation to prevent commercial interests from undermining breastfeeding, optimal infant and young

child feeding, and the health of children and women, including during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

- Health workers must protect, promote and support breastfeeding; they must not accept sponsorship from companies that market foods for infants and young children for scholarships, awards, grants, meetings, or events.
- The infant and young child feeding industry must publicly commit to full compliance, globally, with the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly resolutions.

“Together, we must take the 40th anniversary milestone as an opportunity to celebrate the progress made in promoting and supporting breastfeeding and call to boldly protect breastfeeding as the best start in life, for every child.”

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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

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About WHO

The World Health Organization provides global leadership in public health within the United Nations system. Founded in 1948, WHO works with 194 Member States, across six regions and from 149 offices, to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable. Our goal for 2019-2023 is to ensure that a billion more people have universal health coverage, to protect a billion more people from health emergencies, and provide a further billion people with better health and wellbeing.

For updates on COVID-19 and public health advice to protect yourself from coronavirus, visit www.who.int and follow WHO on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [TikTok](#), [Pinterest](#), [Snapchat](#), [YouTube](#), [Twitch](#)