



Media Update

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United Nations SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE FOR WORLD POPULATION DAY

11 July 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to upend our world, reaching one grim milestone after another. In addition to the millions of lives tragically lost, there has been a less visible toll: a shocking rise in domestic violence as women were forced into isolation with their abusers; empty maternity wards as women postponed motherhood; and unintended pregnancies due to curtailed access to contraceptive services.

Our latest estimates indicate that COVID-19 will push 47 million women and girls into extreme poverty. Many girls who are out of school may never return.

In every corner of the world, we are seeing a reversal of hard-won gains and an erosion of women's reproductive rights, choices and agency. With the onset of the pandemic, resources for sexual and reproductive health services were diverted.

These gaps in access to health rights are unacceptable. Women cannot be alone in this fight.

As we mark World Population Day, let us pledge to ensure the reproductive health rights of everyone, everywhere.

UNICEF

PRESS RELEASE

EU-UNICEF Sign 17.4 Million Euros (PKR 3.27 Billion) agreement to improve access to education in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD/QUETTA – July 10, 2021: The European Union (EU) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), have signed an agreement to launch the Balochistan Education Support (BES) II, a five-year education development programme for which the EU will provide 17.4 million Euros (PKR 3.27 Billion). The overall cost of this project is Euro 22.2 million and UNICEF co-financing is Euro 4.8 million (PKR 0.92 billion).

The new programme aims to contribute to supporting the Government of Balochistan to build high-quality performance and management education systems in the province. It will contribute to the overall objective of improving literacy, numeracy, skills and qualifications for the people in the province. It will do so through improving access to quality primary and middle-level education and by increasing accountability, reporting and transparency of the Secondary Education Department.

BES II is providing continuity to the Balochistan Basic Education Programme (BBEP) for which the EU and UNICEF partnered in 2016, and which has helped education authorities in the province take a major leap forward in providing quality education to all children and young people, boys and girls, in the province.

The new programme will help build on all successful reform initiatives of the BBEP such as the new performance management system, the newly established Balochistan Assessment and Examination Commission, strengthened and expanded parent-teacher school management committees, local education councils and the school development process.

The Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, Androulla Kaminara said, "An educated young generation is the basis for Pakistan to pursue a path of inclusive growth and development. Education is a basic human right and key to ensuring that people do not fall behind in society and in life. The EU is committed to ensuring access to quality education for all boys and girls

in Balochistan, which would enable them to follow their dreams and contribute to a better future for Pakistan. The Pandemic has had a significant impact on education and our support will focus on addressing some of these challenges. The EU will continue to work closely with its partners including the Government of Balochistan and UNICEF to support and strengthen Pakistan's education system."

The EU's support on primary and secondary education is a priority area under the EU-Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan, which serves as guide for bilateral relations between the two sides and aims to further enhance engagement and work towards addressing emerging global challenges.

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest province in terms of land area, faces serious challenges in the areas of quality of education, access, low educational outcomes and poor governance.

While substantial progress was being made under the BBEP, the COVID-19 crisis adversely affected the gains made in the education sector, as schools remained closed for nearly the entire academic year.

"The setback to educational activities due to COVID19 must not deter us from trying to provide a better and brighter future for the children and young people of Balochistan," said Aida Girma, UNICEF Representative in Pakistan. "Led by the Education department, supported by generous funding from the EU and encouraged by the resilience and determination of the people, UNICEF will endeavor to translate children's right to education into outcomes. The BES II will go a long way to help achieve the long-term targets set in BBEP and the new initiatives reflected in the programme."

To make up for the academic time lost due to COVID19, additional activities have been included in BES II. These include training of teachers on Standard Operative Procedures (SoPs) for school health and safety, tailoring enrolment drives to ensure that children return to education and providing alternatives for children who drop out due to economic impact of the crises.

EU Development Cooperation

In Pakistan, the EU is committed to a stable, democratic and pluralistic country that respects human rights and benefits from its full economic potential by supporting sustainable and inclusive development for all its citizens. The EU provides Pakistan with about €100 million annually in grants

for development and cooperation. Among other issues, the EU supports Pakistan in its efforts to tackle poverty, increase education, promote good governance, human rights, rule of law and ensure sustainable management of natural resources. EU-funded projects cover all of Pakistan with a special focus on Sindh and Balochistan.

More information on the European Union's cooperation with Pakistan is available at the following link:

https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/pakistan/area/projects_en

More details about the Strategic Engagement Plan are available here:

https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu-pakistan_strategic_engagement_plan.pdf

About UNICEF

UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places, to reach the world's most disadvantaged children. Across 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 and www.unicef.org/pakistan. For more information about COVID-19, visit www.unicef.org/coronavirus. Find out more about UNICEF's work on the COVID-19 vaccines here, or about UNICEF's work on immunization here. Follow UNICEF Pakistan on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

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