

Media Update

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PRESS RELEASE

UNDP Pakistan hosts Pakistan Inequality Debate series on its *Pakistan National Human Development Report (NHDR) 2020: The Three Ps of Inequality: Power, People, and Policy*

Value of the privileges of Pakistan's vested interests added up to PKR 2,660 billion in 2017-2018: UNDP Pakistan NHDR

Islamabad, 13th August 2021—UNDP Pakistan hosted the second webinar of its Pakistan Inequality Debate series today. These webinars are being held to discuss the findings of the *Pakistan National Human Development Report (NHDR) 2020: The Three Ps of Inequality: Power, People, and Policy* which was launched by Pakistan's Prime Minister Mr. Imran Khan in April this year. The webinar began with a plenary session, entitled "Policy as a Driver of Inequality: Centering People for Inclusive Policy", addressing the Report's emphasis on Policy. The session included Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety as the Chief Guest; Mr. Knut Ostby, Resident Representative, UNDP Pakistan; and former Federal Minister and NHDR 2020 lead author Dr. Hafiz Pasha. The panelists for the session included Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Chairperson, Karandaaz and the Pakistan Stock Exchange; Dr. Abid Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI; and feminist researcher Dr. Saba Gul Khattak.

In her keynote address, Dr. Sania Nishtar spoke of the government's commitment to building a 'welfare state' where rule of law, meritocracy and transparency is guaranteed to all citizens and a social safety net is provided to marginalized segments. "This year we will cover 1 million families under Ehsaas Kafaalat, breaking a record—this will be the highest number of families ever getting regular support from the government," said Dr. Nishtar.

In his welcoming remarks, UNDP Pakistan Resident Representative, Mr. Knut Ostby, highlighted policy as a core strategy through which governments determine what kind of country they want to create for citizens. “Citizen power is an important part of public policy. By participating in the political process, citizens can play an important role in defining the future of the country,” said Mr. Ostby.

Dr. Hafiz Pasha, when presenting the report’s findings, spoke of policy in the context of areas that need redressal. “Pakistan has experienced high income and wealth inequality, with the richest groups co-opting the lion’s share of national income, bank advances, farm area, and property. The NHDR 2020 shows that the value of the privileges of Pakistan’s vested interests added up to PKR 2,660 billion in 2017-2018,” observed Dr. Hafiz Pasha.

Moderated by Mr. Mosharraf Zaidi, CEO and Senior Fellow at Tabadlab, the panel discussion explored the role of policy in creating inequality in the country. Speakers engaged in a wide-ranging discussion covering challenges to inclusive policymaking; how financial inclusion can lead to greater human development; and how the government has leveraged policy for inequality reduction in the wake of COVID-19.

UNDP’s Pakistan Inequality Debates continue to explore themes related to inequality at the national, provincial, and regional levels, with the goal to deconstruct Pakistan’s disparities and move the country towards an Equal Pakistan.

The NHDR 2020 on Inequality can be viewed [here](#).

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