

Media Update

17 September 2021

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON INTERNATIONAL EQUAL PAY DAY 18 September 2021

COVID-19 pulled back the curtain on a gross injustice: the lack of compensation for the work of raising children and caring for people who cannot look after themselves, which is largely done by women.

By pushing care work out of the formal economy and into the home, the pandemic has exacerbated the gender pay gap. Many women are struggling to hold down paid jobs while raising children, dealing with online school, and caring for sick or vulnerable family members without material compensation. Investing in the care economy helps bridge the pay gap by creating new, sustainable jobs while freeing women up to participate in the paid workforce.

At the same time, most frontline health workers battling the virus are women. They often earn less than men, lack decision-making power, and suffer greater exposure to violence and harassment.

I was vividly reminded of women's dual roles when I spoke with a health worker in Ghana, Scholastica Dery. "As frontline workers, we are the majority," she said. "Combining this with our household duties is not easy, but we are determined to do it."

Despite equal pay laws, women earn an average of just 80 cents for every dollar men earn for work of equal value. That figure is even less for women of colour and those with children.

Addressing the COVID-19 pandemic offers a generational opportunity to write a new social contract that upholds women's human rights, including the right to equal pay. This is a matter of justice and a responsibility for us all.

On International Equal Pay Day, let's resolve to dismantle the discrimination and harmful gender stereotypes that contribute to the gender pay gap.

ITC

PRESS RELEASE

ITC supporting Government of Sindh to attain SPS compliance

(Karachi) International Trade Centre (ITC), a joint agency of the United Nations and World Trade Organization through its 5-year European Union Supported Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress (GRASP) project completed a series of seven Training of Trainers (ToTs) on "Slaughterhouse Management and SPS Compliance on 17 September 2021 in Karachi.

At the closing ceremony of the training program Secretary Livestock and Fisheries, Government of Sindh, Mr. Aijaz Mahesar said the trainings marked the beginning of a new era of enhancing and strengthening public sector capacity in professional performance and execution of duties. He stated that "he believed that unless there is good collaboration between public and private sectors, no coherent, integrated and sustainable progress can be made.

During his speech, Mr. Mahesar appreciated GRASP initiatives for enhancing professional capacity of government officials in SPS compliance in Sindh and termed the collaboration between the Government of Sindh and GRASP project vital for improving professional capacity of especially field staff in ensuring food safety standards and compliances.

While addressing the participants Director General Sindh Institute of Animal Health, Mr. Nazir Kalhoro said that ITC in collaboration with the Livestock and Fisheries Department has undertaken several initiatives in Sindh which will ultimately benefit SMEs in Sindh. He emphasised on the need to have active

and close coordination between public and private sector to improve the quality and effectiveness of the services at grass roots level. Complying with the SPS regulations and quality standards of slaughtering and processing of meat will enable local entrepreneurs to tap the full business potential of the sector.

Ms. Shabnam Baloch, GRASP Provincial Lead informed that over 150 master trainers from 14 districts of Sindh have been prepared through seven training sessions across the province. “This capacity building program has been designed to build the professional capacity of the staff of departments of Livestock and Fisheries, Local Government and Sindh Food Authority”

GRASP is supporting the Government of Sindh in not only building professional capacities of the staff of line departments, but also providing technical assistance in regulatory reforms through development and review of various policies, acts and laws etc. The initiatives taken by the project will result in improved quality and delivery of the services and pave the path for further collaboration between public and private sector in Sindh.

UNICEF

PRESS RELEASE

Schoolchildren worldwide have lost 1.8 trillion hours and counting of in-person learning due to COVID-19 lockdowns, says UNICEF

Urging governments to reopen schools as soon as possible, UNICEF unveils No Time to Lose – a clock counting hours of lost learning – as the UN General Assembly gets underway in NY

NEW YORK, 17 September 2021 – Schoolchildren around the world have lost an estimated 1.8 trillion hours – and counting – of in-person learning since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. As a result, young learners have been cut off from their education and the other vital benefits schools provide.

To call attention to this education crisis, UNICEF today unveiled 'No Time to Lose' at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The centerpiece of the installation is a clock, modelled to look like the blackboard of an empty classroom, situated at the UN Visitors' Plaza in front of the General Assembly Building. The clock is a real-time counter, displaying the growing cumulative number of in-person learning hours every schoolchild in the world has lost and continues to lose since the pandemic's onset. The empty classroom consists of 18 desks, one for every month of the pandemic-caused education disruptions.

The installation is being created ahead of the opening of the General Debate of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), a period when some leaders will take the opportunity to return to United Nations headquarters in person for the first time since the onset of the pandemic.

"Next week, the United Nations will open its doors to delegations from around the world. But in many countries, the doors of schools will remain closed to children and young people," said United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres. "We are short-changing an entire generation whose minds and futures hang in the balance. We must prioritize the reopening of schools and support those who have lost out during the pandemic. There is no time to lose."

This year, the General Debate and associated annual meetings will take place in a hybrid format, with many events taking place virtually. The installation, open to delegations which will have elected to attend General Assembly meetings in-person, is a stark reminder that millions of schoolchildren remain locked out of their schools and a call for leaders to act urgently on this education crisis.

The installation will be up from 17 September to 27 September with the conclusion of UNGA.*

Globally, around 131 million schoolchildren in 11 countries have missed three-quarters of their in-person learning from March 2020 to September 2021. Among them, 59 per cent – or nearly 77 million – have missed almost all in-person instruction time. Around 27 per cent of countries continue to have schools fully or partially closed. Additionally, according to [UNESCO's latest data](#), more than 870 million students at all levels are currently facing disruptions to their education.

UNICEF urges governments, local authorities, and school administrations to reopen schools as soon as possible and take all possible steps to mitigate against transmission of the virus in schools, such as:

- Implementing mask policies for students and staff that are in accordance with national and local guidelines;
- Providing handwashing facilities and/or hand sanitiser;
- Frequently cleaning surfaces and shared objects;
- Ensuring adequate and appropriate ventilation;
- Cohorting (keeping students and teachers in small groups that do not mix); staggering start, break, bathroom, meals and end time; and alternating physical presence;
- Establishing information sharing mechanisms with parents, students and teachers;
- While not a prerequisite to reopen schools, teachers should be prioritised to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, after frontline health workers and those most at risk, to protect them from community transmission.

Additionally, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP and the World Bank previously issued the [Framework for School Reopening](#) to provide practical and flexible advice for national and local governments and aid their efforts to return students to in-person learning.

"Every hour a child spends in the classroom is precious – an opportunity to expand their horizons and maximize their potential. And with each passing moment, countless amounts of opportunity are lost," said Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director. "1.8 trillion hours – and counting – is an unfathomable amount of time. Equally unfathomable is setting priorities around mitigating the impacts of COVID that do not put our children's future first. We can and must reopen schools as soon as possible. The clock is ticking."

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Notes to editors:

Download multimedia content [here](#).

*NOTE: Due to the prevailing conditions under COVID-19, media accreditation will not be issued for the high-level period of the 76th session of the General Assembly. Access during high level week will be limited to accredited media representatives who have an office at UN Headquarters (resident correspondents) and the official media of visiting delegations. Other

interested media are encouraged to join the [photo call](#) on 17 September to obtain access prior to high-level week.

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.

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