

Media Update

27 October 2021

UNICEF

PRESS RELEASE

Gilgit-Baltistan Child Labour Survey Report Launched

GB First in the Country to Publish Report of the Largest Ever Child-Focused Survey Conducted with Support from UNICEF

Gilgit: October 27, 2021 – The Gilgit-Baltistan Child Labour Survey (GBCLS) Report 2018-19 was launched here today by the Chief Minister, Mr. Khalid Khursheed Khan. The survey conducted in collaboration with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to provide authentic data about the living conditions of children, which in turn, will help the Government to address key issues pertaining to fundamental rights of children in Gilgit Baltistan (GB).

As part of the nationwide Child Labor Survey being conducted in all provinces and territories of the country, GBCLS Report is the first to be published in Pakistan. It is also the largest survey conducted in GB, with a representative sample of 7,032 households from all 10 districts representing nearly 400, 000 children between the ages of 5 to17, living across urban and rural areas of the region.

“Government of Gilgit Baltistan is sternly committed to protect basic rights of every child and to ensure access of every child to basic education, health, social & mental wellbeing and more as protected under the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and other United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child,” said Khalid Khursheed Khan, Chief Minister GB. “ The Government of GB has already invoked, ‘Prohibition of Employment of Children Act, 2019’ and the capacity of the Department of Labour is being enhanced to ensure strict compliance of the Act.”

The CM applauded technical support of UNICEF and the efforts of P&DD GB to be the first to complete the survey despite the challenging conditions due

to unique and rough geographical terrain, widespread population, harsh weather and above all in absence of Bureau of statistics in GB.

He expressed his concern about alarmingly high prevalence of the rate of child labor in GB which is 13 percent and even touches 28 percent in some districts, keeping in view the strong family value system and peculiar culture in GB.

“30 percent children of school going age are out of school. It is a gigantic task to confront this,” he added.

The CM expressed hope that the survey would be a huge leap forward towards evidence-based planning and policy making in this remote region of Pakistan.

The GBCLS Report will help decision makers to formulate well informed policies to eliminate the menace of child labour in its core form the consequences of economic exploitation of children on their educational, health, mental health and social well-being. It’s our national duty to protect the fundamental rights of a child, enshrined in the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child, which Pakistan has ratified in 1990.

The GBCLS report shows that the child labour prevalence in the province stands at 13.1 percent, with 1 in 7 children is working. Thus, an estimated 50,000 children in GB are involved in child labour. The data reveals that many children work in hazardous conditions and are almost twice as likely to report mental health problems.

The Survey also highlights that almost 30 per cent of children aged 5-17 in GB, do not attend school. Amongst those who attend, there is gender disparity with 88 percent boys and 77 percent girls.

“Every child has the right to be protected from harm, exploitation and abuse,” said Aida Girma, UNICEF Representative in Pakistan. “Children should be provided access to learning opportunities – as opposed to being forced to engage in exploitative economic activities - to live with dignity and reach their full potential. This target can only be achieved if no child is left behind – no matter how difficult and challenging the circumstances.”

“The commitment shown by the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan, in particular, Planning & Development Department GB, in conducting the Child Labour Survey and being the first to launch the Report, is highly commendable.

UNICEF is committed to support the Government in identifying, addressing and resolving issues related to child rights,” she added.

Besides providing key data about the status of children in the province, the GBCLS also suggests policy recommendations.

The Report recommends that since child labour is a complex issue, it is imperative to adapt a coordinated policy response, focusing education, social protection, labour markets, and legal standards and regulations.

It highlights that around 14.8 percent of students are neither in school nor working. These children are particularly vulnerable to becoming engaged in child labour. The Report suggests that it is important to understand why these children do not attend school, especially as schools in public sector are providing free of cost education in GB.

The survey responses also suggest that parents of those not in school often perceive school to be inaccessible and expensive. Therefore, informing people of the value of education and facilities provided by the government may help ensure that these children get enrolled and remain in school.

UNICEF has been providing technical assistance to all provincial and territorial governments since 2016 to ensure that child labour survey is conducted using an international methodology through a fully digital platform ensuring accountability, transparency, and quality.

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UN Women

PRESS RELEASE

Inter Provincial Ministerial Group vows to enhance women's representation and participation across party lines and strengthen the functioning of provincial commissions

Karachi – 26 October, 2021: The 18th Meeting of the Inter Provincial Ministerial Group (IPMG) was hosted by the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), Sindh Commission on the Status of Women (SCSW) and UN Women Pakistan in Karachi today. Representatives from Federal Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR), Women Development Departments (WDDs), provincial commissions and parliamentary bodies on women development came together to strategize on collective efforts in strengthening coordination mechanisms, data collection and analysis and dispensing timely justice to survivors of gender-based violence.

The IPMG is the only inter provincial coordination forum having the potential and effectiveness for supporting the women's empowerment and gender equality agenda through sharing of experiences, fostering peer learning, and developing strategies to fulfil the country's national and international commitments. The group is structured to ensure representation of Ministers and Secretaries of Women Development Departments from four provinces, Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and the Chairpersons of National and Provincial Commissions on the Status of Women.

Chairperson NCSW, Ms. Nilofar Bakhtiar, said, "We need to strengthen women's representation and participation across party lines and provincial commissions. The National Commission on the Status of Women is fully committed and determined to unite and work with the Government and

women's machinery across the country to bring about positive change in the situation of women and girls in Pakistan.”

Ms. Nuzhat Shirin, Chairperson, Sindh Commission on the Status of Women (SCSW), in her opening remarks said, “Sindh has been at the forefront of progressive laws and policies especially for women. For this purpose, it is vital that the bureaucracy and different departments working for women, unite.”

The representatives called for concerted actions towards implementing the provisions in the Constitution of Pakistan and CEDAW focusing on ensuring women's voice, visibility and agency through efforts at the national and provincial levels.

Ms. Sharmeela Rassool, Country Representative of UN Women Pakistan highlighted the need for engaging the whole population in order to boost economic growth and sustainable development. She added, “We need accelerated and focused efforts to uplift women of Pakistan. Engaging 50% of the population to its fullest potential is no longer an option – it's an imperative.”

Mr. Muhammed Hassan Mangi, MoHR, encouraged the women machineries at the federal and provincial levels to support the data collection for Pakistan's international reporting commitments.

All the provincial departments and commissions shared information on the progress achieved during the year 2021 and updated the participants on future plans with a view to enhancing coordination and collaboration among the women machineries of the country.

In the closing session, the Secretary of the NCSW, Mr. Arif Baloch, said, “The strategic plan developed by the NCSW is the result of consultation with all the provincial and national stakeholders and machinery. The way-forward for all stakeholders is to focus on improving the status of women in Pakistan and use the platforms and forums such as these for coordinated efforts.”

The forum agreed to form a national level committee to combat violence against women and give a loud and clear message during the upcoming 16 days of activism campaign.

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