

Media Update

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PRESS RELEASE

UNDP Pakistan and NCSW hold provincial consultations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to gauge the gendered impact of climate change

Peshawar, February 2, 2022— In the last 20 years, Pakistan has faced significant loss of life, property damage, and developmental setbacks from floods, cyclones, and earthquakes, with damage and losses exceeding \$20 billion. The worsening climate crisis threatens and affects all humanity, although not uniformly. As it intersects with multiple ongoing crises, existing gender inequalities aggravate climate change impacts. To understand the effects of climate stress on women and solicit feedback, UNDP Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa SDGs Support Unit, in collaboration with the National Commission on the Status of Women, organized a provincial consultation with stakeholders on 'Women and Climate Change: Impact, Challenges, and Solutions'.

This theme is aligned with the upcoming 66th session of the Global Commission on the Status of Women (CSW): 'Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies, and programmes'. Similar consultations were previously held in Gilgit-Baltistan and Punjab on the same theme.

The consultation provided a platform to engage highly experienced gender and climate change experts, policy practitioners, representatives from the Government, private sector, civil society, academia, and media, to discuss how climate change impacts women adversely, and highlight existing mechanisms to reduce these vulnerabilities. It also provided a platform to explore potential solutions to reduce the vulnerabilities of climate stress on women and other marginalized populations.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairperson, National Commission on the Status of Women, Ms. Nilofar Bakhtiar said, “We have come to understand that climate change is as important to women as health and education. Reports have shown that women are directly and most affected by disasters. Of the 1.3 billion poor people in the world, 70% are women and, thus, any climate related shocks impact them first.”

“Pakistan has consistently ranked among the top ten most vulnerable countries in the world owing to poor resilience mechanisms and exposure of disadvantaged groups to extreme weather events. To this end, UNDP is committed to ensuring that women's priorities and needs are reflected in climate change planning and funding. We strongly believe that it is critical to ensure gender-sensitive investments in programs for adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer, and capacity building in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,” said Ms. Ammara Durrani, Assistant Resident Representative and Chief of the Development Policy Unit, UNDP Pakistan.

Climate change impacts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are evident as 25 districts are categorized as vulnerable to flash flooding as a result of accelerated glacial melt. These floods disrupt food security and livelihood earning in the province, as these sectors employ 44% of the population, with 80% of the population relying on agriculture alone for income. It also hampers the economic growth of the province, as the contribution of agriculture to national GDP is 22% in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Women, who are more than 50% of the population of the province, are impacted more than others due to climate change, as they bear the responsibility of managing the water, food, and nutritional needs of the household. This substantiates the need to address and re-evaluate national and provincial policy frameworks incorporating gender-responsive planning, and to ensure gender equity in design, procedures, budgeting, and outcomes, to avoid women's exacerbated vulnerabilities to climate change impact.

“One of our government's main goals has been to tackle climate change. The Government is cognizant and conscious of the fact that without gender mainstreaming, no goal can be achieved. We are strengthening Provincial and National Disaster Management Authorities to better cope with any climate related disasters,” said Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Information.

Other notable speakers at the consultation included Dr. Shabnum Sarfaraz, Member Social Sector & Devolution, Ministry of Planning, Development &

Special Initiatives; Ms. Sumaira Shams, MPA and Chairperson, Women Parliamentary Caucus KP; Ms. Ayesha Bano, MPA, Member Task Force on the Women's Commission KP, and also member of the Parliamentary Task Force on SDGs; Mr. Muhammad Bakhtiar Khan, Director General, Sustainable Development Unit, Planning and Development Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Mr. Arif Anwar Baloch, Secretary, National Commission on the Status of Women; and Dr. Riffat Sardar, Chairperson, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women.

The findings of this provincial consultation, and the feedback received from other relevant stakeholders at the country-wide dialogues will be presented at the 66th session of the Global Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March 2022 in New York.

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