

Media Update

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WFP

PRESS RELEASE

Special Advisor to World Food Programme, HRH Princess Sarah Zeid of Jordan concludes her week-long visit with appreciation and aspirations for Pakistan's efforts in improving maternal and child health and nutrition

Islamabad, 27 August 2022: The World Food Programme (WFP) Special Advisor on Maternal & Child Health and Nutrition, Her Royal Highness Princess Sarah Zeid of Jordan, concluded her week-long visit to Pakistan, where she saw first-hand how WFP is supporting the Government of Pakistan in addressing malnutrition through the Benazir Nashonuma Programme, particularly stunting that affects 12 million or up to two-thirds of children in Pakistan.

During her stay, the first stop of HRH Princess Sarah Zeid was district Badin in Sindh where she together with the Federal Minister of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Ms. Shazia Atta Marri, visited the Benazir Nashonuma Facilitation Centre. There, and at a Community Health Centre, the Princess interacted with lady health workers, midwives and mothers to explore the maternal and child health challenges faced by local communities. The partnership between WFP and the Government of Pakistan under the Benazir Nahsonuma Programme supports more than 150,000 women and children with vital health and nutrition assistance, aiming to reach 1.7 million over the next three years.

"I am inspired to see how some of the most vulnerable mothers and children are receiving essential nutrition support combined with conditional cash transfers as part of the Benazir Nashonuma Programme. It is incredible to see

the positive change in Pakistan since my last visit in 2019”, said Princess Sarah while sharing her experience.

In Islamabad, she visited a chakki (small-scale mill) – part of WFP’s Chakki Programme - to see how the process of fortification works and how it is enabling WFP to prevent malnutrition in up to 70% of Pakistan’s population while also providing employment in the local community. WFP currently supports fortification of food by adding crucial vitamins and minerals to wheat flour in 50 small-scale flour mills in Pakistan.

The Princess met with high-level government officials in Karachi and Islamabad, including the President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi, Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, and other key Ministers, to appreciate their efforts in prioritizing maternal and child health nutrition to eliminate malnutrition in the country. During her meetings with the Government officials, the Princess advocated for maintaining a focus on pregnant mothers and young children while scaling up nutritional support to older children and adolescents – from 1000 to 8000 days – ensuring total growth and development.

Commenting on the Benazir Nashonuma programme's success, Princess Sarah Zeid said “The Government’s decision to scale up the programme across the country shows how investment in mother and child nutrition is being prioritized to break intergenerational cycles of malnutrition, poverty and exclusion putting mothers, children, communities and nations on track for fulfilling their full potential. I am already looking forward to seeing the impact of this scaling up in a future visit to Pakistan,” added Princess Sarah.

Her Royal Highness will share her learnings and best practices on maternal nutrition from Pakistan at relevant global fora after her visit.

The World Food Programme assists the Government of Pakistan in malnutrition prevention activities, enhancing social and public sector capacity to identify, target and assist nutritionally vulnerable populations. The target is that children under 5 years of age, adolescent girls and women of reproductive age, have improved nutrition in line with national targets in Pakistan Vision 2025.

Note to the Editor: The United Nations World Food Programme is the world’s largest humanitarian organization, saving lives in emergencies and using food assistance to build a pathway to peace, stability, and prosperity for people recovering from conflict, disasters, and the impact of climate change.

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