

Media Update

10 September 2022

UNITED NATIONS & GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

UNSG Guterres applauds efforts of Government and people of Pakistan, and calls for substantial and sustained support and solidarity from the international community to overcome the enormous challenges posed by the unprecedented climate-induced floods in Pakistan

United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) Antonio Guterres visited Pakistan on 9-10 September 2022 to show solidarity with the people of Pakistan, braving a colossal climate-induced natural disaster caused by unprecedented rains and floods across the country. The two-day visit comprised high-level meetings, briefings, interactions with displaced people, first responders, UN country representatives, civil society and media.

The UNSG called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. Several members of the Federal Cabinet joined the meeting. The PM expressed his gratitude for the Secretary-General's personal attention to situation arising from the floods and greatly appreciated his visit and concern for the affected people. The PM informed the UNSG about the efforts of the Government of Pakistan in addressing the daunting challenges posed by the flash floods, including the provision of Rs.35 billion cash relief through Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), rescue and relief operations, and delivery of humanitarian assistance in coordination with all national stakeholders and with support of international partners. While appreciating the UNSG's video message for the UN Flash Appeal, the PM highlighted that with less than 1% of global carbon

emission Pakistan is facing brunt of natural calamities in the form of heat waves, glacial outbursts, droughts, torrential rains and unprecedented monsoons. The PM called for urgent mitigation and adaptation efforts in addition to mobilizing support for recovering and rebuilding from such extreme climate events.

The UNSG said that countries like Pakistan, who have done almost nothing to contribute to global warming, do not deserve this. He added, “I know how volunteers, civil servants, army, NGOs have been working together in a remarkable way to mitigate the suffering of Pakistani people”. The UNSG stated, “My voice is at the service of Government and people of Pakistan. I have seen the enormous generosity of Pakistanis in protecting and assisting more than 6 million Afghan refugees and helping each other in previous calamities such as during the earthquake and floods. My admiration for this country is limitless”. He assured that the UN would do everything in its capacity to help people of Pakistan. The UNSG appealed to the international community to provide massive support to Pakistan for not only relief assistance but also for rehabilitation and climate resilient reconstruction. He emphasized that it was not just a matter of solidarity but a matter of justice, as countries like Pakistan who have not contributed to climate change are amongst the frontline countries impacted by climate change.

The UNSG was briefed on the overall ground situation, humanitarian activities and coordination amongst national and international stakeholders at the National Flood Response and Coordination Centre (NFRCC). The PM and the UNSG also had a joint presser.

The UNSG held delegation level talks with Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, followed by a joint press stakeout. A broad range of issues related to the recent floods and climate change came under discussion. The FM noted that one-third of the country was inundated, around 33 million people affected across the country, over 1300 lives lost including more than 400 children, nearly 800,000 livestock perished, more than 1.7 million houses and 6000 km of roads have been destroyed or damaged. The Foreign Minister said that though the people impacted by the floods have made no contribution to the climate change, they were suffering the most due to it, and therefore, it was the shared responsibility of the international community to do its utmost to assist the millions of affectees to return to normal lives and livelihoods in a sustainable manner. The FM emphasised that it was critical that the momentum on the

Flash Appeal, which was jointly launched by the Government of Pakistan and the UN, was sustained and looked forward to the UNSG's support in further mobilizing the international community for the subsequent phase of sustainable rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The UNSG stressed that an important reason for his visit was to draw the attention of the international community to this climate catastrophe and to appeal for massive support for Pakistan. UNSG told the reporters, "I'm here to express my deep solidarity with the Pakistani people over the devastating loss of life and human suffering caused by this year's floods". The Secretary General said that it was not only a matter of solidarity but a matter of justice. The UNSG reiterated that "today it is Pakistan, tomorrow it can be anywhere else". The UNSG commended the Government of Pakistan's strong leadership in the flood response efforts and reiterated the United Nations' engagement to continue supporting the government's relief efforts. He reaffirmed his commitment to galvanizing international support for the people of Pakistan through the recently launched Flash Appeal and Floods Response Plan and shared that funds have been released from the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). The UN Secretary-General thanked the Government and the Foreign Minister for the facilitation provided to support international partners to scale up their efforts in support of Pakistan.

The Secretary General reaffirmed full support and cooperation of the UN both for ongoing humanitarian relief work as well as for long term recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. The Secretary General discussed various ideas for mobilizing finance and for enhancing fiscal space for Pakistan's efforts to rehabilitate and reconstruct. Both sides exchanged views on how to reinforce climate action, with special emphasis on supporting the adaptation efforts of developing countries through debt swaps.

The UNSG, accompanied by the PM and the FM, visited flood affected areas of Sindh and Balochistan including Sukkur, Larkana, Mohenjo Daro, and Usta Muhammad, where he was given an overview of the rescue and relief efforts of the Government of Pakistan and national and international partners. The UNSG got first-hand assessment of the on-ground situation by the displaced people, civil society, first responders and others. The FM shared deep appreciation and acknowledgement of UNSG's visit and efforts for international awareness raising, show of solidarity with the Pakistani nation, and mobilization of necessary support from the global community.