

Media Update

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FAO

PRESS RELEASE

FAO holds validation workshops in Islamabad

Islamabad (Tuesday, December 13) The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) recently organized two validation workshop in Islamabad.

First workshop was held on “Agriculture Innovation System (AIS): Assessment Findings and Recommendations” in collaboration with the Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFSR) The objective of organizing this workshop was to gather feedback on the detailed assessment results and discuss way forward and finalize road map for the next phase i.e. capacity building.

Assessment of AIS is part of global three-year EU-funded project aimed at strengthening the functional capacities of National Agriculture Innovation Systems with focus on climate-relevant, productive, and sustainable transformation of agriculture and food systems. Detailed assessment of AIS was conducted during September-October 2022 by three-member assessment team comprising of a national consultant and members from Agriculture Extension & Adaptive Research Department, Punjab. Seven innovation case studies of different public sector organizations from federal and provinces were studied in four analytical dimensions i.e., functional, structural, capacity and enabling environment.

All the participants acknowledged the results of assessment and agreed with the recommendations for next phase of capacity building. They also emphasized on the need to prepare action plan for each innovation case study. Project Advisory Committee member recommended to include service and product innovation case studies in specific interventions and also include governance departments as well in training component of capacity building.

Participants also emphasized on the importance of strengthening the agriculture innovation system with the involvement of private stakeholder as it would reap long lasting benefits. Mr. Selvaraju Ramasamy Head, FAO's Research and Extension Unit (OINR), joined the event virtually and apprised stakeholder on Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) and the Global TAP AIS Project.

The event was attended by 25 participants in person and through virtual participation. They included; key officials from Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC), National Agriculture Research Center (NARC), Provincial Extension and Research departments and FAO Office of Innovation (OIN).

The other workshop was held to showcase the investment potential of various commodities to a broad range of stakeholders including; the Government of Pakistan, financial institutions, resource partners and leading private sector companies.

The Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HiHi) of FAO is an evidence-based, country-led and country-owned initiative. The Hand-in-Hand Initiative represents a bold step to eradicate poverty (SDG 1) and end hunger and all forms of malnutrition (SDG2) by accelerating agricultural transformation and sustainable rural development.

The Initiative prioritizes countries where national capacities and international support are most limited or where operational challenges, including natural or man-made crises, are greatest. FAO facilitates in bridging prevailing issues both in terms of strengthening capacities and match making. In 2018, the Government of Pakistan analyzed, selected 33 priority commodities in line with Vision 2025 to identify potential opportunities with detailed feasibility and cost-benefit analysis for each of the commodity. The report on Cluster Development Based Agriculture Transformation also included proposed interventions, strategies and policies to transform the agriculture sector from supply-driven to demand-oriented and to be competitive in the international markets.

In order to support Government initiative, FAO Pakistan further shortlisted 20 agricultural commodities in consultation with private and public sector stakeholders and updated feasibility studies. As a next step, validation workshop was organized to showcase the investment potential for each of the commodities to a broad range of stakeholders including the Government of Pakistan, financial institutions, resource partners and leading private sector companies.

The participants of validation workshop appreciated the FAO initiative for investment mobilization to accelerate the agriculture sector growth and shared their feedback to further strengthen this initiative. The participants also endorsed FAO upcoming investment symposium which is being planned in February 2023.

For more details

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UNHABITAT

PRESS RELEASE

International Housing Expo 2022, Pakistan 8-11 December 2022

Building resilient communities through climate resilient housing and sustainable post disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction

UN Habitat in collaboration with Ministry of Housing and Works organized two sessions at the International Housing Expo 2022, Pakistan. The objective was to review the impact of the unprecedented floods of 2022 in Pakistan, identify challenges and actions for achieving climate resilient housing and sustainable post disaster rehabilitation and recovery. The deliberations were focused on the need to move towards zero carbon housing and adaptation of green building technologies and practices for a sustainable built environment and need for recovery planning and framework. Move towards zero carbon housing in consideration to climate change dimension in development and ensure climate resilience. In the inaugural session, Ms. Sherry Rehman, Minister for Climate Change advocated for resilient housing to reduce climate vulnerability.

The sessions commenced with opening remarks from Mr. Iftikhar Ali Shellwani, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Works and Mr. Shahzad Nawaz Cheema, Joint Secretary Ministry of Housing. Mr. Iftikhar Ali Shelwani explained that it is the responsibility of the government to provide affordable housing to the people, but it needed the help of the private sector to achieve that goal. He added that the event held on the basis of the public-private partnership was the right step in that direction. Mr. Shahzad Hassan stressed on the need for immediate actions both on the ground and at policy level to mitigate the disastrous effects of Climate Change.

Experts including Dr. Shoaib Ahmad, Distinguished Professor PIMSAT; Mr. Raja Rehan Arshad, Former Lead World Bank on Disaster Risk Reduction; Ms. Nusrat Nasab CEO AKAH; Mr. Jawed Ali Khan, HPM, UN Habitat; Ms. Mio Sato, Chief of Mission, IOM, Ms, Maggie Stephenson, Recover Advisor, UNOPS; Mr. Shahid Saeed, CEO, Indus Earth Trust; Mr. Fazal Noor, Associate Professor, SSUET; Mr. Mehboob Illahi, Former Director General, MOCC participated as panelists in two sessions.

Climate Resilient Housing: Need for Replanning

In the session on Climate Resilient Housing, Need for Replanning, Dr. Shoaib Ahmad, Distinguished Professor, PIMSAT as a keynote speaker highlighted vulnerability of Pakistan with respect to climate change and need for climate resilient affordable housing. He emphasized that future constructions must pay attention to flow of water that destroy housing every 4-5 years and government must prohibit construction in low lying areas. Building codes should be adopted at all levels. We now must build what lasts longer, and for that its important that the reconstruction and rehabilitation is compatible with local conditions, and it must take the local need scenarios into the consideration.

The panellists emphasized that it is needed to move towards resilient and zero carbon housing and incentives must be provided to private sector in order to have sustainable housing, they also need to be part of planning. Panellists also raised concerns on raising voices of rural communities who are facing challenges for affordable housing, so there is a need to include their concerns in the planning. Engage community specially women in the building climate resilient housing.

It was recommended that the opportunity offered by the post flood construction in Pakistan may be availed to revitalize zero carbon and low cost indigenous materials and vernacular construction techniques. The informal settlements are regularized and upgraded. Recovery and Reconstruction without reforms

may prove to be unsustainable. This process as a first stage should involve setting up standards and institutional arrangements through broad based consultation for reconstruction with the objective of achieving climate resilient housing. To support this initiative, mapping of indigenous materials, especially zero carbon low cost construction materials is important.

Sustainable Post Disaster Rehabilitation and Reconstruction

In the session on Sustainable Post Disaster Rehabilitation and reconstruction, Mr. Raja Rehan Arshad, Senior Advisor, World Bank as a key note speaker urged on taking the disasters as an experience and learning opportunity to Build Back Better by identifying the gaps, and loopholes, which can be used to improve the national response system. The panellists emphasized that there is need for operational reforms and not major reforms and prioritizing people-centered socio-economic recovery and also outcome based planning instead of sector based planning. Building back stronger and faster will reduce well-being losses by ensuring that reconstructed infrastructure can resist more intense events in the future.

It was highlighted to ensure that post-disaster support reaches all affected population groups. This emphasizes the importance of providing reconstruction support to low-income households, which are typically more exposed, more vulnerable, and less comprehensively supported. Further, it was deliberated that building financing mechanisms that fast disburse affordable, low-interest financing to businesses affected by the disasters.

It was also stressed the importance of the Right Base Approach in post-disaster assessment phases, which is conscious and systematic integration of rights and right principles into the core steps of the work which is done during the disaster response, which can range from the identification of all right holders and then strengthening their capacity to claim their rights and to the duty bearers who bear the obligation to reach back and protect, ensure these rights.

Gender based recovery was also supported by providing gender-specific support for reconstruction and recovery, so that the differing needs of women and men are met. Use recovery as an opportunity to bridge the gender-resilience gap. Women may be more vulnerable to the impact of disasters; gender-specific support has the capacity to improve future resilience. The post-disasters investments we make must not only be materialistic investments but also the investment in people. We must mainstream the considerable talent

from all age groups to not only solve our issues but also to utilize their unutilized potential in a constructive way.

The Chief Guest Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Mr. Azam Nazir Tarar stressed the need to implement the existing laws to transform the ideas into reality. The Chief Guest concluded the session with an urge to make the cities better, sustainable, and livable for the current as well as the generations to come.

UNHCR

PRESS RELEASE

UNHCR supported exhibition brings together female artists from Pakistan and Afghanistan

The painting exhibition to mark 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, displayed artworks created by refugee and Pakistani women aimed at highlighting the importance of safe space

ISLAMABAD - Seven Pakistani and Afghan refugee artists showcased their art in a three-day exhibition held between 8 and 10 December, organized by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency at the Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) in Islamabad.

The public exhibition, organised to mark 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, tells the stories of talented women from all over Pakistan to advocate for gender equality, and strengthen the link between local and international action to end violence against women, through their paintings.

Diana, an artist from Afghanistan, explained the dreams of women in her country through her pieces. "In these paintings called "safe space", I show myself flying, where my arms symbolize my abilities and strength to reach my goals," she added.

At the launch ceremony, UNHCR Deputy Representative in Pakistan, Ms. Tammi Sharpe underscored that over 43 million forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls face heightened risk of gender-based violence.

“Across the world, women and girls are bearing the brunt of wars,” she said. She said that beyond women’s economic empowerment, we must strive for a world where women can live without fear of violence.

Women and girls also face higher risks and greater burdens from the impacts of climate change, including the devastating floods witnessed in Pakistan this year.

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence Campaign, which runs annually from 25 November to 10 December, is intended to generate awareness, and mobilize action to prevent gender-based violence (GBV). The focus of years theme “Activism to End Violence against Women and Girls”, is aimed at the prevention of GBV, mobilizing public support, amplifying the voices of diverse feminist women’s movements, increasing long-term, sustainable and flexible funding for girl-led and women’s rights organizations, strengthening of protection mechanisms and promoting the leadership of women and girls.

UNHCR in Pakistan provides assistance to survivors and promotes activities for prevention, and risk mitigation of gender-based violence, thanks to the generous contribution of the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), France, Italy, Japan, Netherlands and other committed donors from the private sector including Novo Nordisk.

Photo captions:

UNHCR Deputy Representative, Ms. Tammi Sharpe speaking during the opening ceremony of the Art Exhibition at the Pakistan National Council of Art in Islamabad.

Diana, an artist from Afghanistan, explained the dreams of women in her country through her pieces during the opening of the Art Exhibition at the Pakistan National Council of Art in Islamabad.

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