

Media Update

24 January 2023

UNDP

PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Human Rights and United Nations Development Programme hold a dialogue on taking forward Business and Human Rights in Pakistan

Islamabad, 24 January 2023 — The Ministry of Human Rights and UNDP Pakistan held a seminar and panel discussion to identify key priorities, drivers, and recommendations for implementing Pakistan's National Action Plan (NAP) on Business & Human Rights (BHR) in 2023.

At the dialogue, participants discussed best practices for the inclusion of rights-holders, including workers, local communities, and human rights and environmental defenders, in implementing the NAP. Further, the responsibility of the private sector to practice corporate Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) as a means to identify and address human rights challenges across value chains in Pakistan was also emphasised.

Opening the launch, the Director General of International Cooperation Ministry of Human Rights Mr. Muhammad Arshad welcomed stakeholders to the event, which included representatives of the Federal and Provincial governments, the private sector, and civil society. Referring to the need for multi-stakeholder collaboration for implementation of the NAP, Mr. Arshad highlighted, *"We are pleased to share that both the formulation and now drafting of the NAP have been an inclusive process. Moreover, for effective implementation, we also need multi-stakeholder collaboration."*

Meanwhile, in his opening remarks, UNDP Assistant Resident Representative Mr. Rana Kaiser Ishaque reflected on the strength of the framework provided by the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), and remarked, *“Through the implementation of the NAP, we can contribute towards achieving several objectives, including fulfilment of human rights, Sustainable Development Goals, and strengthening the competitiveness of Pakistan’s businesses in the global value chains.”*

Following presentations by the Ministry of Human Rights and UNDP Pakistan elaborating on their joint initiatives on Business and Human Rights, a panel discussion was held with stakeholders representing the private sector and civil society. Panellists from the Securities & Exchange Commission of Pakistan, Pakistan Institute of Corporate Governance, Pakistan Textile Council, HomeNet Pakistan, and Special Talent Exchange Program shared their recommendations on practical means to establish HRDD as a common practice in the private sector in Pakistan, both through voluntary and eventually, regulatory means. They agreed that the application of HRDD in Pakistan could significantly contribute toward fulfilling fundamental labour rights and workplace standards, as well as promoting the right to work of marginalised communities.

Closing the launch, Mr. Arshad of MoHR again thanked the participants for taking advantage of this dialogue and sharing their recommendations for fostering a coherent and inclusive approach to the implementation of the NAP across Pakistan.

Pakistan’s NAP on BHR can be viewed at: www.bhrpak.org

For additional information, please contact Ayesha Babar at ayesha.babar@undp.org or +92 (51) 835 5650

UNDP is the leading United Nations organisation fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality, and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and planet.

Learn more at undp.org or follow at @UNDP