

Media Update

23 May 2023

WFP

PRESS RELEASE

WFP WELCOMES CONTRIBUTION FROM THE PHILIPPINES TO SUPPORT FLOOD RESPONSE IN PAKISTAN

ISLAMABAD – The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomed a contribution of US\$ 100,000 from the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines to Pakistan for its ongoing flood response to reach the most vulnerable flood-affected communities with relief, recovery and rehabilitation support. The Ambassador-designate of the Republic of the Philippines to Pakistan, Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, handed over the donation to Rathi Palakrishnan, WFP’s Country Director a.i., during a ceremony held at the WFP office in Islamabad on 18 May.

"The Philippine Government is always ready to provide whatever help it could give to the people of Pakistan, with the Philippines and Pakistan considered as most vulnerable to climate change. This is an extension of our appreciation to Pakistan for its assistance after Typhoon Yolanda brought devastation to a large part of the Philippines", said Ambassador-designate Maria Agnes M. Cervantes.

The contribution comes at a critical time and will support thousands of people in need after the devastating floods last year. Malnutrition was already a major public health concern across the country before the floods, but now its acute form is an increasing concern in the worst-affected areas of Sindh and Balochistan, especially among children under 5.

“WFP is very thankful to the Government of the Philippines for the generous contribution and its solidarity with the Pakistani people, especially at a time when people are struggling with soaring food prices and record high inflation. These funds will enable WFP to provide much-needed relief to flood-affected people who do not know where their next meal will come from”, said Rathi Palakrishnan.

In its ongoing flood response, WFP has supported over 3.7 million flood-affected people with 77,745 mt of food and nutrition assistance and US\$ 23.3 million in cash-based transfers to date.

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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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UNFPA

PRESS RELEASE

STATE OF WORLD POPULATION REPORT PROVIDES INFINITE POSSIBILITIES FOR PAKISTAN

Islamabad, 23 May 2023 – The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Pakistan and the High Commission of Canada in Pakistan co-hosted an event on Tuesday to mark the launch of UNFPA's 2023 State of World Population (SWOP) report. The event was held at the Canadian High Commission and brought together representatives from the Government, the donor community, various UN agencies, civil society and other stakeholders.

This year's report, titled '8 Billion Lives, Infinite Possibilities: The Case for Rights and Choices', was launched globally on April 19. Presenting the latest trends with regard to population growth or decline, fertility rates, reproductive health, family planning, and migration around the globe as well as the debates and policies those developments are sparking, the report also cautions against trying to control women's bodies to address demographic concerns. Family planning, it suggests, must not be used as a means for achieving fertility targets but as a tool for empowering individuals. Women should be able to choose if, when, and how many children they want to have.

According to the report, Pakistan will be among the eight countries to account for half of the projected global population growth by 2050, along with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, the Philippines and the USA. Pakistan's population is currently estimated at 240.5 million and is projected to reach 403 million by 2050.

The report discusses "population anxieties" felt in different parts of the world, including in Pakistan, in reaction to population growth or, in some cases, to low fertility rates or other demographic trends.

Echoing the key message from the SWOP, Dr. Luay Shabaneh, UNFPA Representative in Pakistan, said there is population anxiety in the country, and a genuine linkage between population dynamics, poverty, nutrition and other socioeconomic dimensions recommending that these should be made clear in

the public policies and programmes in the country. He called for a radical rethink of how population numbers are framed, urging policymakers and other stakeholders to abandon narratives about population booms and busts to instead focus efforts on making sure that individuals, especially women, are able to freely make their own reproductive choices, a goal which has unfortunately not been met.

"The government needs to ensure that families are provided with all proper services, information, and understanding to implement their own reproductive decisions. Women are not accountable for any nation's problems; they are victims of social norms," said Dr. Shabaneh. "People need to talk about population issues in today's world of unease and uncertainty. Still, they must do so in new ways that uproot current biases and avoid perpetuating harmful, discriminatory norms and myths."

The High Commissioner of Canada to Pakistan, Her Excellency Ms. Leslie Scanlon, highlighted reproductive rights, gender equality and bodily autonomy as key priorities shared by UNFPA and Canada and highlighted Canada's support to family planning and reproductive health in Pakistan through the project Sehaat Mand Khaandaan. "Sadly, many women in Pakistan, like in a number of other countries, are unable to make choices about contraception, family size and their own health given cultural and economical factors, among others."

Such tremendous challenges and gaps are the reason why Canada stepped forward with a long-term commitment to SRHR with our global 10-year commitment. We do our best to reach the populations that need it the most", she added.

The event also gave the opportunity to members of the community, including a health practitioner, a woman and a youth leader for health and empowerment, to share their views on these issues and talk about their personal experiences.

UNFPA is committed to working with the government of Pakistan and other partners to address the challenges and opportunities presented by the country's growing population. The SWOP report strongly recommends that governments institute policies with gender equality and rights at their heart, such as parental leave programs, child tax credits, policies that promote gender equality in the workplace, and universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. These offer a proven formula that will reap economic

dividends and lead to resilient societies able to thrive no matter how populations change.

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