

Media Update

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UNOPS

PRESS RELEASE

Over 62 million People to Benefit as KOICA and UNOPS Complete Water Quality Monitoring Project

- In partnership with KOICA, UNOPS Pakistan is supporting the Ministry of Climate Change to strengthen the technical and coordination capacity of the Government of Pakistan to monitor drinking water quality in close collaboration with Punjab and KP provincial governments, PCRWR and Pak-EPA. This project will benefit over 62 million people in the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab & Islamabad.

Islamabad: In an event held in Islamabad, Senator Mr. Muhammad Sabir Shah (Chief Guest), Senator Ms. Keshoo Bai, Ms. Samar Ihsan, Additional Secretary EAD, Ms. Sadia Sarwat, Additional Secretary Ministry of Climate Change, His Excellency Mr Park Ki Jun, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Mr Yeon Je Ho, Country Director KOICA Pakistan and Ms Jennifer Ankhom-Khan, Country Manager UNOPS Pakistan, attended the closing ceremony of the project “Enhancing Water Quality Monitoring System to achieve SDG 6 in Islamabad, Punjab and KP”

Acknowledging the fundamental right to clean and safe drinking water, the initial and vital step is monitoring its quality. Pakistan faces a significant challenge, with almost 44% of the population lacking access to safe drinking water. In response, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) collaborated with UNOPS Pakistan to enhance water quality monitoring systems in Islamabad, Punjab, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan.

UNOPS Pakistan is implementing this project in collaboration with the Ministry of Climate Change Pakistan (MoCC), Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) and Public Health and Engineering Departments of Government of Punjab & KP.

The **\$4.4 million** project has been implemented in **35** district laboratories in Punjab, **8** divisional labs in KP and research and monitoring laboratories, PCRWR and Pak-EPA, in Islamabad.

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The project includes significant upgrades to water-quality testing laboratories, encompassing the procurement and installation of advanced laboratory equipment, minor infrastructure enhancements to ensure a safe working environment, capacity-building initiatives for laboratory staff and the WASH Cell of the MoCC, the introduction of a Management Information System (MIS) for improved coordination, and the provision of 8 vehicles transformed into water-quality testing laboratories for the Government of KP and 1 vehicle for PCRWR.

Quote Chief Guest: (Senator Mr. Muhammad Sabir Shah)

“We celebrate this significant achievement, taking pride in the successful project completion that saw the enhancement and equipping of laboratories -a pivotal move towards swift and precise water contaminant testing. This initiative underscores our commitment to climate resilience, exemplified through various measures, including the utilization of advanced technology to respond promptly to challenges in remote areas and emergencies.. Collaboratively with KOICA and UNOPS, we are strengthening Pakistan's capacity to tackle climate-related challenges and uphold the availability of safe and clean water for all”

In partnership with KOICA, UNOPS Pakistan has equipped the laboratories with latest technology to ensure quick, accurate and hassle free testing of contaminants such as arsenic, heavy metals and pathogenic bacteria through microbial testing in the drinking water thus enhancing the capacity of labs to test 16 mandatory water quality parameters and 18 optional parameters as per WHO guidelines. The mobile laboratories will play a vital role in testing the quality of water in far-flung areas and will also be used to respond to public

health emergencies during natural disasters or spread of waterborne diseases. UNOPS has also supported the Ministry of Climate Change to establish a WASH cell in Islamabad.

Korean Ambassador Mr. Ki-Jun Park Pakistan said:

“We are pleased to announce the successful completion of the water quality testing project. The Korean Government will continue to support the Government of Pakistan in different sectors, especially in the water sector. I believe that this project will improve people’s quality of life by enhancing water quality and will help in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”

UNOPS has also developed a Management Information Software (MIS) to strengthen the water-quality data management at provincial level and enable the Ministry of Climate Change to coordinate and monitor the drinking water quality in close collaboration with the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The MIS will also ensure smooth and paperless lab operations in the province of KP.

Miss Jennifer Ankrom-Khan, UNOPS Country Manager for Pakistan, said:

“In Pakistan, millions of people still live without access to clean and safe drinking water as it guarantees healthier and resilient communities. The absence of clean drinking water spreads waterborne diseases like cholera, typhoid, hepatitis A&E etc., and leads to malnutrition in children. With generous support from KOICA, we are delighted to support the Government of Pakistan and specifically the Ministry of Climate Change in providing the people of Pakistan with increased access to safe drinking water and improving their quality of life.”

Under the project, KOICA and UNOPS helped the government make progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: **3: Good Health and Wellbeing**; and **6: Clean Water and Sanitation** as it is aligned with the Pakistan Government’s Vision 2025 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Pakistan 2023-2027.

This project also supports achieving **SDG 13: Climate Action** as water is at the center of climate change; rising temperatures and climate related disasters are introducing deadly pathogens in the freshwater. Enhanced water-quality monitoring systems will identify the patterns of contamination, take mitigation measures accordingly and support the communities during climate change induced disasters.

About KOICA

The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) is a leading development cooperation agency to achieve global social values. KOICA's mandate is to contribute to the advancement of international cooperation through various projects that build friendly and collaborative relationships and mutual exchanges between Korea and partner countries and support the economic and social development in partner countries. Read more: www.koica.go.kr

About UNOPS

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) mission is to help people build better lives and countries achieve peace and sustainable development. We help the United Nations, governments and other partners to manage projects, and deliver sustainable infrastructure and procurement in an efficient way. Read more: www.unops.org

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