

Media Update

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UNDP

PRESS RELEASE

Together for Inclusive Justice: Over 100 Women Lawyers Convene at Balochistan's Historic First Women Lawyers Conference

16 May 2024 – Quetta: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Balochistan Bar Council organized Balochistan's first Women Lawyers Conference under the European Union (EU) funded 'Deliver Justice Project.' The conference focused on bringing women lawyers from all across Balochistan together so that they could learn from each others' lived experiences and develop ideas on how to make the justice sector in Balochistan more accessible and safer for women and marginalized individuals, may they be lawyers or litigants.

Over 100 women lawyers from across Balochistan gathered to celebrate their victories, highlight their barriers, and recommend solutions for a shift to a justice sector that responds well to the needs of women and other vulnerable groups in Balochistan. For this, the conference comprised panel discussions and a design thinking group work session with broad participation.

The Women Lawyers Conference is a flagship initiative of the UNDP Pakistan Rule of Law Programme, which has previously been held three times in 2016,

2019, and 2022 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to bring together women lawyers from across the province including the merged districts.

Dr Rubaba Khan Buledi, Advisor to the Balochistan Chief Minister for Women Development, attended the event as the chief guest. Rahib Khan Buledi, Chairperson Legal Education Committee, Balochistan Bar Council, and Zulfiqar Durrani, Head of Office, UNDP Sub-Office Balochistan, also attended the conference.

In her address, Dr Buledi underlined the importance of such initiatives to improve the representation of women in the justice sector. “We appreciate the commendable efforts of the European Union and UNDP Pakistan for bringing this flagship initiative to Balochistan. And we highly appreciate the tireless work of the Balochistan Bar Council for empowering women lawyers in the province. For any society to prosper and progress, every member of that society must be given equal opportunity to grow. Today, on this historic occasion of the first-ever Women Lawyers Conference in Balochistan, I would like to reaffirm the Government of Balochistan’s commitment to creating a women-friendly and safer environment for women lawyers and litigants to ensure justice for all.”

Jeroen Willems, Head of Cooperation, Delegation of the EU in Pakistan, welcomed the participants to the conference via video message. “To come together as women lawyers in Balochistan is a milestone and it is bringing justice closer to women and actually to all people in Balochistan. This country and this province need more women like you so all the best to you!”

Van Nguyen, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Pakistan, in her video message, stated, “At UNDP, under the EU funded ‘Deliver Justice Project,’ we are working with the justice sector in Balochistan to develop the capacity of women lawyers, equipping them with skills to represent clients and provide legal aid, especially to women and other marginalized groups.” Thanking the Balochistan Bar Council and the EU for their long-standing partnership, Van

Nguyen appreciated all women lawyers who are working tirelessly to overcome structural barriers in Balochistan, “You are an agent of change and we thank you for your service!”

The ‘Deliver Justice Project’ aims to support reform processes to ensure the delivery of people-centered justice, enhance access to justice for all, particularly women and marginalized groups, and improve service delivery of the security sector in line with constitutional safeguards and international standards. Implemented in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the Merged Districts, the programme is funded by the European Union and jointly implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The UNDP Rule of Law Programme is implementing a range of interventions to strengthen the security and justice sector governance in Pakistan.

For media inquiries and further information, please contact:

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Launch of Glaciers Inventory of Pakistan

16 May 2024 – Islamabad: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in close collaboration with the Embassy of Italy, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), Government of Gilgit Baltistan and EvK2CNR Italy presented the Glaciers Inventory of Pakistan. This initiative marks a significant step forward in understanding and preserving Pakistan's invaluable glacial resources.

Participating in the launch event were Mr. Abrar Ahmed Mirza, Chief Secretary, Gilgit Baltistan and other key stakeholders from the government, the development sector and academia. The event was hosted by H.E. Madam Marilina Armellin, Ambassador of Italy, at the Italian Residence in Islamabad.

The Italian Ambassador to Pakistan, Ms. Marilina Armellin, was extremely pleased to see the project “Glaciers and Students” come to fruition. She stated: “Italy’s long-standing tradition of scientific glacier studies in Pakistan goes back to 1929 when Prof. Ardito Desio founded EvK2-CNR. Having cultivated this legacy for almost a century, EvK2-CNR has conducted, with the invaluable support of the Italian Cooperation Agency-AICS and UNDP, the remarkably important study “Glaciers Inventory of Pakistan” that we are proud to present today. The study, with its invaluable inventory of data, will undoubtedly strengthen the capacity of local institutions for future planning in the field of climate hazards mitigation. It will also help ensure food security for local communities through the conservation of water resources for agriculture. The Government of Italy will continue to support the Pakistani Government’s efforts in fighting climate change, protecting vulnerable communities and ensuring food security”.

Dr. Samuel Rizk, the Resident Representative of UNDP Pakistan, emphasized that “The development of the Glaciers Inventory of Pakistan, cataloging over

13,000 glaciers, is an important building block for informed decision-making within the government institutions ultimately supporting Pakistan to increase its preparedness for climate change-induced disasters”. He further added, “UNDP is grateful for Italy’s support to improve the management of protected areas, promote innovative and local solutions, generate livelihood opportunities and uplift the economies of local communities in Pakistan’s mountainous regions.”

Mr. Agostino Da Polenza, the President of EvK2CNR Italy presented the Glaciers Inventory of Pakistan, followed by a presentation by the Glaciers & Students Project Manager Mr. Maurizio Gallo and his team of experts. Mr. Francesco Zatta, Head of Office, Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) Islamabad affirmed that “AICS Islamabad is firmly committed to strengthening the resilience and adaptation to climate change and natural disaster management within vulnerable communities of Pakistan. Our portfolio approach is based on three pillars that aim to mitigate the impact of climate change, enhance food security, and foster economic development with a focus on job creation. In all our projects, we strive to facilitate partnership and ownership. Glaciers and Students is a virtuous example of this development approach, putting at the core of our interventions an invaluable resource such as glaciers, by fostering knowledge and optimizing their management. We will uphold our commitment by implementing a new program that recognizes the critical role of water for development in Gilgit Baltistan.”

The Glaciers Inventory of Pakistan comprehensively maps and assesses the state of more than 13000 glaciers across the country, utilizing cutting-edge technology and scientific methodologies. This inventory will provide policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders with essential data to formulate evidence-based strategies for glacier conservation, water resource management, and climate adaptation.

During the launch event, attendees had the opportunity to hear about the methodology employed in the inventory, the key findings, and the implications

for environmental conservation efforts in Pakistan. Participants appreciated the support of the Italian Embassy, AICS Islamabad, UNDP and EvK2CNR Italy in realizing this initiative and their commitment to safeguarding Pakistan's natural heritage for present and future generations.

About Glaciers and Students Project:

The Glaciers and Students project, funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) Islamabad and implemented by EvK2CNR Italy together with UNDP Pakistan in the region of Gilgit Baltistan aims to prevent risks of hydrogeological hazards in Pakistan's mountain areas, by establishing an evidence-based assessment and monitoring system for mountain glaciers. The Glaciers Inventory of Pakistan is one of the major activities under the project. The project has developed research linkages between universities. A dedicated training and capacity building programme will be designed for the students to ensure long term sustainability of the project.

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