

## Pakistan celebrates first 'International Day of the Markhor'

This May 24<sup>th</sup> marks the first-ever celebration of 'International Day of the Markhor', proclaimed by the United Nations earlier this month



ISLAMABAD, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – Today Pakistan and the world celebrated 'International Day of the Markhor', Pakistan's iconic national animal, for the first time.

On May 2<sup>nd</sup> this year, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution, sponsored by Pakistan

and eight other countries, proclaiming May 24<sup>th</sup> as the International Day of the Markhor. It recognizes that preserving the Markhor, which was categorized as "near threatened" in 2014, and its natural habitat is an ecological imperative, given the animal's role in the overall ecosystem.

"Markhors have long been Pakistan's national treasure. Today, they have also become a world's treasure," said Mr. Mohamed Yahya, the UN Resident Coordinator in Pakistan. "Not only do Markhors play a crucial role in the ecosystem, but they offer a significant opportunity to bolster the economy, foster conservation efforts and promote sustainable tourism and economic growth, in line with the Government's 'Living Indus' initiative which the United Nations supports."

The Markhor population in Pakistan has kept increasing for the past ten years, reaching between 3,500 and 5,000 today thanks to the country's proactive conservation programmes, and community engagement. Around the world, however, their numbers are declining -- there are less than 6,000 mature individuals across the planet today.

Famous for its long corkscrew-shaped horns, this iconic and ecologically significant species can be found across the mountainous regions of Central and South Asia, including in Pakistan. The greatest threats to its survival are habitat loss, illegal hunting, including poaching, and climate change.

A skilled climber, the Markhor can traverse slanted, almost vertical mountainous terrain and can be found between 600 and 3,500 meters in elevation.

The resolution invites people all over the world to celebrate that day and encourages conservation efforts, while highlighting the importance of continued international and regional cooperation.

Pakistan's 'Living Indus' initiative, which aims to protect and restore the environment, was designated a 'World Restoration Flagship' project by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) in February this year. It is led by the Government of Pakistan and supported by the United Nations.

**Note to editors:**

Official UN page on International Day of the Markhor:  
[www.un.org/en/observances/markhor-day](http://www.un.org/en/observances/markhor-day)

Information about Pakistan's 'Living Indus' initiative:  
[www.livingindus.com](http://www.livingindus.com)

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