

Media Update

11 February 2025

IFAD

MEDIA ADVISORY

FAD's 48th Governing Council

Eradicating hunger and poverty by 2030 - how can we get back on track in an increasingly fragmented and uncertain world?

WHAT: Press Conference with the King of Lesotho, President of Sierra Leone, IFAD President, and Indigenous leader

WHO:

- King Letsie III of Lesotho, African Union Nutrition Champion
- Julius Maada Bio, President of Sierra Leone
- Alvaro Lario, President of IFAD
- Dayana Dokera Domico, Indigenous and youth activist, leader of the Emberá People

WHEN: Wednesday 12 February 2025, at 12:00 noon (CET)

WHERE: IFAD Headquarters in Rome, Via Paolo di Dono, 44, Rome in person or online via zoom

Hunger and extreme poverty rates have remained high in recent years and show little sign of receding drastically by 2030. As global alliances, priorities and development financing become more complex and uncertain, and climate change continues to accelerate, tackling agricultural and rural development challenges requires renewed action, strategic focus, and innovative thinking and financial instruments. In January, African leaders adopted the [2025 Kampala Declaration](#) setting the African Union's agrifood systems strategy for the next 10 years.

IFAD President Alvaro Lario will share his insights on how to broker and channel financing to rural areas and his vision to accelerate rural development despite numerous challenges.

On the back of a devastating drought in Southern Africa and persistent malnutrition on the continent, King Letsie III of the Kingdom of Lesotho will provide his unique perspective on the country's approach to tackling food insecurity. A "[state of National Food Insecurity Disaster](#)" was declared last July and more than 400,000 people are expected to experience crisis levels of acute hunger through March 2025.

The [President of Sierra Leone, Julius Maada Bio](#), will speak from his experience of leading a country coming out of a decades-long civil war - from fragility to prosperity. He is keen to advocate on behalf of Africa in its journey to develop with self-determination, dialogue and cooperation.

[Dayana Dokera Domico](#), is a Colombian indigenous and youth activist and the leader of the Emberá People. Actively involved in peace talks in the country, she will call for investments to end hunger and poverty, seeking equitable solutions that are [driven by the indigenous communities themselves](#), that help communities adapt to climate change, respect traditional indigenous knowledge and safeguard biodiversity and natural resources.

Hunger and poverty are most entrenched in rural areas of developing countries where nearly half of the global population lives. Yet, small-scale farmers produce one third of the world's food and seventy per cent of the food consumed in low- and middle-income countries. Despite their strategic importance, rural areas suffer from chronic underinvestment.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS FOR MEDIA

WHAT: Inaugural ceremony of IFAD's 48th Governing Council

WHEN: Wednesday 12 February 2025, 09:30 – 10:30, attend in person or follow online.

WHO: The inaugural ceremony will feature

- **Alvaro Lario, President, IFAD**
- **Giancarlo Giorgetti, Minister for Economy and Finance, Italy**
- **King Letsie III, Lesotho**
- **Julius Maada Bio, President, Sierra Leone**
- **Noora Sulaiman Salem Al Fassam, Minister for Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investments, Kuwait**
- **Hussein Bashe, Minister for Agriculture, Tanzania**
- **Dr Muhammad Yunus, Chief Adviser of the interim Government, Bangladesh (video statement)**
- **Muhammad Sulaiman Al Jasser, Chairman, Islamic Development Bank**
- **Rosângela Lula da Silva, First Lady, Brazil**

This year, IFAD's annual Governing Council brings together heads of state, ministers, high-level representatives of international financial institutions and multilateral development banks, Indigenous Peoples representatives and others from rural communities from all over the world to explore how to catalyse investments at the first mile, i.e. rural areas where the world's poorest live and grow the food that nourishes the planet.

Global leaders discussions will also contribute to global conversations towards the 4th [International Conference on Financing for Development](#), the [Nutrition For Growth](#) summit, ambitious [G7](#) and [G20](#) meetings and the implementation of the [Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty](#).

Check the [programme of leaders dialogues to follow online](#).

Accreditation to the Governing Council and the press conference

Deadline to request accreditation is **14:00 (CET) on Tuesday 11 February 2025**.

Please email ifadnewsroom@ifad.org with "Press Accreditation" in the subject line and attach:

- a copy of a valid press card or letter of assignment on company stationery.
- a copy of a valid ID (passport, identity card).

For journalists attending in person:

Please have all ID materials with you to gain access to IFAD premises. For more information on the accreditation process: ifadnewsroom@ifad.org

A workspace will be available for journalists in IFAD. Refreshments will be served. Light lunch will be available at 13:00.

For journalists participating online:

The zoom link will be sent to you before the press conference and once your accreditation has been received.

Translation in English, Spanish, French, Arabic available in person and on zoom.

[More information and complete IFAD Governing Council programme](#)

For more information or interview requests:

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UNESCO

PRESS RELEASE

Empowering Women in STEM: UNESCO Marks 10th Anniversary of International Day of Women and Girls in Science in Pakistan

Islamabad, 11 February 2025 – In celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, UNESCO, in collaboration with the Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO (PNCU), hosted an inspiring panel discussion titled "Unpacking STEM Careers: Her Voice in Science" at Islamabad College for Girls, F-6/2, Islamabad, Pakistan. The event aimed to encourage young girls to explore careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) by connecting them with accomplished female scientists and role models.

Welcoming the panelists and attendees, Ms. Sabah Faisal, Principal of Islamabad College for Girls, commended UNESCO's efforts in bridging the gap between students and scientists. She emphasized the significance of such engagements, stating that firsthand interactions with successful women in STEM provide students with inspiration, guidance, and a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in these fields.

The panel featured renowned female scientists, including Prof. Dr. Saima Shabbir, a tenured professor of Materials Science and Engineering, Dr. Sarwat Ismail, an esteemed member of the Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, and Prof. Dr. Iram Murtaza, a distinguished biochemist and molecular cell biologist, with Ms. Alima Bibi from UNESCO moderating the session. Through compelling discussions and personal narratives, the panelists shed light on their journeys in STEM, celebrated the achievements of women in science, and addressed structural barriers that hinder women's participation in the field.

In his closing remarks, UNESCO Officer-in-Charge, Mr. Kar Hung Antony Tam, highlighted the ongoing gender disparity in STEM, noting that women account

for only 33% of researchers globally. He called the event an essential step towards fostering an inclusive and diverse scientific community, emphasizing that empowering women in STEM is not just about gender equality — it is about unlocking innovation, broadening perspectives, and driving sustainable progress.

"Together, let us create pathways for young women, invest in mentorship, and build a future where every girl has the opportunity to thrive in STEM," he stated.

The discussion concluded with a resounding call for greater collaboration among policymakers, educators, and industry leaders to support women in STEM. By celebrating the contributions of women scientists and empowering future generations, UNESCO reaffirmed its commitment to fostering a more inclusive and diverse scientific landscape in Pakistan.

About UNESCO

With 194 Member States, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization contributes to peace and security by leading multilateral cooperation on education, science, culture, communication and information. Headquartered in Paris, UNESCO has offices in 54 countries and employs over 2300 people. UNESCO oversees more than 2000 World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks; networks of Creative, Learning, Inclusive and Sustainable Cities; and over 13 000 associated schools, university chairs, training and research institutions.

UNHABITAT

PRESS RELEASE

UN-Habitat Building Resilience of School Infrastructure in Collaboration with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and KP Education Department

Islamabad, 10 February 2025 – UN-Habitat is supporting the Government of Pakistan in enhancing the resilience of the school infrastructure in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Education Department through its project on Disaster Resilient School Infrastructure (DRSI). The 4th Project Steering Committee meeting held in Islamabad bringing together key stakeholders to discuss the progress to strengthen school infrastructure in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The meeting highlighted the importance of building resilient school infrastructure to ensure safe and secure learning environments for children in disaster-prone regions. The meeting was chaired by **Mr. Masood Ahmad**, Secretary of the Elementary and Secondary Education Department, KP

Mr. Jawed Ali Khan, HPM, UN-Habitat, outlined the project's objectives and explained that the project is promoting resilience of educational infrastructures through structural and non-structural measures and provision of necessary service infrastructure including WASH facilities. The project is contributing to the implementation of the Sendai Framework aiming to reduce lives lost, numbers of people affected, and economic damage from natural disasters. Through this project, UN-Habitat made a tangible impact on gender equality in education. The retrofitted schools saw an increase in female enrollment and attendance. In some schools, girls de up 44% of the beneficiaries of the project, demonstrating how the project helped to directly address the unique challenges faced by girls in disaster-affected areas. This progress is a reflection of UN-Habitat's commitment to gender equality, and the project has been submitted for the **UN-Habitat Gender Impact Award 2025**.

Mr. Masood Amad, Secretary of the Elementary and Secondary Education Department, KP, expressed his gratitude to UN-Habitat and JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) for their support in building resilience in the school infrastructure of selected districts. He emphasized the importance of

earthquake-resistant schools buildings, which play a pivotal role in safeguarding both lives and education. He reaffirmed the Education Department's commitment to ensuring safe and accessible learning spaces for all students.

Mr. Naoki Miyata, Chief Representative of JICA Pakistan, while addressing to the 4th Project Steering Committee meeting emphasized on addressing the impacts of natural disasters, complex emergencies, and displacement on education. He stressed the need for long-term solutions to build resilience through both structural and non-structural measures. Mr. Miyata reaffirmed JICA's commitment to providing technical and financial support to further strengthen the resilience of school infrastructure and enhance education quality, contributing to global frameworks like the Sendai Framework and Sustainable Development Goal 11.

Mr. Hamid Mumtaz Deputy Programme Manger UN-Habitat shared that more than 80% Project activities have been completed. Notably, the project has gone beyond its original scope, with voluntarily undertaking additional activities such as constructing boundary walls and improving accessibility, further enhancing the safety and functionality of schools. The schools retrofitted by UN-Habitat were also evaluated against EDGE certification criteria, and the buildings were found to meet the necessary requirements for certification.

The participants emphasized on the need for continued support to expand the support to build resilient infrastructures in KP region. As the meeting concluded, **Mr. Jawed Ali Khan** reiterated the need for joint efforts from JICA, UN-Habitat, the Education Department, and other donors to continue building resilient school infrastructure.