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The first issue of the United Nations Pakistan magazine for 2018 focuses on migration and refugees.

The United Nations Secretary-General’s report ‘Making Migration Work for All’, released in January to the UN General Assembly shares the vision of how to better manage migration for the benefit of all—the migrants themselves and their host communities and societies of origin. Currently, Pakistan is hosting 1.4 million Afghan refugees, and the country has shown strong commitment to their protection. In this issue, some of the challenges and hopes of Afghan refugees living in Pakistan are highlighted through first-hand stories, as well as the efforts made by the United Nations agencies to manage, integrate and assist them. Examples of these include providing access to free education and training, humanitarian and development assistance, and legal documentation.

In light of the Social Day for Justice, the spotlight is on the world’s 150 million migrant workers, many of whom face exploitation, discrimination and violence and lack even the most basic protections. This is particularly true for women, who make up 44 per cent of migrant workers.

This issue also has a special focus on the challenges related to climate change and what efforts have been accomplished in the country, following the Paris agreement signed in 2015. 17 of the 18 hottest years ever recorded have occurred since 2000 highlighting the need to take swift action. In Pakistan, climate change has contributed to devastating floods in 2010, as well as to drought in Balochistan and flash flooding in Chitral. The glaciers in Pakistan’s north are particularly vulnerable, a vulnerability passed on to the millions who depend on their meltwater to water their crops. Initiatives such as improving preparedness for tsunamis, providing communities with sustainable sources of income through returns for sustainably harvested products, and mainstreaming climate finance into government development planning are all covered in this edition.

In this ambit, we highlight the issues related to climate change faced by Pakistan’s mountain regions in Hindu Kush, Karakoram and the Western Himalayas, where initiatives led by UN agencies such as the UNDP Mountains vs Market place project ensure these vulnerable ecosystems are protected and livelihoods enhanced by sustainable production. We are also excited to present the profile of Samina Baig, who was appointed as the National Goodwill Ambassador for Pakistan by UNDP this month. As the first Pakistani woman to have climbed Mount Everest, Ms. Baig will lead efforts to raise awareness and partnerships around the Sustainable Development goals related to climate change and environmental protection.

In this issue we also share information on several development activities undertaken by different UN agencies in the areas of employment, green growth, drug and crime prevention, gender equality, and education. In other news, we are pleased to share news stories about the projects about signing the agreement to empower more than 20,000 youth in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; supporting media professionals to foster peaceful democratic discourse in Pakistan, and a project that will assist 15,000 out of school children in the country to achieve quality primary education.

I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the UN Communications Group and the UN Country Team for their continued support for this magazine and for working in partnership to communicate and help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in Pakistan.

Neil Buhne
Resident Coordinator, United Nations Pakistan and Acting Director, UNIC
Managing migration: one of the most urgent and profound tests of international cooperation in our time

The report Making Migration Work for All was released to the UN General Assembly on 11 January, and is the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres’ contribution to the process of developing a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The report offers the Secretary-General’s vision for constructive international cooperation, examining how to better manage migration, for the benefit of all – the migrants themselves, their host communities and their societies of origin. The Secretary-General emphasizes that “migration is an engine of economic growth, innovation and sustainable development”. The report highlights clear evidence that, despite real challenges, migration is beneficial both for migrants and host communities, in economic and social terms. The Global Compact will provide Member States with the opportunity to maximize those benefits and better address migration challenges. The report points to an estimated 258 million international migrants, or 3.4 per cent of the world’s population, with levels expected to increase. While the majority of migrants move between countries in a safe, orderly and regular manner, a significant minority of migrants face life-threatening conditions. The report notes that around 6 million migrants are trapped in forced labour, and that recent large-scale movements of migrants and refugees, in regions including the Sahel and South-east Asia, have created major humanitarian crises. The report calls for the Global Compact to include a special strategy to address this.

It also underscores the economic benefits of migration. Migrants spend 85% of their earnings in their host communities and send the remaining 15% to their countries of origin. In 2017 alone, migrants sent home approximately $600 billion in remittances, which is three times all official development assistance. Women, who make up 48% of all migrants, send home a higher percentage of their earnings than men, yet they face more restrictive labour policies and employment customs than men, thus restricting their economic income and social contribution. Member States are urged ‘to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls’ as a central element of the Global Compact.

The Secretary-General encourages governments to work together to establish a productive and humane global migration system which would enhance, rather than detract from sovereignty. If governments open more legal pathways for migration, based on realistic analyses of labour market needs, there is likely to be fewer border crossings, fewer migrants working outside the law and fewer abuses of irregular migrants. The Secretary-General commits to work within the UN system to identify news ways to help Member States manage migration better based on the Global Compact.
Social justice for migrant workers is in everyone’s interest

“Fair treatment for the world’s 150 million migrant workers is in everyone’s interest, and requires labour migration to be well-governed and effective”

Social justice is a cornerstone of lasting peace and prosperous coexistence.

On this World Day of Social Justice, we are focusing on the world’s 150 million migrant workers, many of whom face exploitation, discrimination and violence and lack even the most basic protections. This is particularly true for women, who make up 44 per cent of migrant workers. Most migration today is linked, directly or indirectly, to the search for decent work opportunities. But many migrant workers end up trapped in jobs with low pay and unsafe and unhealthy working conditions, often in the informal economy, without respect for their labour and other human rights. They often have to pay high recruitment fees to get a job, on average over a year’s wages – there is high vulnerability to forced labour and child labour.

Migrant workers like all workers are entitled to fair treatment and fair treatment for migrant workers is also key to preserving the social fabric of our societies and to sustainable development.

If labour migration is well governed, fair and effective, it can deliver benefits and opportunities for migrant workers, their families and their host communities. It can balance labour supply and demand, help develop and transfer skills at all skill levels, contribute to social protection systems, foster business innovation, and enrich communities both culturally and socially.

Good governance will foster strong cooperation across migration corridors and regions. It should be guided by international labour standards, in particular the fundamental principles and rights at work and the relevant ILO and UN Conventions. The ILO’s Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration and the General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment offer further guidance.

The ILO is encouraging the adoption of fair labour migration governance frameworks at all levels – global, regional and national. These include a comprehensive, integrated and ‘whole of government’ approach that engages labour ministries together with business, and employers’ and workers’ organizations – those on the frontlines of labour markets.

In 2016 the United Nations General Assembly decided to develop a Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration to improve the governance of migration, to address the challenges and to strengthen the contribution of migrants to sustainable development.

We can choose to make labour migration a win-win situation for migrants and host communities. How we, as the international community, develop and help Member States implement this Compact will be instrumental in determining the future course of labour migration.

Guy Ryder
Director-General, ILO
Migration is often associated with economic burden, resource allocation and social integration challenges for the host countries. Due to volatile political, economic and security environments that often trigger mass exoduses, the emergency nature of the movement and the immediate conditions upon arrival, the negative effects and looming challenges tend to receive more attention. Meanwhile, the benefits of migration are not apparent in the short term, which makes it easy to miss the positive aspects when discussing migration. Yet, we can no longer envisage our economies, societies or cultures in isolation without accounting for human mobility, which is expected to increase in the near future. IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants. If managed effectively, migration can yield positive results for all, and countries that integrate immigrants successfully are less likely to feel the stress and more likely to reap the benefits. Moreover, facilitation of human mobility is not imperative on the basis on human rights alone, but also to cope with demographic, social and economic transformations that different countries are going through. Migration can bring great benefits, fuelling growth, innovation and entrepreneurship in both the countries of origin and destination.

According to the IOM-Gallup 2012-2014 poll, a third of respondents worldwide would like to see immigration levels in their countries decrease. It is important to note that not only does a negative public perception of migration restrict the ability of policy-makers to manage migration effectively but an obstructive policy may also influence opinions against migration in the society, especially in countries where it is linked with unrest, violence and insecurity. To curb discrimination against migrants and the general public’s fears about migration, we need to continue to monitor, diversify and strengthen evidence about various aspects of migration, including but not limited to flow monitoring at the borders, vulnerability profiling and socio-economic surveys. Moreover, there is a need for states to adopt policies that incorporate migration into their social and economic growth planning to gauge positive outcomes of migration through capacity building of the migrants and host communities, and to allow for inclusive development.

Davide Terzi
Chief of Mission, IOM Pakistan
Committed to Afghan refugees, committed to Pakistan

I took up my new role in October last year. It quickly became apparent that most, if not all people across Pakistan knew that Afghan refugees have been living here for nearly forty years. However, outside of the region the hospitality that successive governments and generations of Pakistanis have shown towards Afghan refugees and the length of this crisis are not always so well-known.

This changed as 2018 kicked off. The situation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan was brought back into the political and media spotlight, including on the international stage. On 3 January, the federal cabinet took a decision to renew registered Afghan refugees’ right to remain in Pakistan for one-month. This decision took observers by surprise – many were expecting the period to be longer. In the days that followed, Afghan refugees were uncertain about their future stay in the country.

At the end of January, the federal cabinet took a second decision to extend the stay of registered Afghan refugees – those with Proof of Registration cards issued by the government of Pakistan – for a further two months. This extension of sixty days ends on 31 March.

Due to the current environment, there is likely to be an increase in the number of Afghan refugees returning home during the course of this year. The UNHCR programme to support refugee families who want to return to Afghanistan opens its two centres – one in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and one in Balochistan – on 1 March.

All refugees have the right to return home and when that decision is taken it must be voluntary and well-informed. Both the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan support this fundamental right, which is a cornerstone of international refugee protection.

The repatriation process over the coming months for those who choose to return must be carried out in a dignified way – in safety – and with special attention given to those who are most vulnerable – including babies, young children and the elderly.

UNHCR will be working closely with the government of Pakistan and other partners to ensure the rights of refugees are fully protected during this process. UNHCR stands ready to do all it can to support the needs and protect the rights of all Afghan refugees.

We have been committed to this cause for decades in Pakistan with the support of the international community. As we enter a new chapter at the beginning of 2018 – we remain fully committed to stepping up to protect the refugees we are here to serve.

Ruvendrini Menikdiwela
Representative, UNHCR Pakistan
UNHCR, a pillar in Pakistan since 1979

The UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR in Pakistan has been assisting Afghans who fled conflict in their homeland since 1979. For nearly four decades, Afghan refugees have been one of the largest groups of persons of concern to UNHCR worldwide. Currently Pakistan is hosting 1.4 million Afghan refugees. The majority (74 per cent) are the second or the third generation born in Pakistan. An estimated 68 per cent are living in urban or semi-urban settings while 32 per cent reside in 54 refugee villages, located mainly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Punjab provinces. Out of the 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees, approximately 64 per cent are children or youth (24 years and below).

Pakistan has shown strong commitment to the protection of Afghan refugees. A total of 2.15 million Afghan refugees were registered and issued with Proof of Registration (PoR) cards by the Pakistani authorities, with support from UNHCR in 2006 and 2007. The PoR cards are an important form of identification, attesting the refugees’ legal right of stay in Pakistan, and providing effective protection against arrest and forcible return. The validity of PoR cards have been extended for different periods until the end of 2017.

UNHCR is responsible for facilitating the voluntary, safe and dignified return of Afghan refugees. UNHCR assists them in the initial phase of return and also supports and advocates for their effective reintegration. UNHCR Pakistan supports them in seeking durable solutions through inter-linked interventions in the areas of health, education and livelihoods. A legal aid and assistance
programme is implemented countrywide through nine advice and legal aid centres. The programme is focused on reducing arbitrary arrest and detention, family matters, and preventing Sexual and Gender-based violence (SGBV) while responding to the needs of its survivors.

UNHCR Pakistan is providing students with access to free primary education and secondary education in one refugee village in Balochistan through 171 schools, 48 satellites classes, 45 home-based girls schools and 13 early childhood education centres in three refugee villages. Around 56,000 refugee children living in 54 refugee villages across Pakistan receive education through these interventions. UNHCR also provides tertiary-level scholarships to Afghan refugee youth through the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI). UNHCR continues to support the provision of basic health services in refugee villages. Refugee women and children enrolled in preventive and reproductive health care programmes received antenatal, perinatal, postnatal care and routine immunisation services.

The Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) initiative supports infrastructure, environment, education and health systems in refugee hosting areas to mitigate against the impact of an additional population living alongside local communities. The initiative also aims to create and support basic services through development interventions both for Afghan refugees and for Pakistani communities.
Making a difference through the refugee and hosting community programme

The UN refugee agency’s priority in Pakistan is to achieve lasting solutions for one of the largest and most protracted refugee situations in the world. The presence of Afghan refugees has affected the Pakistani host communities they live in, however, refugees have also contributed greatly to the country, including economically, for example in the areas of agriculture and carpet weaving.

The Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) programme was designed to provide humanitarian and development assistance to both Afghan refugees and the Pakistanis. The RAHA initiative was launched in 2009 by the government of Pakistan’s Ministry of States and Frontier Regions and the Economic Affairs Division in close partnership with a consortium of UN agencies, to address the needs of refugees and redress the profound and multi-faceted impact of the protracted displacement on the local host communities.

The international donor community has supported the programme in the spirit of international responsibility sharing as well as in recognition of Pakistan’s continued hospitality to Afghan refugees and by extension its contribution to the global public good.

Urooj Saifi, Senior Coordinator for the RAHA programme explained that RAHA invests into national public service delivery systems and strengthens local institutions and capacities to ensure sustainability and cost-effectiveness, benefitting
both refugees and their host communities.

RAHA has two key components, the first involves refugee hosting areas, delivering programmes in rural and urban locations that continue to host Afghan refugees. This aims to maintain temporary protection space, improve living standards and promote peaceful co-existence and social cohesion among refugees and their Pakistani host communities.

The second component involves refugee affected areas, and aims to rehabilitate the areas that were historically heavily populated by Afghan refugees, but from where the majority of refugees have already been repatriated. This compensates the Pakistani communities for the economic, social and environmental impact of past displacement.

RAHA acts as a vehicle for youth empowerment through inter-linked activities in the sectors of education, skills development and livelihoods support. Investment in Pakistani and Afghan youth improves resilience and contributes to the future prosperity of both countries.

Since its launch in 2009, the programme has helped over 10.6 million people (89 per cent of beneficiaries are Pakistanis) across the country through some 4,500 projects worth more than USD 200 million.
Refugees and the sustainable development goals

More than 4.3 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan since 2002 under the largest voluntary return programme in UNHCR’s history. Around 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees still remain in the country.

Within the framework of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), UNHCR in Pakistan prioritises efforts to build resilience, empowerment and potential for solutions through SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) and SDG 4 (Quality education), with an emphasis on children and youth who constitute nearly 70 per cent of the Afghan refugee population in the country.

The inclusion of refugees in the sustainable development agenda signals recognition of the link between development and displacement challenges.

The UN refugee agency and partners are working closely with the government of Pakistan to support its policy of enabling access to education, including in Pakistani public schools for all children, irrespective of their nationality.

UNHCR continues to support the provision of basic health services in refugee villages across the country. One of the main objectives is to facilitate equitable access to primary health care services for refugees focusing on the vulnerable and marginalised groups, in particular women and children.

The Sustainable Development Goals underscore the importance of development investments in preventing and resolving displacement and identifying comprehensive solutions with a view to strengthening resilience and minimising dependency.

Close collaborations between humanitarian and development actors are critical, particularly in the context of protracted refugee situations such as those faced by Pakistan, when refugees reside in exile for prolonged periods of time, often in limbo and with no solutions in sight.

Joint investments of humanitarian and development actors to enhance access to, and quality of national public service delivery systems and local capacities yield immense benefits for both refugees and their host communities.

UNHCR appreciates the government’s efforts to provide refugee children with access to education through inclusion in government schools, alongside their Pakistani peers, in line with the government’s commitment to SDG 4 of ensuring inclusive and equitable education for all.

This is fully aligned with the 18th Constitutional Amendment (Article 25-A), which stipulates free and compulsory education as a constitutional right of all children on the territory of Pakistan.
Thirty-six years serving refugees in Pakistan

UNHCR paid tribute to Muhammad Ayaz who has served the organisation as a driver for nearly four decades.

Born in 1958 in Sheikhan on the outskirts of Peshawar, Muhammad Ayaz fondly remembers his uncle teaching him how to drive his old Bedford truck. He was always inspired by the United Nations and always thought that there was something charismatic about UN drivers and their vehicles. While speaking during his farewell ceremony earlier this month he said this was a perfect opportunity to fulfill his humanitarian ambitions.

Ayaz said drivers had a lot of work to do at UNHCR, right from the start. While the Afghan war was ongoing he claims his job was not merely that of a driver. He was fully engaged in his team, helping the refugees who were pouring into Pakistan. He helped to carry the tents and pitched them way past midnight. He claims this work gave him instant gratification, that he felt like he was sheltering his own family.

Although Muhammad Ayaz reminisces fondly over his long journey with UNHCR, he has had his share of close calls during his career. In one particular incident in 1990, Ayaz recalls travelling along with other staff to North Waziristan Agency. On an empty stretch of road, their vehicle was stopped at gunpoint and they were told to drive slowly to an isolated spot. The gunman informed them that they would be held hostages for ransom and in exchange for the release of other group members from prison. The kidnappers had been on the lookout for any government vehicle crossing the area. Unfortunately, they came across the UN vehicle and seeing a foreigner on board they were convinced that they could use this to their advantage. Ayaz bravely stepped forward to explain they did not work for the government but belonged to a humanitarian organization, and kidnapping and detaining them would not serve a purpose. To the relief of the whole team, this argument somehow convinced the kidnappers to release them unharmed.

Ayaz feels happy to have retired in good health and feels honored to have worked for an organization as prestigious as UNHCR.
Livelihoods and skill development

UNHCR Pakistan has been providing Afghan refugees and their host communities with limited support in livelihoods development by imparting market-led vocational skills trainings and provision of income-generating tools and business start-up equipment. The most recent and current livelihood interventions of UNHCR include livelihoods support through provision of vocational and technical training classes of three to six months. Trainings courses have been provided to both men and women through the partners and these institutions. Upon successful completion each trainee is provided with a certificate and a tool kit. In some cases, trainees are linked to the business community or industries for exploring employment opportunity. The trainees acquired additional basic skills that positively impacted their household management and savings. For example, the women trained in sewing and stitching were able to produce...
clothing for their families and thereby save the resources they would have otherwise used to purchase these items in the markets.

UNHCR Pakistan has further assisted the target populations in learning artisanal skills: male and female trainees are currently producing 43 different types of crafts. Further refinement of the quality of the products and linking into markets can help the trainees to produce high-quality crafts for national and international markets. Within the implementation of UNHCR’s health strategy, UNHCR has supported 80 Afghan youths to learn paramedic skills.
Falling through the cracks: undocumented and invisible

Without proper documentation, migrants are often unable to have the basic rights that citizens enjoy. This directly affects their socioeconomic conditions such as their level of education, employment, social welfare, housing, healthcare, mobility, and lack of protection from arbitrary detention. When large numbers of migrants are undocumented, the result is entire communities and neighborhoods that are alienated and marginalized. This also creates a challenge for the host government.

Thousands of Afghan families residing in Pakistan are now applying for Afghan Citizen Cards, which has provided hope for systematic and orderly management of the undocumented population. 28-year-old Kabir Khan and his family are among these individuals.

Kabir was born in Pakistan after his father migrated in 1978 from Kunar province, Afghanistan. Since then, he has been living near Pandho Chowk in Peshawar City. He has no formal education and as result had limited livelihood opportunities. For many years he served as a salesman in the leather market of Peshawar. Father to six young children, Kabir has struggled to provide for his family, as he had to quit his job in the leather market due to police presence and army check posts where identity proof was frequently demanded. To avoid detention and deportation due to his undocumented status, he opted to become a daily wage laborer in the local vegetable market near his home. As a result his income has considerably decreased and the family struggles to make ends meet. Kabir also had to forgo opportunities to take part in small-scale businesses since he could not access banks and other government facilities without proper documentation.

In addition to his inability to avail opportunities himself, he worries about the future of his young children. He has not been able to access government health facilities for free treatment of his ailing mother, and cannot afford to go to private clinics due to his meagre income. Kabir wants his children to receive an education so that they may have better opportunities. When he learned about the documentation exercise, he repeatedly tried to get an appointment. Finally he was able to visit the documentation center in Peshawar through the ACC call center established with the support of IOM, to get his family registered. Kabir is hopeful about the application process: after having lived in Pakistan his whole life, for the first time he may be able to move without fear of detention.
**Afghan refugee teacher Fatima Limar**

50-year-old Fatima Limar is an Afghan refugee who takes pride in supporting other refugees. She has taught at one of the schools in Rawalpindi since 1997. Fatima has also been serving as an outreach volunteer with UNHCR. She has a strong network with other refugee women. She arranges sessions with them and informs UNHCR about the issues of fellow refugee women. Fatima says “I feel satisfied when I help resolve any problem.”

Fatima Limar with Afghan refugee girl students. © UNHCR/Asif Shahzad

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**UNHCR’s partner: ICMC Shahan Abbas**

Shahan Abbas, has worked with the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) since 2010. He has been working with refugees in Pakistan who managed to reach the country with a hope to start a new life. He believes that he is very lucky to be a part of this programme because he has contributed in different projects for Afghan and non-Afghan refugees in the fields of education, health care and legal services. He feels that the protracted refugee situation demands more coordinated efforts.

Shahan Abbas distributing the certificate to an Afghan refugee student. Photo credit. © UNHCR/Asif Shahzad
UNHCR’s partner: ICMC
Nergis Ameer Khan

Nergis Ameer Khan joined the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) in February 2014. The ICMC provides basic essential services to Afghan and non-Afghan refugees.

“This was my first experience working with refugees. Prior to this, ‘refugee’ was just a word for me. I knew that millions of Afghans reside in Pakistan but their sufferings, feelings and issues were unknown to me.

“In more than four years I closely work with refugees. I wanted to be their friend and someone they could trust. I started counselling them in shelter homes and to my surprise they listened, understood and trusted me.”

Nergis Ameer Khan interacting with Afghan and non-Afghan refugees.
Photo credit. © UNHCR/Asif Shahzad

UNHCR’s partner: SHARP
Syed Liaqat Banori

Syed Liaqat Banori, chairman of the Society for Human Rights and Prisoners’ Aid (SHARP), a local NGO and UNHCR’s partner in Pakistan stressed the need for adopting the national refugee law in Pakistan.

“Refugees are always vulnerable and they should be treated on a humanitarian basis,” he said.

The people and government of Pakistan have showed exceptional hospitality to Afghans for four decades despite not being party to the refugee convention and this gesture is not only recognised at international level, but acknowledged and widely respected by refugees as well.

The people of Pakistan offered refuge to their Afghan brethren in accordance with the teaching of Islam that is why there has been no clash or conflict between Afghan refugees and host communities.

Liaqat Banori, Chairman SHARP talking to the Afghan refugees.
Disability is not inability: Miraj Bibi’s determination to achieve her dreams

Heading towards the ‘Safe from the Start’ centre with a hobbled walk, a 27-year-old Afghan refugee teacher is confident and indifferent to those who judge her. Miraj Bibi was born with a rounded back in Quetta, Balochistan. Her spine developed a twist that later affected her legs. Her family moved to Pakistan from Logar, a province in the eastern part of Afghanistan. Her father was strictly against educating girls, so it was a struggle for her to go to school. After passing the 10th grade, she waited for years for an opportunity to use her knowledge and skills.

In 2017, her mother introduced her to the ‘Safe from the Start’ project, which is funded directly by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and supported by Japanese clothing brand UNIQLO. The project was first run in Quetta in 2016 and targeted 130 women. In 2017, the project involves 100 women in the Ghausabad region in Quetta and offers training in kilim making, machine and hand embroidery, stitching and tailoring.

Miraj immediately felt the project provided a safe working environment for her, and she was recruited as a teacher at the centre. Over time, she has developed a reputation as a courageous and bright girl, who inspires fellow teachers, management and students.

Not letting her father’s strict traditional ideas about educating females get in the way, she persevered through her studies. Along her journey she also had to deal with fixed engagements to relatives, and rejected proposals due to her physical condition. Her mother’s support was important, but she also received support from her teachers, brothers and neighbours.

She eventually convinced her father that because she could not marry he should allow her to live her life. She showed her first salary from ‘Safe from the Start’ to her father with satisfaction. Miraj says that after this, her father greets her properly when she enters the home. This fills her heart with immense happiness and pride.

Miraj now plans to study at a higher level. She knows that her spine condition can be cured in Karachi, but right now this is beyond what she can afford. She is determined to achieve her dreams to be an independent and useful member of society and will not let her physical disability get in her way.
Afghan refugee children in Pakistan: the importance of a birth certificate

The UN refugee agency has registered 781,659 Afghan children and issued 1,025,785 birth certificates to registered Afghan refugee children across Pakistan from 2008 until 2017.

Pakistan’s National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) with the support of UNHCR manages five Proof of Registration Card Modification (PCM) centres to support the modification or replacement of existing cards and the registration of new born babies and children up to the age of five. The centres also issue birth certificates and provide proof of registration cards to registered refugee children who have reached five years of age and are entitled to their own identity cards.

To obtain a birth certificate from NADRA, all registered refugees in Pakistan need to provide a proof of birth document which confirms that the child was born in Pakistan. A doctor or nurse at the hospital or basic health units in refugee villages can issue these.

UNHCR started the birth registration exercise of Afghan refugee children through its PCM centres and voluntary repatriation centres (VRC) in 2008 and all Afghan refugee children below 18 years of age are eligible to receive birth certificates from these centres.

Ahmad Mir, 46 and his family have come to the Peshawar centre to register the last of his sons and receive a birth certificate.

At the age of nine, Mir came to Pakistan with his parents from Afghanistan’s eastern province of Logar during the Soviet invasion in the early 80s and started living in Jalozai camp near Peshawar, on the eastern end of the historic Khyber pass. Mir was only eleven-years-old when he had to join his father as a daily wage labourer to support his family. He learnt to drive and became a professional cargo driver driving between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Mir is happy that all his children are now registered.
Helping refugee drug addicts

Rahmatullah, a 26-year-old Afghan refugee was a bright student and wanted to become an engineer. He would score top marks at school, but his life took a turn for the worst and he ended up addicted to heroin.

“The first puff inhaling heroin and I was on top of the world. It was an amazing feeling, no worries and anxieties - only blissfulness,” Rahmatullah recalls. “I thought it was a brain enhancing drug which will enable me to achieve my dreams quicker. But I was wrong and I ended up suffering from a fuzzy mind.”

Born in Surkhab refugee village, he was in grade six, when he became heroin-dependent. He started missing his classes. His family tried to support him to no avail. His parents fixed his marriage in the hope that he would fight his addiction but this did not yield positive results either.

The heroin-dependent Rahmatullah has now recovered after being admitted to the Nai Roshni centre supported by UNHCR. The UN refugee agency has been providing financial and technical support to the centre since 2008. The centre provided him counselling – encouraging him to be strong and try to get back to his life before drugs.

Around 100 Afghan refugees are detoxified through proper medical care and regular psychosocial counselling each year. The centre also conducts free HIV tests, and refers the HIV positive cases to the Balochistan AIDS control programme for treatment.

Rahmatullah urges people to learn from his life as he suffered a lot. He says if it weren’t for the addiction he would be an engineer by now, and that the drugs have cost him time and personal relationships.

Rahmatullah has now been learning tailoring and embroidery at the centre for the past one and half years. He could not attain higher education himself, but is now determined to provide higher education to his daughters, and he will allow them to choose their occupation.
Engulfed by loneliness in a dark room, 38-year-old Yagmur is watching raindrops run down the window – but he cannot listen to the relaxing sound of the rain as he is hearing and speaking-impaired. His mother Qurban (which means sacrifice) named him Yagmur – meaning ‘Rain’. Yagmur is emotionally drained and tired. The intensity of his pain appears unbearable after he lost his 72-year-old mother – his only companion in life.

“Everything has changed. She is no more amongst us,” Yagmur said with the help of hand gestures and facial expression during a recent visit from UNHCR staff after the death of his mother. With tears rolling down his cheeks, he quickly grabbed his phone and displayed her mother’s picture. Yagmur’s fellow villager and a friend, Khan Mohammad understands the sign language and they both use the same medium to communicate with people. She died a month ago. It was a cold and dark night. “I can’t sleep because I miss her. When the pain is unbearable, I go to her grave in the middle of the night and talk to my mother and trying find solace,” he said. The pair fled Balkh province in the early 80s when war broke out in Afghanistan. They escaped Afghanistan with just a bundle of clothes and reached the safety of one of the UNHCR-managed camps in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The UN refugee agency has helped millions of uprooted Afghan refugees since 1979 by giving them shelter, food and other facilities. Yagmur’s mother also had two daughters – but they died of measles a few years before the family fled Afghanistan. Her husband died around the same time in Kabul from tuberculosis.

Two years ago, when UNHCR staff met the family at the Turkman refugee village, Yagmur’s mother was completely immobile and her son had to help her into a cart that he had made from wood – serving as a rudimentary wheel chair. Qurban was also deaf and had been paralyzed by a stroke she suffered ten years ago. Yagmur spent his entire life taking care of his ailing mother, like she took care of him when he was a child. He did everything for her – washing her, feeding her and changing her clothes.

His only dream in life was to get a fridge so that he could prepare food and keep it fresh for his mother so that he did not have to come home multiple times each day from the brickmaking factory he was working at. After his mother’s death, he is running a small shop as he left the brickmaking factory. He repairs motorcycle tyres and earns three dollars a day. He is uncertain about his future. “My mother was confined to one room, but she was alive and she was my hope,” he said. Yagmur is not sure he will be able to marry and start a family. Turkman tradition dictates that men who marry must pay between USD 15,000 to 20,000 USD to the parents of the bride. As he is disabled, it may cost him more. It was still raining, Yagmur wipes his tears away and looked at the sky. “My mother will be at peace now,” he said.
Pakistan hosts one of the largest refugee populations with 1.34 million registered Afghan refugees, making it the largest protracted refugee situation globally (Humanitarian Strategic Plan, 2017). In addition, an estimated 600,000 to one million undocumented Afghan individuals also reside in the country (UNHCR, 2017).

To document these migrants, the Government of Pakistan has launched a documentation exercise throughout August 2017 whereby 21 specially designated NADRA documentation centers were established across 17 districts of the country. As of February 13 2018 a total of 833,346 Afghan migrants have applied for the Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC) at these centers.

IOM supports the documentation exercise in an advisory and monitoring role. The ACC cards will temporarily regularize the stay of the Afghan nationals and serve as a primary identification document. The validity of the ACC card is yet to be determined by the federal cabinet, meanwhile thousands of Afghan families await the issuance of ACC cards to move under the legal ambit.

On Friday, February 16, the distribution of ACC cards was formally initiated during a pilot-test ceremony held at the Karachi documentation center. The first recipient of the ACC card, Abdullah Khan was handed over the Afghan Citizen cards of his wife and two children, in addition to his own card. Upon receiving the cards, Abdullah said he was thankful to the government of Pakistan for providing them with this option.

A total of 13 applicants received their cards during the ceremony, which was attended by Commissioners from Provincial Commissionerates for Afghan Refugees (CAR) of Punjab and Sindh, the Deputy Refugees’ Attaché from the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations Afghanistan, as well as representatives from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA). The distribution of ACC cards has commenced at the documentation centers in Karachi and Lahore and is expected to follow suit at other centers. As the exercise moves into its next phase of card distribution, IOM will continue to facilitate solutions for undocumented Afghans with an emphasis on voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration in Afghanistan to safeguard the rights of vulnerable migrants.
SPECIAL FEATURE:

CLIMATE CHANGE AND MOUNTAINS OF PAKISTAN
As climate change takes hold, 17 of the 18 hottest years ever recorded have occurred since 2000. In Pakistan, climate change may have contributed to the devastating 2010 floods as well as to drought in Balochistan and flash flooding in Chitral. The glaciers in Pakistan’s north are particularly vulnerable to climate change, a vulnerability passed on to the millions who depend on their meltwater to water their crops. In Pakistan and around the world, the risk of drought, floods, natural disasters and food shortages affecting millions is increasing.

In 2015, the world’s countries gathered in Paris and embarked on an ambitious plan to take action on climate change, build resilience, reduce emissions and achieve sustainable development. As the UN system’s largest implementer of climate action, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is helping countries to achieve the climate goals outlined in their Nationally Determined Contributions to this global effort. UNDP supports enhanced adaptation and mitigation, at national and local levels, especially for the most vulnerable. This includes helping countries develop climate-resilient agriculture, enhance food security, manage their water sustainably, and protect their coasts. It also means preparing for extreme climate events through early warning systems and improved planning.

Reducing emissions quickly and effectively is vital if we are to limit global warming to 2 degree Celsius or less and thus avoid the worst impacts of climate change. UNDP works with all countries and sectors to promote clean energy and new sustainable technologies, improve energy efficiency and promote renewables, and change consumer behaviour. UNDP also supports efforts to protect forests and manage them sustainably.

In Pakistan, UNDP is assisting the government to mainstream climate finance into development planning and allocation processes within the context of the National Climate Change Policy, as well as to improve disaster preparedness. In the north, fragile ecosystems and vulnerable communities are being protected through community forest management, forest product certification, and early warning systems against glacial lake outburst flooding. Sustainable transport will improve city environments and reduce emissions, while sustainable management systems are empowering communities to protect land and water in areas vulnerable to desertification and land degradation.

As we confront the new reality of climate change, UNDP is proud to draw on its vast experience and global expertise to help countries design effective, efficient systems and introduce innovative and equitable approaches in this united effort to protect our planet and its most vulnerable inhabitants.

Ignacio Artaza
Country Director, UNDP Pakistan
Bringing sustainability to the mountains

Spread across 175,000 square kilometres of the Hindu Kush, Karakoram and Western Himalayan mountain ranges, northern Pakistan is rich in biodiversity. Although protected areas now cover some 11 per cent of the mountains and community co-managed conservancies another 12 per cent, threats to the region’s unique biodiversity remain, due to poverty and limited livelihood options.

For generations, pine nuts harvested from chilghoza forests in northern Pakistan have provided an essential source of livelihoods for communities living on these harsh, arid mountainsides.

Yet, today, as demand grows, pine nuts are increasingly collected unsustainably. Instead of leaving a few cones so new plants can proliferate and allow natural regrow, communities gather all the cones they can find. This is partly because impoverished, remote communities often lack an understanding of markets and quality controls, and thus operate with low returns and tight margins.

This over-exploitation of non-timber forest resources is widespread and as fragile ecosystems dwindle, endangered species such as the snow leopard and woolly flying squirrel are threatened and communities are deprived of the forest products on which they depend.

The Mountains and Markets initiative supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) helps protect the rich biodiversity of the Hindu Kush, Karakoram and western Himalayan mountain ranges. Existing poverty and limited livelihood options lead to unsustainable exploitation of other natural resources as well, such as medicinal plants.

The initiative seeks to provide local communities with sustainable sources of income by using market-based mechanisms to help ensure that communities receive better returns for certified, sustainably harvested forest products.
Renowned mountaineer Samina Baig was appointed the National Goodwill Ambassador for Pakistan by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) today. The first Pakistani woman to have climbed Mount Everest, Ms. Baig will lead efforts to build national awareness and partnerships around the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those related to climate change, environmental protection and women’s empowerment.

The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Pakistan, Neil Buhne said Pakistan is amongst the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change. Preparing for its effects, and instituting environmental protections, will safeguard economic development for future generations. Moreover, half of Pakistan’s population, its women, are under-represented in education, the workforce and in decision-making. Empowering women to play their full role in society is not only an ethical imperative, it is essential for sustainable development.

UNDP Pakistan Country Director Ignacio Artaza said UNDP’s National Goodwill Ambassadors are leaders in their societies, and role models. As the National Goodwill Ambassador for Pakistan, Ms Baig will use her profile to shine a light on the issues that shape Pakistan’s future, and build the partnerships required to address them.

Born in Gilgit-Baltistan, at the age of 22, Samina Baig became the first Pakistani woman to climb Mount Everest. By the time she turned 23, she had climbed the highest mountain on each of the world’s seven continents. Awarded the Pride of Performance by the Government of Pakistan, today she presides over the Pakistan Youth Outreach Foundation to encourage youth, especially women, to participate in outdoor activities. As a mountaineer she bears witness to the critical importance of preserving Pakistan’s fragile ecosystems and preparing for the effects of climate change.

Samina Baig said she was honoured to be the national goodwill Ambassador of UNDP to spread the voice to take serious step to counter global warming and raise voices to empower young girls to climb the highest level within their field of profession. UNDP’s National Goodwill Ambassadors are inspirational women and men who serve as spokespersons to uphold the United Nations Charter and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The signing ceremony was attended by the Ambassador of Austria, Her Excellency Dr Brigitta Blaha, United Nations Resident Coordinator Neil Buhne and UNDP Pakistan Country Director Ignacio Artaza.
“From the most remote village of Pakistan to reaching the summit of the world’s tallest mountain, Mt. Everest... Then beyond the country’s borders, Scaling Peak in Antarctica and the seven highest peaks of the seven continents in some of the harshest conditions, my entire climbing purpose was to empower women through these adventures and encourage gender equality. With my brother, I have experienced the significant impact of global warming and climate change on our planet. I am honoured to be the national goodwill Ambassador of UNDP to spread the voice to take serious steps to counter global warming and raise voices to empower young girls to climb the highest level within their field of profession.”

Samina Baig
Pakistani Mountaineer and UNDP Goodwill Ambassador

Strengthening school preparedness for tsunamis

Tsunamis are rare but they can affect many people, especially communities living in coastal areas. The 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake tsunami impacted up to five million people in 15 countries. Tsunamis know no borders, making international cooperation key for deeper political and public understanding of risk reduction measures. In 1945, a Tsunami killed 4,000 people along what was then a sparsely populated stretch from Gwadar to Karachi. Today, over 20 million people live in Karachi and 85,000 in Gawada. Without preparedness and awareness, thousands of people along the coast are at risk if a tsunami hits.

Improving preparedness for tsunamis in 18 countries was part of five school-based awareness trainings and evacuations in Karachi’s vulnerable coastal areas, supported by the Government of Japan. Evacuation drills were conducted at a school in Rehri Goth, Karachi, to highlight the significance of school tsunami preparedness and its effectiveness in saving lives from tsunami risk.

UNDP signed the Sendai Framework on disaster risk reduction, a global initiative to work with local Governments to make communities resilient against disaster.
Concern has been growing in recent years regarding the potential impact of climate change on Pakistan’s already stressed water resources. Rising temperatures, increasing saltwater intrusion in coastal areas, a growing threat of glacier lake outburst floods, more intense rainfall, and changes in monsoon and winter rainfall patterns are just some of the ways in which climate change is expected to affect Pakistan’s hydrologic resources. These risks amplify an already problematic situation given that Pakistan is among the most water-stressed countries in the world. Per capita access to surface and groundwater sources is expected to continue to decline in the decades ahead, driven largely by rapid population growth and urbanization.

Of particular concern is the potential for climate change to affect water flows within the Indus Basin. The majority of Pakistan’s water is provided through the Indus River and its tributaries, which are fed primarily by snow and ice melt in the Hindu Kush-Karakoram Himalaya mountains. Any change in water flow in the Indus basin will have significant implications for food security in Pakistan given that 90 per cent of total agricultural production occurs on arable land supported by the Indus Basin Irrigation System. Indus basin water flows also play a critical role in meeting domestic and municipal water supply needs, as well as supporting the country’s energy production, manufacturing and industrial processes.

While the potential for climate change to jeopardize the country’s efforts to increase its water, energy and food security has been acknowledged by the Government of Pakistan, there remains uncertainty regarding how changing climatic conditions are or could adversely affect the country’s critical water resources (GOP, 2012). This uncertainty impedes Pakistan’s capacity to move forward on planning and implementing adaptation response strategies. Compiling existing research related to climate change and water in Pakistan and systematically identifying priority research needs in this area would be a step toward enhancing the country’s capacity to prepare for the impacts of climate change.
Climate change financial framework

Communities are at the heart of efforts to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. To increase resilience in the face of natural calamities, UNDP launched the first in-depth analysis of climate-related public expenditure in Pakistan, as part of an international initiative on climate-related public finance. The Global Climate Risk Index 1993–2012 has ranked Pakistan 12th in the list of countries most affected by extreme weather events. Vulnerability to climate change is high because of its extreme weather and unpredictable monsoons, which causes floods, glacier melting and disturbed cropping patterns. Yet Pakistan’s commitment to mitigating climate change is low. Unlike Bangladesh and some other countries, Pakistan has not been able to make effective use of Global Climate Finance. UNDP is the UN’s global development network, an organization advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. It works with the government, civil society, national partners and the people of Pakistan to help find solutions to persistent development challenges.
Summer is brief but fierce in Siksa village. Located amidst the Himalayan mountains in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan, the village suffers from harsh winters when no agriculture is possible. Only when the summer comes is it possible to grow the crops that Siksa’s people depend on for their livelihoods.

Yet, with agriculture dependent upon the vagaries of snowmelt from the mountains, water flow patterns can have a direct impact on agricultural productivity and food security. With climate change taking a hold in this vulnerable ecosystem, water supplies are increasingly unpredictable. The nearest source of freshwater is distant, making the cost of creating water channels prohibitive.

The village headman says the community has vast tracts of land holdings but they were of no use as there was not enough water to bring them under productive use. He adds that the climate has changed in recent years, and that bringing arid land under cultivation seemed like an impossible dream.

This impossible dream was realized through the New World project, a collaboration between Coca Cola and the United Nations Development Programme. This multi-country initiative seeks to build environmentally sustainable and resilient communities through access to safe water and sanitation, and improved water resources through community based approaches.

With a channel constructed that brings freshwater to the village, there is now enough water to irrigate the fields and to fill a storage tank that can deliver water to previously uncultivated land. As a result, each household now has larger portion of cultivable land and, after fulfilling its own needs, can sell produce on the market.

With the reduction in precarity, the residents of the village have experienced greater social cohesion and are able to protect their natural habitat.
Safe drinking water at the doorstep helps keep girls in school

The headmistress of Siksa village school suggests there was a large problem of absenteeism during the summer months. Siksa village is located in Gilgit-Baltistan in northern Pakistan. Set amongst towering Himalayan peaks, the remote village is snowbound in the winter. As such, the summer months are critical for education. Yet, lack of access to a safe and reliable source of drinking water led to repeated illness amongst schoolchildren, causing many to miss school. Girls were particularly prone to drop out of education, helping their mothers on their hours-long daily journey to collect water and irrigate the fields.

With the completion of a joint project by Coca Cola and the United Nations Development Programme, working through the Mountain and Glacier Protection Organization, however, this situation has dramatically changed. The New World project seeks to build environmentally sustainable and resilient communities through access to safe water and sanitation, and improved water resources through community based approaches. In Siksa, safe, clean drinking water for domestic consumption is now transported through underground pipes right to the doorstep. This has already drastically reduced the incidence of waterborne disease and school attendance has soared.

Siksa village’s parents are delighted with the change and have found that it has reduced their economic burden.
The Khyber Pass may elicit images of remote beauty for many of us. I have been lucky to make a couple of visits to Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), one of the provinces that the Pass cuts through. This beautiful part of Pakistan is susceptible to the devastating effects of climate change, but luckily, the elected representatives in KP are taking matters in their own hands. We had a vibrant interaction with a number of members of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Provincial Assembly in Pakistan, a selection of cross-party representatives who make up the newly established Working Group on Climate Change Finance. I was there as part of UNDP’s efforts to increase the engagement of KP Assembly Members on the issue of climate change finance. The strong interest was a reminder that there are concerned, devoted representatives across the country who have a deep desire to address these issues - and some have been very active already. For instance, Honourable Amna Sardar of the KP Assembly has raised a motion to discuss climate change at the KP Assembly, and hopes she will get enough support to make it happen.

In this breathtaking, mountainous province on Pakistan’s North Western frontier the effects of climate change are a real and pressing challenge. The government has risen to this challenge by initiating the Green Growth Initiative, which includes the Billion Tree Tsunami efforts, hydel projects, and improved management of national parks. However, as these initiatives increase in size and scope, the Assembly members have a greater need to monitor and discuss the investments to ensure that government resources are prioritised as per needs, and spent in an accountable manner. As Honourable Jafar Shah stated, it is about knowing “where to strike”, given the need to prioritise resources. Effectively providing this oversight requires specialised knowledge and skills. But the members in the room were keen to develop these and UNDP, through its Governance of Climate Change Finance team, has begun to deliver them, together with the Parliamentary Support Programme.

This is being done through building new skills, systems and processes using the existing platforms as starting points. One example that participants said would be very helpful, was the programme’s creation of a Climate Budget Review Toolkit, with KP specific knowledge and data about climate finance, as well as a list of potential oversight questions to put to the government. Having access to research and analysis being undertaken on the topic was also thought to be practical in improving evidence-based discussions. These Members are fast becoming champions for better budgeting of climate financing for the entire assembly. As climate finance continues to flow, ensuring it is properly managed and reviewed will only become more important. Luckily, in this stunning part of Pakistan, it seems to be in good hands.

**Sujala Pant**
Governance and Climate Finance Specialist, Bangkok Regional Hub, United Nations Development Programme
The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) with the financial assistance of the European Union (EU) will work to improve land tenancy for the landless farmers, or haris, under the project ‘Improved Land Tenancy in Sindh Province (ILTS)’. This project was launched at a ceremony in Karachi. Haris in Sindh usually have access to land as tenants through verbal agreements between themselves and the landlords. These farmers often end up as vulnerable ‘bonded’ workers.

Four million Euros will be spent over the next four years to benefit 12,600 households in eight districts of Sindh.

4,800 informal tenancy agreements between haris and landlords and 504 Farmer Field Schools and Women Open Schools will be conducted to contribute to improving livelihoods and reducing poverty, along with ensuring better use of natural resources in the targeted areas.

Mr. Hazar Khan Bijarani, the honourable minister for Planning and Development Board, Government of Sindh and chief guest at the ceremony expressed his hope to see programmes for poverty alleviation all across Sindh.

Speaking on the occasion, H.E. Jean-François Cautain, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan said the European Union was pleased to collaborate with FAO on promoting the establishment in Sindh of a land tenure system that can sustainably improve the equitable access to, and governance of, land and natural resources, allowing for improvements in agricultural production, food security and nutrition. Ms. Minà Dowlatchahi, FAO Representative in Pakistan appreciated the partnership with EU and Government of Pakistan and said the project will implement elements of The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT) for unlocking the potential of agriculture and rural development in Sindh. VGGT will be used to improve tenure security for farmers taking into account agricultural productivity and gender inequality issues. These guidelines are a set of internationally accepted standards of good practices in relation to tenure governance, which can guide decision-making and policy development regarding matters related to tenure security in the context of arrangements between landlords and haris. This project will be instrumental in introducing governance arrangements leading towards secure tenancy within the framework of the existing legal and institutional framework. It will also help develop the capacity of local institutions working to improve life in rural Sindh.
Agriculture in Pakistan is most affected by natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, droughts and landslides. With a 20 per cent share of the national GDP and a 43 per cent share of Pakistan’s total workforce, it is crucial that the sector is able to prevent and mitigate the impact of disasters.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has developed a tool to assist countries in monitoring agricultural drought and in managing its risk. This tool uses satellite data to detect agricultural areas where crops could be affected by drought. The ‘in-country’ version of the tool is based on the general methodological principles of the Agricultural Stress Index System (ASIS).

In order to promote institutional ownership of the agricultural drought monitoring system, at the national level, FAO in collaboration with Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) conducted a training workshop in Islamabad. Highlighting the importance of this collaboration Ms. Minà Dowlatchahi, FAO Representative in Pakistan said ASIS-Pakistan and the partnership with PMD is a cornerstone in the efforts towards an early warning system to support the transformation of the Indus Basin agriculture, through innovative climate resilient agriculture practices and climate smart water management.

27 technical staff members from PMD Islamabad, PMD Punjab and PMD Sindh took part in the training where they were informed of ways to monitor the drought in agriculture properly and in turn enable decision makers to implement drought mitigation activities in agriculture on a timely basis.

ASIS aims to simulate the analysis that would be performed by a remote sensing expert, and simplify the results in the form of maps for end-users. The country-level ASIS was created to help countries strengthen their agricultural drought monitoring and early-warning systems.

Mr. Nasar Hayat Assistant FAO Representative said FAO is building capacity of key stakeholders on use of its global Agriculture Stress Index System (ASIS) to detect areas with a high likelihood of prolonged dry periods and drought. Drought monitoring is continuous and FAO provides satellite data every ten days, which is an ideal time frame for monitoring annual crops because it takes account of the water contributed by groundwater reserves. The final results are summarized in easy-to-interpret maps enabling decision-makers to implement drought mitigation activities in agriculture on a timely basis. These results are also useful for guiding public investments such as water harvesting, irrigation and water reserves.
Using the food balance sheet to improve food security

FAO conducted a five-day training for food security professionals working in the government and other development institutions. The overall aim was to build their capacity on the effective use of the Food Balance Sheet concept. Mr. Hem Raj Regmi, statistician for FAORAP in Bangkok and Mr. Ajmal Jahangeer, Statistician, FAO Pakistan facilitated this training, which successfully helped participants in understanding the concept of food security at regional level in the global prospective and current Food Balance Sheet system in the government departments. Gaps in the current system were also identified. The sessions were also instrumental in enhancing the capacity of government officers on new guidelines for the preparation of food balance sheets and its analysis, common understanding of data collection and data reliability and consistency.

The Food Balance Sheet is one among various cost-effective methods developed by Global Strategy, a multi-partner initiative tasked to help countries develop a long-term strategy to improve agricultural and rural statistics termed the ‘Strategic Plan for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (SPARS)’. The research component of the Global Strategy has further produced a number of technical reports and guidelines dealing with improved statistical methodologies for collection of agricultural and rural statistics.

Improving availability and quality of agricultural statistics through the adoption of these new methodologies is an important output of the Global Strategy work. These could help countries prioritize the required technical assistance from development partners and capacity building requirements for monitoring Food Security policies and plans as well as SDG indicators.

The training was arranged in coordination with Ministry of National Food Security and Research, Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform and Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.
A four-day workshop on Market Systems and Private Sector Development was conducted in Quetta from 30 January to 2 February 2. The training was jointly organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Market Development Facility (MDF). The 17 participants included staff from FAO and MDF as well as staff from the Government of Balochistan (Agriculture Extension Department) and the Agricultural Value Chain Collaborative Research project (AVCCR).

FAO, MDF and AVCCR are funded by the Australian Government and FAO implements the Australia Balochistan Agribusiness Programme (AusABBA) in cooperation with the Government of Balochistan and MDF. The AusABBA programme is operational in six districts in south west Balochistan.

MDF supports businesses with innovative ideas, investment and regulatory reforms that will increase business performance, stimulate economic growth and ultimately provide benefits for the poor, including workers, producers, and consumers.

However in Balochistan due to security, political and economic reasons the private sector is not very active and markets are not well functioning. As a result, farmers face difficulties with the marketing of their produce and are deprived of quality seeds, fertilizers, feed, vaccines, agricultural credit and other essential inputs and services. AusABBA seeks to develop economically viable value chains on crops and livestock, and to advance agribusiness in Balochistan.

The private sector is considered an engine of economic growth, and in order to be able to partner with a variety of businesses who should be willing and able to invest in improved business practices, including more affordable products and services or providing better information, it was felt necessary to upgrade the skills of project staff and the GoB extension department on Market Systems and Private Sector Development. Participants learned how to develop market system incentives to improve performance, productivity, trade, and ultimately to generate increased income for the farmers in Balochistan and their families. By the end of the training all participants agreed that the tools, skills and methods that were learned and practiced on real life cases from Balochistan will be very helpful for the implementation of the AusABBA programme. As a result of their training the FAO and GOB team will be able to better facilitate farmers and their organizations (mostly Farmers Marketing Collectives) at district and provincial level to improve the production and marketing of dates, onions, sheep and goats, wool, nursery trees, vegetables and other important commodities in Balochistan.
Japan supports efforts towards Foot and Mouth Disease control and restoring livelihoods in FATA

The Government of Japan announced funding to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to implement two projects, worth around 2.7 million USD and 5.0 million USD respectively, for the enhancement of Foot and Mouth disease (FMD) control and the second phase of restoration of the livelihoods in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

Notes were signed and exchanged between H.E. Mr. Takashi Kurai, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan and Ms. Minà Dowlatchahi, FAO Representative in Pakistan in the presence of H.E. Mr. Sikandar Hayat Khan Bosan, Federal Minister of National Food Security and Research. A Grant Agreement on the details of implementation of the project was signed and exchanged between Mr. Yasuhiro Tojo, Chief Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Ms. Dowlatchahi at the same ceremony.

FMD is a highly contagious disease of cloven-footed animals that threatens food security and the livelihoods of smallholders and prevents the livestock sector from achieving its economic potential. Milk production may drop 50 to 70 percent and mortality of young calves reaches 10 to 22 percent. If these losses are interpolated into livestock population, it results into hundreds of million dollars per annum.

The project will significantly improve the FMD outbreaks surveillance and rapid response mechanism for disease control and reduce the incidence of FMD outbreaks in the country. This will help curtail the losses caused by the disease and improve productivity of livestock contributing to food security and improve resilience of livelihood of livestock farmers to animal disease threats.

FATA has been severely affected by unrest and military operations over the last decade. In 2015, Japan also funded 5 million USD for the first phase of the project, and FAO successfully supported approximately 77,000 households to resume agricultural production that helped improve food security and livelihoods. In the second phase of the same project, Government of Japan through FAO will provide support to about 32,000 households in the two targeted agencies of FATA, Kurram and Khyber.

The project will help reduce poverty and promote economic opportunities in the region through agriculture development, which will support stabilization, and economic growth in the area. This project is in line with the “FATA Sustainable Return and Rehabilitation Strategy”, launched by FATA Secretariat and implemented in collaboration with UN agencies and donor countries including Japan.
A major independent report endorsed by the Government of Pakistan says that even a small shift in public spending can help end hunger and improve nutrition, and so strengthen the country’s steady economic trajectory.

The report ‘Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Pakistan’ identifies challenges to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG) ‘zero hunger’ in Pakistan and makes recommendations on how to overcome them at federal and provincial levels.

The Honourable Secretary, Economic Affairs Division (EAD) Arif Ahmed Khan said the report’s recommendations will be useful for Pakistan in achieving SDG 2 in the time span set for reducing the food insecure population to 30 per cent by 2025 and tackling malnutrition by 2030.

The launch was attended by Mr. David Kaatrud, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) who noted that WFP welcomes this review as a basis for planning an effective programme of food security and nutrition.

Pakistan has made significant progress over the past decades and brought food security and nutrition to a more prominent place since 2010. Today the agriculture sector produces more than enough to achieve self-sufficiency in the main staples. Furthermore, the Benazir Income Support Programme now reaches about one third of the impoverished population, and resources were just made available to help more than 1.5 million people graduate from poverty and leave hunger behind.

The report lauds such gains as impressive, but cautions that they must not lead to complacency as Pakistan aspires to become an upper middle-income country and top-25 economy by 2025, because sufficient quantities of food at the national level and reduced poverty alone do not equal food security and good nutrition for all.

The report outlines that significant progress can be initiated quickly. Existing delivery platforms can be used to promote exclusive breastfeeding and provide supplements and complementary feeding for children and women of childbearing age. A scale-up of such interventions is cost-effective and would only require small reallocations of Government funds. Other “quick fixes” include fortifying wheat with important micronutrients and modifying existing social safety nets to not only reduce poverty, but also improve food security and nutrition.

The report is published as Pakistan – like the rest of the international community – is defining exactly how to deliver on Sustainable Development Goal 2 to ‘end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture’ by 2030.

The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Pakistan, Mr. Neil Buhne said that the review makes it clear that as Pakistan moves forward, the focus has to be on improved food and nutrition security, so as to improve the lives of the most vulnerable citizens and ensure the delivery of Pakistan’s 2025 vision.
Taxila Museum gets a makeover

It is a sad reality that we don’t usually hear children excitedly tell their parents, “Let’s go to the Museum!” In today’s age of gadgets and gizmos, cartoon channels aplenty, and infinite interactive options on social media, the rich learning opportunities presented by activities geared towards cultural heritage are lost in the white noise of technology. However, if children are offered the opportunity of combining their love for technology, and efforts are made by the development community to make museums interesting again, it exponentially increases the chance that children would develop an inclination and sense of appreciation for the objects carefully conserved and displayed behind locked cases.

That was the forethought that went into the project designed by UNESCO with the financial support of SDC (The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation). The project’s closing ceremony was conducted on 14 February, 2018. A one-and-a-half year venture, the project was broken down into three components; firstly, museum staff were trained and capacitated to develop a digital inventory of Museum artifacts; secondly, the educational role of the museum was improved by developing a web application with QR codes that allow visitors to engage with the artifacts safely and securely; thirdly, in order to generate interest among children by creating interactive material for them to learn about the Gandharan Civilizations, and encourage them to become ‘ambassadors of cultural heritage’, the project also trained teachers to educate students about heritage.

The museum, which was subject to disappearing artifacts and a lack of informational plaques next to display cases, now hosts digital kiosks that anyone with an Android-enabled phone can easily access and download (now available through Google Play store). The online application will provide a new platform that can serve as a learning opportunity for children and adults alike. The bilingual application, developed by the Technology for People’s Initiative (TPI) at LUMS is audio and text enabled, with pictures and panoramas of the Taxila World Heritage Site.

The staff at Taxila Museum has been working on developing the inventory with close to 23,000 products on display and in storage. Development partners, members of civil society, academics, schoolchildren, teachers, and members of the government attended the closing event. The opening address was delivered by Ms. Vibeke Jensen, Representative/Director of UNESCO Pakistan, and was followed by His Excellency, Thomas Kolly, the Swiss Ambassador to Pakistan.

His Excellency, Ambassador Kolly, expressed Switzerland’s commitment to the protection and preservation of culture and art, and how effective contributions can be made towards promoting diversity, tolerance, and peace.

A tour was conducted around the museum that showcased the improvements and creative spaces installed in the museum. The event concluded with the ceremonial handing over of equipment to several other national museums- including the National Museum of Karachi, Hund Museum, Chitral Museum, Kasur Museum, Harappa Museum, and Islamabad Museum.
In a unique example of south-south collaboration, the People’s Republic of China and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan have signed a US$4 million agreement to provide assistance over four months in areas of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Balochistan that have been affected by natural and human-made crises.

The ‘China South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund for the Recovery Project in FATA and Balochistan’ will assist 8,100 families returning to the areas affected by insecurity in FATA in rebuilding their lives. In Balochistan, about 19,000 school children will benefit, as schools that were damaged in the 2010–2011 floods are being refurbished.

H.E Yao Jing, Ambassador of China to Pakistan said the successful launching of the project renews the commitment to deliver strong support to the people of Pakistan. He added that in the future, China will continue to increase the Grant Assistance to Pakistan, enriching the categories and sectors, expanding the input into areas with pressing demands including FATA and Balochistan.

Muhammad Aslam Chaudhry, Joint Secretary, Economic Affairs Division was thankful to the Government of China for this initiative to provide immediate response to meet the needs of communities in FATA and Balochistan.

Ignacio Artaza, UNDP Pakistan Country Director, said FATA and Balochistan are amongst the country’s least developed regions and, in recent years, have been severely affected by disasters. This support from China will help temporarily displaced families get back on their feet as they return home after years of uncertainty, and help ensure that schools in Balochistan meet the necessary conditions to keep young students in school.

The recovery project is supported by the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) of the People’s Republic of China and implemented by UNDP. The project aims to provide immediate response to meet the needs of the affected individual and communities through the distribution of essential supplies for the restoration of livelihoods.

This initiative builds on UNDP’s on-going support for early recovery and rehabilitation of affected populations in Pakistan and will provide 56,700 people (8,100 families) in Kurram, South Waziristan, North Waziristan, Khyber and Orakzai Agencies with construction kits to rebuild their homes, as well as essential household items.

In Balochistan’s Naseerabad, Jafferabad and Sohbatpur districts, which were the worst affected by the 2010–2011 floods, 375 schools will receive new furniture and education kits.

The project will be implemented in partnership with government stakeholders including the Disaster Management Authority, FATA Secretariat and Temporarily Displaced People Secretariat in FATA, and in Balochistan the Departments of Education and Planning and Development.
Pakistan’s leading emergency logistics experts gathered in Islamabad on 15-20 January, for the nation’s first National Logistics Response Team (LRT) Training, jointly organized by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Global Logistics Cluster. In a mix of group-learning exercises and emergency simulation, 21 participants from 12 groups including the Government, UN and non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) took part. As a leader in humanitarian logistics, WFP has been offering the Logistics Response Team training across the globe for more than ten years. The LRT works to enhance the response capabilities of the international community through the establishment of clear accountability, enhanced predictability and strengthened partnerships, within the context of humanitarian interventions.

Finbarr Curran, WFP Pakistan Representative and Country Director said the training was not just an opportunity to exchange cutting-edge information but a valuable chance for Pakistan’s emergency logistics experts to meet and get to know each other, adding that in a real disaster situation where lives hang in the balance, this is crucial. The training consists of intensive theoretical sessions and a three-day simulation exercise, and aims to better prepare logistics staff to be part of skilled Logistics Response Teams, deployable when immediate operational surge capacity is required.

Participating organizations included the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA), Gilgit Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA), Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA)- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan Red Crescent Society, FAO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOCHA, OXFAM GB, CONCERN International, ACTED, and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF).
For the first time in Pakistan, a National Logistics Response Team (LRT) training was held on 15-20 January. The training was jointly organized by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Global Logistics Cluster.

LRT is a unique logistics training with the purpose to enhance response capabilities of the international community through establishment of clear accountability, enhanced predictability and strengthened partnerships, within the context of humanitarian interventions. The objective of the training was to prepare logistics staff to be part of skilled Logistics Response Teams, deployable when immediate operational logistics surge capacity is required. 21 participants from 12 different organizations including the National Disaster Management Authority, Pakistan (NDMA), State Disaster Management Authority, AJK (SDMA), Gilgit Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA), Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), KPK, Pakistan Red Crescent, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, UNICEF, United Nations OCHA, Oxfam, CONCERN International, ACTED, and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) received the training; whereas 23 facilitators from 10 different organizations facilitated the training.

The three-day simulation was envisaged to allow participants to apply their skills, knowledge and abilities in a disaster situation with a strong multi-organization facilitation team supporting and providing them with necessary guidance and feedback. Upon completion, in addition to personal and professional benefits of the training, participants are also in a position to raise awareness on emergency response systems within their organizations.
First aid and firefighting training

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) Pakistan in collaboration with the Emergency and Disaster Management Metropolitan Corporation (MCI), Islamabad organized a ‘First Aid and Firefighting Training’ for WFP staff on 10 - 11 January in Islamabad. The main objectives of this training were self-preparedness for any emergency, and to ensure Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS) are in place for the WFP staff. The training was delivered by the experts from Emergency and Disaster Management Directorate, Government of Pakistan. The trained staff will further provide First Aid Trainings to the rest of WFP staff members in provincial offices. The training was followed by an evacuation drill in which participants took keen interest and performed some important exercises.

WFP Pakistan Representative and Country Director presented shields to the resource persons from the Emergency and Disaster Management Directorate (MCI) team for their valuable contribution and support. Certificates were distributed to the 56 participants.
Pakistan Evidence and Learning Platform (PELP) launched

Through its Multi-Year Humanitarian Programme 2014-2019 (MYHP), the UK Department for International Development (DFID) has been providing humanitarian assistance to Pakistan and supporting 2-3 million people affected by natural disasters, such as floods, earthquakes and droughts, as well as over 1 million internally displaced persons from conflict and other complex emergencies. The Pakistan Evidence and Learning Platform (PELP) is an important component of the Multi-Year Humanitarian Programme and aims to strengthen knowledge management processes and achieve concrete results, by ensuring that knowledge is captured, shared, and utilized for the benefit of the humanitarian system in Pakistan. The PELP will support MYHP through the provision of high quality knowledge services that will progressively improve the performance of the humanitarian response, as well as contribute to the humanitarian-development nexus.

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) has been retained by DFID to develop and initiate implementation of the PELP for ultimate transfer to a suitable national entity. The PELP establishment phase is taking place over a 2-year period (2017-2019) through a dedicated project team and an office located in the Serena Business Complex. Through the combination of knowledge and learning hub, an innovation grant mechanism and third-party monitoring, the PELP’s ambition is to strengthen capacities to document and disseminate humanitarian best practices, enhance skills for effective humanitarian engagements and improve accountability and lesson learning from humanitarian activities in Pakistan.

On February 16 UNITAR organized an official launch event of PELP along with the announcement of the Innovation Grant Mechanism Call for Proposals, in Islamabad. The event brought together delegates from major stakeholders in the humanitarian and development landscape of Pakistan, including donors, NGOs, academia, and civil society.

Neil Buhne, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Pakistan expressed his appreciation to NDMA, DFID and UNITAR for bringing together various partners in delivering transformational change in humanitarian work in Pakistan through PELP. Among the group of finest experts and leaders in the humanitarian sector of Pakistan, the event’s distinguished guest speakers included Head of DFID Joanna Reid, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator Pakistan Neil Buhne, and Chairman National Disaster Management Authority, Lieutenant General Omar Mahmood Hayat. UNITAR GCP Manager Angus MacKay and UNITAR/UNOSAT Manager Einar Bjorgo facilitated the event and delivered presentations.
Strengthen regional cooperation to combat drugs and crime in West and Central Asia

The United Nations Office on Drugs Crime in Pakistan (COPAK) hosted a roundtable meeting of Ambassadors that represent countries of the Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighboring Countries. This meeting included representation from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

During the meeting, UNODC COPAK Representative Mr. César Guedes explained that since its launch in 2011 the Regional Programme has become the core mechanism for UNODC to strengthen regional cooperation in West and Central Asia. He elaborated on the inter-regional drug control approach, integrated programming and the focus on partnership as the main principles of the Regional Programme. The establishment of a regional working group on precursors, law enforcement training, forensic, trafficking in persons, cybercrime and transfer of sentenced prisoners as well as the Family and School Together Programme and specialized research on the Balkan route were shared as a few of the achievements of the Regional Programme. On the other hand, a 63 per cent surge in Afghanistan poppy cultivation, diversion of precursors, difference in legal systems, use of cyberspace and cryptocurrencies by criminals and low data availability were highlighted as challenges by the UNODC Regional Programme during last year.

H.E. Mehdi Honardoost, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, suggested that fund allocations for countering narcotics should be in consonance with the challenges that each country faces, while referring to regional drug scenario and the importance of cooperation, he stated that local diseases need local remedies.

Mr. Zardasht Shams, Chargé d’affaires of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, emphasized the long-term, sustainable programmes to help the alternative development initiatives in Afghanistan. H.E. Atadjan N. Movlamov, Ambassador of Turkmenistan, mentioned the importance of comprehensive and long-term approach to counter the drug problem.

Mr. Esen Ausamaev, a representative from the Kyrgyz Republic, flagged the challenges posed by emerging synthetic drugs and use of cryptocurrencies by criminals in the region and Mr. Behodur Buriev from the Republic of Tajikistan enquired about UNODC’s technical assistance on designated entry-exit points to the countries in the region to interdict drugs trafficking from the region.

The participants unanimously appreciated UNODC’s effort to generate awareness and cooperation between law enforcement and judicial agencies within the region and reinforced the importance of sharing international best practices in these areas. UNODC thanked the distinguished guests for their presence and valuable contribution during the discussion.
The Ministry of Narcotics Control (MNC) in collaboration with UNODC Country Office Pakistan organized a three-day workshop as a follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations of the General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on the world drug problem, from 31 January to 2 February 2018 at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad.

The UNGASS outcome document, adopted by the General Assembly at its special session on 19 April 2016, is composed of more than 100 operational recommendations. The outcome document has an operational nature and contains recommendations of concrete actions to be taken by Member States and other stakeholders.

The objectives of the workshop were to support the implementation of the UNGASS outcome document, to analyze the recommendations regarding their specific relevance to the region and to translate them into concrete activities.

The outcome of the workshop is an increased awareness of the UNGASS recommendations and the follow-up process, as well as an assessment by the Government of Pakistan of action taken and a roadmap for further implementation of the UNGASS outcome document.

The workshop was well attended by a wide range of participants including officials from different government Ministries, the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan, the Anti Narcotics Force, World Health Organization, Pakistan Customs, National Accountability Bureau, media, the Police and the Goodwill Ambassador of UNODC Pakistan. Ms. Regina Rohrbach and Ms. Dorris Resh from the Secretariat of Governing Bodies facilitated an interactive workshop about the outcome document and discussed in lengths the seven chapters in it and the participants discussed the actions already taken in the country on the UNGASS recommendations.

The workshop was also attended by the Austrian Ambassador Dr. Brigitta Blaha, Secretary MNC Mr. Iqbal Mahmood and Director General Anti Narcotics Force, Major General Musarat Nawaz. While giving the keynote address, Secretary Narcotics Mr. Iqbal said Pakistan has played a key role in the preparations for UNGAS, and is now actively contributing to the implementation of the document at the international level.

The representative for UNODC César Guedes stressed the importance of working together, tying the responses to the world drug problem to the broader goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UNODC Director of Policy Analysis and Public Affairs Jean-Luc Lemahieu gave an overview of the country’s implementation process, and discussed with participants how their UNGASS chapters are linked to the SDGs.

Secretary MNC Mr. Iqbal Mahmood concluded the workshop by inviting all the stakeholders to give their reviews and suggestions to MNC, which is eager to work jointly with them.
A three-day national training seminar for policy makers on the concepts, principles and standards of the Universal Prevention Curriculum (UPC) was held in Islamabad. This is the first activity in implementation of the 'Training of Prevention Professionals in Pakistan' project funded by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), Department of State. It provides a comprehensive training package covering the main fields and theories of drug prevention, based on scientific research and evidence and an ethical stance on how prevention should be undertaken. Twenty participants from eight Federal and Provincial departments from four provinces of Pakistan, including Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan, participated. The Director of the INL Islamabad Mr. Gregory Schiffer and Officer In-Charge at UNODC Mr. Danilo Campisi were present at the opening session. Training was conducted by the experts from the Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Section (PTRS) of the UNODC Headquarters in Vienna.
Guinness World Record Holder Suhail Mohammad Al Zarooni calls upon UNODC Country Representative Pakistan to discuss drug trafficking and abuse

His Excellency Suhail Mohammad Al Zarooni, Guinness World Record Holder, Author, Chairman Al Zarooni Foundation and Emirati Entrepreneur called upon Mr. Cesar Guedes, Country Representative for UNODC Pakistan, at his Residence in Dubai. Mr. Guedes was accompanied by Mr. Shehzad Roy, a prominent Pakistani singer and the National Goodwill Ambassador for UNODC Pakistan, and his team members Mr. Arsalan Malik, Associate Programme Coordinator, Ms. Rizwana Rahool, and Communications Officer. The meeting was also attended Mr. Arif Ahmad Al Zarooni and other senior officials from Dubai, UAE. On this occasion, H.E. Suhail Mohd Al Zarooni also hosted a courtesy dinner in the honor of the Country Representative UNODC Pakistan and his delegation.

It was discussed that Pakistan has a poppy free status since 2001, but there is an alarming situation about the neighbouring country Afghanistan, which is experiencing a worrisome rise in opium production. Pakistan, having the longest porous border with Afghanistan is thus at the risk of being vulnerable to illicit drug trafficking and drug abuse amongst youth. This calls for new strategies and work for the government, agencies, civil society and private sector in promoting drug prevention and awareness especially among youth and families.

Mr. Guedes highlighted that the United Nations General Assembly Special Session was held in New York in April 2016 and the world drug problem was discussed with the member states who all are signatories of the drug conventions. He said that drug dependence - recognizing it as a complex, multifactorial health disorder characterized by a chronic and relapsing nature with social causes and consequences - can be prevented and treated by reaching out to the highest level of provincial command to incorporate drug demand reduction into health care delivery system. He mentioned that there is a need for scaling up of the drug treatment services in line with scientific evidence to improve the quality of services.

During his discussion Mr. Guedes commended H.E. Al Zarooni on his social and charitable work through his organization, the ‘Al Zarooni Foundation’ which aims to provide healthcare to children/women in need through its various projects in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Africa, India, Sri Lanka and beyond. He added that it would be an honour for UNODC if His Excellency can be a part of UNODC’s activities where Mr. Shehzad Roy is engaged in the awareness raising and advocacy for children/youth who are highly vulnerable to drug use, especially children who are working or living on the streets and workplaces.

While discussing with Mr. Guedes, Al Zarooni expressed that the biggest problem in the region is the lack of education and a high level of youth unemployment. He added that the younger generation is not getting proper education and get easily distracted by society members who ex-
Two three-day training sessions on the newly developed Case Management System (CMS) for Prosecutors working on Counter-Terrorism cases in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were organized under the PACT project in Pesha war.

The training sessions were conducted from 19 to 21 February and from 22 to 25 February 2018 respectively. Each training was attended by 25 prosecutors from various districts of the province having experience in prosecuting counter-terrorism cases.

The training was structured in three sessions. During the first day, participants were briefed on the system development process and were given an orientation on the background and on the consultation that took place in the system design phase. The second day of the training was focused on practical usage of the system by entering complete cases in it. During the third and final day, prosecutors were evaluated on their understanding of the case flow along with documenting their feedback on system improvement and modifications.

The official inauguration of the Case Management System is planned for the month of March 2018. The CMS when deployed will be able to automate the entire crime cycle in addition to generating statistics based on actual crime rates.
On 26 February 2018, two modern mobile crime scene investigation units (MCSIU) were handed over to Mr. Moazzam Jah Ansari, Inspector General of Balochistan Police, by Mr. Cesar Guedes, the Country Representative of UNODC in Pakistan. This effort is collaborated by INL, UNODC and Balochistan Police as part of the support in the areas of crime scene investigation and management along with police prosecution cooperation with a particular focus on Balochistan province. This successful model of MCSIU will be further replicated in other divisions of Balochistan as well. This effort has revealed the need for advanced and specialized training in the collection and preservation of forensic evidence. In addition, the continuing need to train prosecutors and judges on the use of forensic evidence has also been highlighted.

Mr. Guedes was grateful of the support by the INL for this important initiative and the Balochistan Police for their eagerness to replicate the model into other districts of Balochistan. The prosecution department has already initiated process procuring six more mobile vehicles as part of the safe city project and establishment of forensic science laboratory in Balochistan. UNODC will establish four forensic science collection and investigation units at Zhob, Khuzdar, Sibi and Gwadar districts of Balochistan.

Mr. Moazzam Jah Ansari thanked UNODC and INL for one of the most important initiatives taken for Balochistan Police and assured his full cooperation for the capacity building programmes being carried out by UNODC in Balochistan.

UNODC Country Office Pakistan in accordance with its Country Programme II 2016-2019 organized a three-day workshop on Criminal Intelligence Analysis at DGTR Karachi from 19 to 23 February 2018. A total of 27 participants attended the workshop. The highlight of the event was the unprecedented enthusiasm and eagerness to learn witnessed among all the participants. The majority of the officials were young and new inductees in their service who showed great keenness in different subjects of Intelligence. A particular area of interest was the making of link charts which they claimed they were learning for the first time. They said that the charts would greatly help them control and link various crimes.
The UNODC Country Office in Pakistan conducted a two-day training on Illicit Drug Trafficking and Diversion of Precursors at Directorate General of Training and Research, Pakistan Customs in Karachi. This training workshop was implemented under UNODC Pakistan Country Programme II (2016-2019) and was designed for field officers of the Anti-Narcotics Force, Pakistan Customs and provincial Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Departments who have responsibilities for monitoring and controlling drug trafficking and diversion of precursor chemicals and carrying out operations and investigations on clandestine laboratories. Approximately 24 mid-ranking officers from these agencies attended the training. The training also conforms to the Government of Japan’s commitment to strengthen border security against illicit drug trafficking and related transnational organized crime. On behalf of Mr. Cesar Guedes, UNODC Representative in Pakistan, Ms. Anila Rahim, Program Officer, Precursors, in her welcome address thanked the Government of Pakistan for their continued cooperation and highly appreciated the Government of Pakistan and its law enforcement agencies for making concerted and highly commendable efforts in interdicting and seizing large amounts of illicit drugs and illegally diverted precursor chemicals destined for international markets. The Program Officer touched upon the UNODC global mandates including countering transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking. She emphasized the importance of the training in the context of the UNODC Country Programme II, Pakistan. Col. Aftab Ahmed, Joint Director ANF, Regional Directorate Sindh, gave a presentation on the ‘Existing control mechanisms and efforts of ANF to control drugs and precursors trafficking’ and highlighted the challenges faced by the ANF and other law enforcement agencies. He emphasized the need to cooperate and collaborate individual efforts of the agencies. In his address Col. Sajid Aslam covered the overall prevalent drug situation in the region, with special emphasis on the diversion of precursor chemicals. Mr. Ali Raza, Deputy Collector Pakistan Customs, also shared his experience of several seizures made by him and his team. The training program aimed to equip counter-narcotics law enforcement field officers with the necessary knowledge and skills to interdict drugs trafficking, control diversion of precursor chemicals and effectively dismantle clandestine laboratories used for manufacturing illegal drugs. At the end of the workshop, certificates were distributed to the participants. This achievement has been made possible by the generous support of the Government of Japan.
Japan supports education of 15,000 out-of-school children in Pakistan

The Government of Japan will provide a grant of approximately USD 3.5 million to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) for supporting its initiative to provide Quality Alternative Education to out-of-school children and adolescents in Pakistan.

Notes to this effect were signed and exchanged between H.E. Mr. Takashi Kurai, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan and Ms. Aida Girma, UNICEF Representative in Pakistan and Mr. Yasuhiro Tojo, Chief Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The grant will be used by UNICEF during its new country programme (2018-2022), to establish 400 centres under the Alternative Learning Programme (ALP), led by the Government of Pakistan.

Nearly 15,000 adolescents between ages 9 to 16 as well as younger children would get a second chance to quality primary education at these centres to be established in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Balochistan provinces. It would also help these children and adolescents to be mainstreamed into the regular education system at the lower secondary and secondary level.

Under the guidance of the Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training and in collaboration with the provincial education departments, of the total 400 ALP centres, 90 will be established in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 160 in Balochistan and 150 in Sindh. A total of 13 priority districts have been selected across the three provinces for establishing these centres with a special focus on the enrolment of girls. The ALP centres will have trained facilitators, learning materials and curriculum. Communities will be mobilized for enrolment and retention of children and adolescents.
Qari Mohammad Iqbal is a prayer-leader at the Jamia Masjid Rehmania, village Dinga Korai in district Muzaffargarh in South Punjab. He was one of the participants of the exposure visit to Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK) and got an opportunity to meet various communities including the religious leaders working for promotion of girls’ education in the area.

“It was a moment of change,” he recalls, “I was inspired and motivated to learn how the religious leaders in PAK were convincing parents to send their daughters to school.” Upon returning from the exposure visit, he states; “I immediately took on the cause and held individual and group meetings with the parents whose daughters were not enrolled or were not sent to school.” Qari Mohammad Iqbal reports that his interaction with the parents was very productive, as it has resulted in new enrolments and regular attendance of 45 children, of whom 20 are girls. Inspired and turned into a role model, his contribution needs to be appreciated and shared in other target areas to motivate community members to perform their due role for promotion of girls’ education.
WFP is the leading agency to initiate the nutrition programme in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and is providing Specialized Nutritious Food (SNF) to undernourished children and Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLW). The SNF food called Achamum, and Lipid-based Nutrient Supplement (LNS) is provided to the registered cases. The sachets are packed in plastic and can become an environmental hazard. Considering this fact, one of WFP’s staff working at the Health Centre where Community Nutrition Programme (CNP), started making decorative items from the empty sachets of WFP provided food, and placed them at her workplace. The idea soon caught the attention of other staff that started making beautiful items out of the empty sachets too. WFP Field office in AJK also encouraged all the staff in the nutrition programme to request beneficiaries to either utilize those plastic bags or return them to the health centre. During International Women’s Day celebrations in the AJK last year, WFP along with the Social Welfare Department and UNWOMEN organized a joint exhibition/Meena Bazar in Muzaffarabad. WFP’s CNP staff of the AJK Rural Support Programme (one of WFP’s implementing partner) setup two stalls of decorative material made from empty sachets. This simple idea of recycling to produce beautiful decorative items was largely appreciated by the visitors. People from all walks of life visited the stall to buy these special souvenirs.
Increasing climate resilience and adaptive capacities of local communities

At the 4th Green Climate Fund (GCF) Pakistan board meeting held at the Climate Change Ministry Pakistan, WFP and FATA Secretariat - Department of Production and Livelihood – the joint GCF concept note ‘Integrated Natural Resource Management for Climate Resilience in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan’ was endorsed. The board has approved WFP’s request for no Objection to present the Concept Note to GCF and also apply for the Project Preparation Facility (PPF). The GCF is a fund within the framework of the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Paris Agreement, which is a financial mechanism dedicated to supporting global efforts to respond to the challenge of climate change. The GCF aims to redistribute funds from the developed to the developing world. This money is meant to assist the Developing Countries in adaptation and mitigation efforts to counter efforts of climate change. The proposed project will increase climate resilience and adaptive capacities of local communities in seven agencies of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Under an integrated natural resource management (INRM) approach, the project will focus on two main pillars: strengthened INRM for improved climate resilience and food security and nutrition of vulnerable communities; and improved local capacities for climate change response and adaptation planning. The project will be implemented by WFP through FATA Secretariat, in collaboration with the relevant departments including Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) and the FDMA (FATA Disaster Management Authority).
UNESCO and UNDP signed an agreement to provide support in assisting media professionals develop a balanced, inclusive and objective election reporting, to foster peaceful democratic discourse in Pakistan. The Government of Japan supports the program financially.

Access to information and freedom of expression are cornerstones of a well-functioning democracy, and UNESCO is mandated by its member states to promote ‘the free flow of ideas by word and image’. Under its output, UNESCO commits to strengthening capacity of media professionals to develop balanced and inclusive, election reporting and foster peaceful democratic discourse.

The activities will consist of building the capacity of journalists on electoral reporting, how to better report on and address information needs of underrepresented groups during the electoral process with a particular focus on women and minorities, and for editorial staff on electoral processes and effective media coverage. Lastly, this program also envisions Mentorship programs for recently graduated journalism students on election reporting.

These initiatives will serve as stepping-stones to better prepare journalists and editors for elections after 2018 in Pakistan. Materials used in the program will be made available online and publicized so that those who do not attend the courses may also benefit from them.
Mainstreaming gender in statistical processes

The ILO Country Office for Pakistan, under its flagship Project on sustaining Pakistan’s GSP-Plus status by strengthening national capacities to improve International Labour Standards (ILS) compliance and reporting with the funding of Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO)-European Union, organized a one day orientation for officials of the Bureau of Statistics Punjab, on the use of Gender in Statistical Processes.

Mr. Salman Asif, a renowned trainer and a gender specialist, facilitated the training for 40 participants, comprising the officials of the bureau of statistics, representatives of the Employers and Workers organizations, UN agencies, civil society and provincial departments of Labour actively. The training provided orientation to various international treaties and instruments related to women’s economic and social empowerment and also focused on national laws and policies for promoting gender balanced and safe and secure work places. More specifically, Mr. Saghir Bukhari, Senior Programme Officer of the ILO Pakistan Office, gave a session on conventions C-111 concerning Discrimination in respect of Employment & Occupation-1958 and Convention C-100 concerning Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951. These conventions form part of the GSP Plus framework, which came into force in Pakistan in 2014.

The training focused on the need for reliable, scientific and inclusive data, reflective of the numbers related to women participation in the labour force. The training also sparked debate and varied viewpoints on how gender could be effectively incorporated in the statistical processes as well as the benefits of generating sex disaggregated data.

Participants identified their lack of knowledge on International Labour Standards concerning women’s rights and highlighted their concern on the low participation of women in the labour force, currently at 24 percent, citing the lack of an enabling environment i.e. security, transportation, day care facilities; limited work opportunities in the formal sector and discrimination at workplace and above all restrictions resulting from cultural and social norms.
The NUST Centre for International Peace and Stability (CIPS) ex NIPCONS signed a cooperation agreement with the UNAIDS Country Office for Pakistan and Afghanistan on January 26, 2018. Maj General (R) Mazhar Saleem Khan, Principal CIPS, and Dr. Mamadou L. Sakho, Country Director, UNAIDS Country Office for Pakistan and Afghanistan signed the MoU on behalf of the two organizations.

In signing this Declaration of Partnership, UNAIDS and the NUST-CIPS agree to work together towards achieving the following goals to mitigate the impact of HIV & AIDS among UN peacekeepers in the uniformed services through training and education on I) Basic knowledge on HIV and AIDS transmission II) HIV Prevention and precautionary measures III) HIV related Vulnerabilities in mission area for UN Peacekeepers IV) HIV Epidemiology V) Gender based violence and linkages with HIV VI) Sexual Exploitation and abuse.

During the signing agreement, Maj General (R) Mazhar Saleem Khan, Principal CIPS said that “We recognize the need to strengthen leadership for an effective response to HIV & AIDS at country level, and recognize that working with uniformed services will contribute greatly to moving ahead the national response to HIV & AIDS during pre-deployment period. We agree that we must act collectively to tackle HIV & AIDS among the uniformed services through a deepening of coordination, cooperation and partnership to address gender related vulnerabilities, prevent HIV transmission, and educate them on precaution and safety measures related to HIV and AIDS”

Dr. Mamadou L. Sakho while appreciating armed forces role in peacekeeping said that “Pakistan has played a significant role as UN member, in bringing peace through active diplomatic, moral and material support in various regions of the world through pivotal role that Pakistan Armed Forces played in UN peacekeeping measures, during war and peace time. He shared that HIV is being comprehensively integrated in all United Nations peacekeeping operations. Reaching personnel who currently serve in UN peacekeeping missions not only helps protect their health and well-being, but the peacekeepers also serve as agents of change in surrounding communities and eventually in their home countries. If we do not address HIV among populations affected by conflict, natural disasters and emergencies, we will not see the end of the HIV epidemic by 2030 and UN peacekeepers can play a pivotal role as partners with UNAIDS.” The UNAIDS in its interaction with CIPS through this cooperation agreement, will provide with guest-speakers for the courses offered at CIPS that have currently been identified as relevant to both sides, and will invite CIPS staff to relevant UNAIDS hosted or sponsored training programmes / workshops within as well as outside Pakistan where considered appropriate.
World Leprosy Day: Visit to the oldest leprosy hospital in Pakistan

Set up in 1904 by the British Leprosy Mission, the Rawalpindi Leprosy Hospital is the oldest facility dedicated to the treatment of leprosy in Pakistan. Located in what is now a crowded part of the city, at the time of establishment, the hospital was a deserted place in the outskirts of the city. Lepers from all over British India used to come here for treatment and shelter.

Since 1968, the hospital has been run by the organization Aid to Leprosy Patients (ALP). There are currently 97 beds for leprosy patients. The facility also runs a tuberculosis control programme and provides services related to skin problems, blindness, psychotherapy and rehabilitation.

Leprosy is a disease that is fully curable if caught early. Yet, without improved active case detection and early diagnosis, the number of persons at risk of developing impairments and disabilities remains high. Of every 100 people newly diagnosed with leprosy in Pakistan, 15 already have impairments.

Annual leprosy statistics in Pakistan show that the number of new case detections is slowly decreasing as a long-term trend, however more efforts are needed to stop this disease. In 2016, 397 new leprosy cases were detected, including 40 cases reported in children.
On World Leprosy Day, we visited the Rawalpindi Leprosy Hospital and listened to stories shared by the patients:

**Asim Shehzad (19)**
from Sialkot, Punjab

“I have always dreamt of completing a diploma in civil engineering. However, at the age of 15, I realized that one of my right hand’s fingers was numb. At first, I did not share this with anyone. Later on, at the age of 17, I started feeling lethargic and had difficulties to attempt a written exam. But initially, no one believed that I was having a hard time writing or holding objects with my right hand.

My parents were concerned and took me to local doctors several times but no one was able to correctly diagnose me.

It took some time until I was admitted to a bigger hospital and doctors performed a biopsy. This is when I was diagnosed with leprosy. I was initially treated at the Sialkot Leprosy Centre and since April 2017, I have been under treatment in the Leprosy Hospital in Rawalpindi.

I am not able to write with my right hand yet, but the disease has stopped spreading which is a big achievement. My mother is really worried and asks when I am coming back home. I was in the first year of my civil engineering diploma and I will join again soon, I am very hopeful.”

**Bibi Jan (43)**
from Bajaur Agency, FATA

“I have seven children: four sons and three daughters. I’ve been suffering from hands and arms problems for the past 3 years. First, I thought this was due to some weather change but then, it started getting worse and the skin color was changing rapidly. My family took me to different doctors and initially I was diagnosed with skin allergy. I had never heard of leprosy before, although this was running in my in-laws family. Doctors gave me different ointments for the skin. If there were any improvements, they were only temporary. I was finally diagnosed with leprosy at a local leprosy hospital, where my eldest son took me. Now, it’s been a month since I am being treated. I am feeling much better and can feel that I am being healed. If I ever see a person with the same symptoms, I will tell them not to waste time and money on wrong treatments but to go and seek the proper cure for it.”
Developing a 100 days action plan for HIV Prevention

WHO in close collaboration with UNAIDS and UNFPA organized a three-day National Stakeholders Consultation from 29 to 31 January 2018 in Lahore. The consultation was planned together with the National AIDS Control Programme under the leadership of the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination. The aims were to strengthen federal and provincial level HIV leadership for addressing key institutional and political bottlenecks to accelerate HIV prevention programme; set national prevention, financing and impact targets for 2020; and develop and endorse the national prevention road map under the 10 points action plan in line with global commitments on HIV Prevention roadmap.

Participants from national and provincial AIDS control programs, representatives of UN agencies, an Association of People living with HIV (APLHIV), NGOs/CSOs and the community representatives including representative from Pakistan Transgender Empowerment Association, had extended discussions on various aspects of HIV prevention interventions and the national response to HIV in the country. The consultation resulted in the development and consensus on a 100 days operational plan, in line with 10 Action Points and a commitment from each province on part of AIDS control programs for prevention scale up and more strategic investment for it.

Pakistan continues to have a concentrated epidemic and the estimated prevalence in the general population based on an AIDS Epidemic Modelling exercise (April 2017), is (0.1%) amounting to 133,299 HIV positive persons. Most (93%) of the burden of this 0.1% is divided in Punjab and Sindh provinces, which account for 50 per cent and 43 per cent of the epidemic respectively. The latest epidemiological trends indicate HIV infection spilling over from injecting to sexual networks.

Without extra additional efforts on HIV prevention, new HIV infections cannot be curtailed. Government, UN, partners and CBOs and community representatives joined together for a National Coalition for HIV Prevention in the country. The 10-points action plan for prevention coalition, lays down foundation for prevention movement in the country for scaling up interventions among key population and help built consensus to hold provincial dialogues for affirmative actions in order to bridge gap in terms of funding and programmatic gaps. Detailed recommendations against 10 point actions for HIV prevention were agreed by all the participants, whereas establishment of a Provincial Multi-Stakeholder Taskforce for HIV were announced in Sindh, Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. WHO, UNAIDS and UNFPA will continue to extend their technical support ensuring implementation of the 10 Points Action Plan in all provinces with special focus on HIV prevention and community empowerment in prioritized districts of Pakistan.
Fighting Anaemia, saving mothers

According to the National Nutrition Survey 2012-13, more than half of Pakistan’s population is anaemic. Anaemia reduces individuals’ wellbeing, causes fatigue and lethargy and impairs physical capacity and work performance. Moreover, anaemia during pregnancy increases the risks of death or illness in both mother and baby.

Keeping the grave situation in mind, a two-day national level Anaemia Reduction Consultative Workshop at Ramada Hotel organized by Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (MoNHSR&C) with support from World Health Organization (WHO) on 7-8 February 2018.

In this context WHO consultant Dr. Tommaso Cavalli-Sforza visited Pakistan in the first week of February to facilitate the development of the ‘Anaemia Reduction Action Framework for Pakistan.’ MoNHSR&C and relevant partners from UN; INGOs; CSOs and academia actively participated in the workshop proceedings, through which concrete actions towards anemia reduction in Pakistan were identified well aligned to the key WHO recommended interventions to prevent anaemia across the life cycle. The detailed situation analysis of the status of anaemia in Pakistan was presented and discussed, addressing anaemia prevalence, distribution and main causes; the efforts conducted so far to reduce anaemia rates; and proposed additional actions needed to accelerate the pace of anaemia reduction. The workshop also featured experience-sharing and best practices of the different actors in the nutrition arena.

As a next step to this exercise, provincial departments of health will identify their province-specific action points for policy uptake and implementation towards reducing anaemia according to the targets set by the World Health Assembly in 2012: to reduce anaemia rates by half between 2012 and 2025, in women of reproductive age (WRA).
Mission of human resources on health

Adequate numbers, quality and well-performing health workers are crucial for effective functioning of health systems. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) call for action to people and leaders across the world to ensure a life with dignity for all with ambitious targets.

Pakistan has one of the lowest densities of health workers in the region and globally. Over the last decade, following the devolution of health services to the provinces, through eighth amendment in 2011, there have been efforts in the past by provincial departments of health to develop their HRH strategies. Pakistan National Health Vision 2016-25 also acknowledges health workforce as one of the 8 key intervention areas. In addressing health workforce challenges and taking the strategies outlined in the National Health Vision, the Ministry of National Health Services Regulation and Coordination (MoNHSR&C) initiated a process to develop a national health workforce vision/strategy. On the request of the government of Pakistan, a mission consisting of experts from the WHO EMRO region visited Pakistan from 28 January to 2 February 2018. The main objective of the mission was to assess the current Human Resource for Health (HRH) situation at national and provincial/area level and to suggest policy options for the development of ‘Pakistan: Human Resource for Health Vision 2018-30’ in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and National Health Vision (NHV 2025).

The mission visited two provincial capitals (Karachi and Lahore) and Islamabad, and held meeting with the provincial and national stakeholders including the federal Minister, federal and provincial secretaries and DGs of health, officials from other relevant ministries including the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms, Higher Education Commission (HEC), academia, representatives of different HR regulatory bodies and health development partners. On the last day a meeting was held with the National Health Workforce working group during which the mission shared the initial findings followed by discussion and feedback from the members of the working group.
UN Chief, Antonio Guterres’ tribute to Pakistani Rights Activist Asma Jahangir

“We have lost a human rights giant. News of the death of Asma Jahangir is echoing within her native Pakistan and across the world. She was a tireless advocate for inalienable rights of all people and for equality – whether in her capacity as a Pakistani lawyer in the domestic justice system, as a global civil society activist, or as a Special Rapporteur.

Asma was brilliant, deeply principled, courageous and kind. I convey my heartfelt condolences to Asma’s family, friends and colleagues, including in the United Nations and civil society within which she was such a leader. Asma will not be forgotten.”

Empowering adolescents through freedom of expression and participation
Although Pakistan is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and committed to provide its children the rights to freedom of expression and participation as well as other rights, adolescents in Pakistan, especially girls, continue to face a range of difficulties and challenges, including lack of access to basic life resources, and low levels of participation and protection.

In 2016 UNICEF conducted a survey to assess the extent of freedom of expression and participation of adolescents at household and community levels, particularly with regard to their level of involvement in important decisions directly affecting their lives. The survey conducted in districts of Sindh and Punjab revealed low levels of adolescent freedom of expression and participation in matters pertaining to their everyday lives.

According to the survey findings from Khairpur District, only 14.5 per cent of adolescents discuss their issues with friends and family; whereas participation in activities such as sports, youth groups etc. stands at 17 per cent.

UNICEF, with funding from the IKEA Foundation, initiated a project on improving adolescents’ lives in Pakistan. Under this intervention, UNICEF’s implementing partners - Rural Support Programmes Network and Sindh Rural Support Organization, selected 1,029 adolescents aged from 10 to 19 years of age to deliver peer-to-peer life-skills training over a course of four days. Memoona Naz, 17, was one of them. She says before getting involved in the project she lacked confidence and was very shy, but claims the four days of training changed her completely.

Arab machi is a small village of approximately 50 households and is located at the outskirts of Khairpur District. Memoona and other teens who participated in the adolescent life-skills training, are now further training adolescents in their respective communities. Memoona has so far conducted eight successful training sessions for girls in Arab Machi. She has also established a girls’ cricket team in her community.

Bringing change to her life through small steps, Memoona is continuing her studies, with a resolve to seek higher education. She is now a 12th grade student at a girls’ school in a neighboring village. In December 2017, Memoona also represented Pakistan at a South Asian regional event in Colombo, Sri Lanka, where the ‘Power of Sports to Shape the Future of Adolescents’ campaign organized by UNICEF, was launched in collaboration with the International Cricket Council. The event included youth representation from South Asian countries, including Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan.
A team of Pakistani innovators, led by Mr. Nabeel Siddiqui from ModulusTech, won the ‘Special Commendation Award’ at the UNIDO-GCIP Global Awards 2017 in Los Angeles, USA. ModulusTech has developed affordable, flat-pack housing for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) that can be assembled by three people in three hours with a unit cost of only $3,000. This alternative shelter that includes plumbing and electricity produces five times less greenhouse gas emissions that concrete buildings while improving living conditions, and thus has the potential to address climate migration issues. This year, three teams – namely Modulus Tech, Biotech and Aerosync from the fourth cycle of GCIP Pakistan’s Call for Awards 2017 participated in this event.

The Global Cleantech Innovation Programme (GCIP) award winners joined top entrepreneurs from around the world to celebrate the progress, achievements and successes of clean technology innovation in addressing global environmental and sustainability challenges. GCIP is a joint initiative of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and is conducted in partnership with the Cleantech Open (CTO), a Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator programme. Each startup involved receives training, mentoring, and promotion, and is put in contact with potential investors, customers and partners throughout the programme. Each national GCIP receives $1M to $2M in funding from the GEF, which is matched by $2M to $6M+ in co-financing (including in-kind) from in-country public and private-sector partners.

Naoko Ishii, GEF CEO and Chairperson said GCIP was the cornerstone of GEF support for small and medium enterprises, and that innovation is critical to solving today’s global environmental threats. He stressed upon the need for scalable, innovative ideas that embrace the opportunity provided by new technologies. Addressing the Forum on behalf of UNIDO, Director General, Li Yong, thanked the entrepreneurs and innovators for the transformative impact that the innovations are having, and for their contribution to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals relating to clean energy and to green industry, innovation and infrastructure.
Pakistan industry gets its first batch of Certified Energy Managers trained

United National Industrial Development Organization, after successfully holding the first ever training program of Certified Energy Auditors (CEA), has now concluded another highly regarded Certified Energy Manager (CEM) course in major cities of Pakistan, under its Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Project.

The training and examination was conducted locally by international trainers from world renowned energy certifying institute, Association of Energy Engineers (AEE), USA. This training module is a part of a larger training program by UNIDO under a project named ‘Sustainable Energy Initiative for Industries in Pakistan’ funded by Global Environment Facility (GEF) in collaboration with Ministry of Climate Change. Two batches consisting of total 28 professionals from different industrial sectors mainly Textiles, Foundry, Paper and Pulp, Food and Diary, including four women professionals attended the trainings, to become CEM’s.

The training will help build a critical mass of energy professionals, by enhancing capacity of the industrial technical force and will prepare the industry to better equip for the forthcoming energy related challenges as well as contributing towards achieving sustainable development goals. The CEO of Bulleh Shah Packaging, Mr. Aslam Mehdi thanked participants and UNIDO for providing such an opportunity to the industrial sector, that will help support in achieving energy efficiency goals, thereby lessening the energy woes of the industry. The Vice President of Tata Pakistan, Mr. Adnan Alam expressed his immense pleasure contributing in hosting one of the training courses in Karachi.

The trainees expressed their full satisfaction on the training course and acknowledged the importance of the training. They applauded the efforts from UNIDO, which they hoped would greatly strengthen their capacities in the field of energy efficiency and help their organization to implement the ISO 50001 Energy Management System.

Speaking at the concluding session of training, the National Project Manager, Mr. Masroor Ahmed Khan, highlighted UNIDO efforts to impart quality training to bring standardization in the energy management implementation initiatives by the industry. He hoped that after the conclusion of these trainings, the participants would apply the learned techniques and information at their work places. The visiting international trainer from AEE, Mr. Tareq Obeido, expressed his delight on conducting this training in Pakistan.
Eleventh batch of national labour inspectors’ training program completed

The ILO Country Office in Pakistan organized a three-day training for the second batch of Labour Inspectors of the Department of Labour Punjab, under its project funded by the Netherlands on Strengthening Labour Inspection Systems in Pakistan (SLISP). This brings the total number of Labour Inspectors trained to date up to 302 (292 men and 10 women from Balochistan, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, AJK, ICT, GB and Punjab).

Mr. Zishan Ahmad Siddiqi, National Project Coordinator for the Project on Strengthening Labour Inspection Systems in Pakistan (SLISP) stated that having a stronger Labour Inspection System as a means of promoting labour laws compliance was an essential condition for preventing fatal industrial accidents, safeguarding labour rights, and improving industrial harmony in Pakistan.

The eleventh batch of the National Labour Inspectors’ Training Program was completed on 18 January, 2017 in Lahore, in collaboration with the Department of Labour Punjab. A total of 30 participants including five women attended the training with the objective of improving theoretical and practical competencies of the labour inspectors on regulatory frameworks, Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW) and contemporary labour inspection methodologies/skills.

Dr. Sohail Shahzad, Additional Secretary Labour, highlighted the need for continued capacity building of the labour inspectorates in order to meet the demands and challenges of labour inspections in Pakistan. Dr. Shahzad also acknowledged the International Labour Organisation (ILO) for its continued support to the government of Punjab and thanked the Government of the Netherlands for providing the financial resources for the training program. He also requested the ILO to assist the Labour Department in revamping its training wing as a means of sustaining the ongoing capacity building efforts.
Collective bargaining and negotiation skills, vital tools to ensure good industrial relations

The ILO brought together government, employers and union representatives from Sindh and Balochistan to explore successful collective bargaining and bipartite negotiation structures and practices in a four-day workshop from 8-11 January 2018 held in Karachi.

The workshop aimed at enhancing participants’ capacity in engaging in meaningful collective bargaining and negotiation processes. The workshop was organized by the GIZ funded Project on Labour Standards in Global Supply Chains, in collaboration with the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC/ILO).

While collective bargaining is essentially a bipartite process involving employers and workers organizations, governments can play an important role in ensuring an enabling environment for collective bargaining and moving the process forward. Mr. Muhammad Rashid, Secretary, Department of Labour, Government of Balochistan, shared his views on the opening of the workshop stating that governments should take a role of mediator between the two sides and help find solutions to difficult problems.

The skills, knowledge, and capacity of those negotiating on behalf of employers and workers organization in collective bargaining are critical in preventing labour dispute and achieving outcomes and agreement that meet the interests of the parties involved. The effectiveness of the collective bargaining process is often hampered by poor negotiating skills of the bargaining parties.

During the workshop, ILO trainers shared examples of how collective bargaining and joint negotiation have improved the living and working conditions of workers, as well as the economic performance of industries across the globe. They also shared knowledge on ways to deepen and promote negotiation in different countries and sectors.

A similar workshop will be delivered for tripartite constituents in March 2018 for provinces of KPK, Gilgit-Baltistan, AJK and the ICT.

The ILO advances collective bargaining and negotiation structures and processes as a means to resolve important economic and social issues, encourage good governance, advance social and industrial peace and stability, and boost economic progress.

The ILO is currently implementing a number of projects across the Asia Pacific Region aimed at promoting fundamental principles and rights at work, through increasing the capacity of partners in areas such as labour dispute management, collective bargaining and social dialogue, in efforts to enhance sound industrial relations in various sectors.
Despite 61 per cent of the Pakistani labour force working in the rural economy, very little efforts have been made to promote Decent Work in rural sectors. Exploitative labour practices including child labour, bonded labour, discrimination at the workplace and unsafe work practices are still rife in rural economic sectors. Lack of labour inspection and unionization of workers has further exacerbated the situation and there is a need for serious efforts to create awareness, institutional arrangements and support mechanisms for rural workers. This was the conclusion of a Tripartite Consultative meeting convened by the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development and ILO in Islamabad.

The Consultation was organized to review the initial findings of the Diagnostic Study on ‘Promoting Decent Work in Rural Economy of Pakistan’ – jointly initiated by ILO, Ministry of OP&HRD, Employers’ Federation of Pakistan and the Pakistan Workers’ Federation. Promoting decent work in rural economy is a priority under the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP - 2016-2020) signed by the tripartite stakeholders in May 2016. The Diagnostic Study identified specific areas for joint interventions for ensuring better working conditions in rural areas at policy and operational level.

More than 60 delegates from all provinces – including Government, workers, employers, civil society organizations, development agencies, rural entrepreneurs, academics, media and one member of the National Assembly were present in the Consultation.

Mr. Noor Zaman Khan, Senior Joint Secretary Ministry of OP&HRD offered full support from the Ministry for improving labour conditions in the rural economies.

Ms. Ingrid Christensen, Country Director ILO Islamabad mentioned that as per DWCP, a detailed action plan would be developed jointly by Government, Employers and Workers – in collaboration with civil society and media – to ensure better working conditions in the rural areas.

Mr. Elvis Beytullayev, Rural Economy Specialist from ILO Geneva, elaborated ILO’s global work on promoting decent work in rural areas – focusing various specific sub-sectors.

The Research Team from Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) presented the preliminary findings. Participants took keen interest in the study and identified various rural value chains where employment could be promoted – including tea production, value-added fruit production, organic farming, honey beekeeping, sericulture, leather products, minerals, handicrafts and gemstones.

Among participants were two representatives from the newly established ‘Centre for Rural Economy’ of the Planning Commission of Pakistan. They appreciated this initiative by ILO and Ministry of OP&HRD for focusing the Rural Economy as a priority sector and they fully committed to work jointly on promoting rural economies in Pakistan.

The tripartite stakeholders of ILO will continue working towards the elimination of exploitative work practices in the rural areas in next three years and will reach out to the rural areas through various modes including partnerships with civil society organizations, media and political setup.
Launch of Punjab’s home based workers survey report

Female Home Based Workers (HBWs) still face the challenge of being recognized as formal workers. Concrete steps should be taken to advocate for the registration of HBWs with social safety net schemes and other relevant institutions to expand the coverage of the existing labour legislation to this category of workers. This will be in line with the provisions of the HBW policy in Punjab, which was approved in 2017. Continuity of data collection and its analysis of working conditions in the informal and rural economy is important to inform actions that support the implementation of this new policy. These were some of the messages that emerged from the ‘Home Based Workers Survey Report Launch’ held in Lahore. The Bureau of Statistics Punjab in collaboration with the ILO and UN-Women organized the launch of the Punjab Home Based Workers Survey Report 2016 in Lahore. The launch follows a survey of the HBWs, which was undertaken towards end of 2016. This is the first ever survey of HBWs in the Asia pacific region undertaken by the Bureau of Statistics Punjab. The launch was attended by the Provincial and Federal representatives of the Bureau of Statistics, Provincial Labour Departments, UN Agencies, Academia, Civil Society Organizations, Employers and Workers’ organizations from across the country. The launch of the HBW’s Survey Report was conducted with the support of ILO’s project on sustaining Pakistan’s GSP-Plus status by strengthened national capacities to improve ILS compliance and reporting with the funding of Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO)-European Union.

Skills and Qualification Recognition and Labour Market Analysis

From 23-24 January, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) jointly supported the Governments of Sri Lanka and Thailand in organizing the Colombo Process Technical Area Working Groups on ‘Skills’ and Labour Market Analysis’ meeting in Colombo (Sri Lanka). Pakistan was represented by Mr. Mubarik Chaudhry, Joint Secretary (Emigration)-MoOPHRD, Engr Syed Qasim Shah, Director General NAVTTC KP and FATA and Mr. Saad Gilani, Sr. Programme Officer-ILO Islamabad. The meeting discussed and agreed on a roadmap for developing a ‘Regional Qualification Reference Framework’ – to promote migration of skilled workers. Under the theme of ‘Building synergy between Skills and Qualification Recognition and Labour Market Analysis’, a total of 64 Senior and Technical Officials from the twelve Member States of the Colombo Process and resource persons participated in the meeting. The meeting was organized within the framework of IOM’s Regional Project ‘Strengthening Labour Migration Governance through Regional Cooperation in Colombo Process countries’ with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Under the broad objective to provide an avenue for the Member States to engage in in-depth thematic discussions in line with the respective TAWG goals and key tasks, the first day of the meeting was dedicated to Skills and Qualification Recognition. The key focus of the discussion was exploring possibilities to establish a Regional Qualification Framework (RQF) including a draft road map towards RQF. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for migrant workers was another key topic of the discussions as well as exploring various models of skilling migrant workers that are being initiated in the region. The second day focused on Labour Market Analysis, covering capacity building of Labour Market Research and Analysis units, gauging labour market trends and experiences of countries of destination (CODs). A representative from the Government of Bahrain presented on their Flexi Permit System as a pilot initiative and a representative from the Human Resources Development Service of Korea, the Republic of Korea, shared the country’s Employment Permit System. Participants also discussed joint programme activities in this area and agreed to conduct a baseline survey of Labour Market Information Systems of the Member States, replacing the previously agreed activity to develop a Labour Market Research Operational Guide. They also agreed to convene a training workshop for labour attachés who play the key role in collecting labour market information in CODs. The outcomes of the group discussions will feed into the respective TAWG Chair’s reporting at the next Senior Officials’ Meeting of the Colombo Process.
Economic inequality is harmful for sustainable growth

A report titled ‘Inclusive and Sustainable Development: Analytical Basis and Policy Framework’ was launched by the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The report, authored by eminent Pakistani economist Dr Akmal Hussain, overturns long-standing beliefs to show that economic inequality is harmful for long-term sustainable growth. The report’s findings will be instrumental in shaping policy directions in the coming years.

The report provides evidence-based recommendations for combating many of the diverse challenges Pakistan faces, calling for equitable growth through participatory development, reducing regional disparities, providing universal health, education and social security, and mobilizing women and youth in the workforce. It also recommends regional cooperation to battle climate change, and comprehensive planning to rehabilitate and manage water infrastructure.

The report reinforces Pakistan Vision 2025 by providing an analytical basis and specific operational policy initiatives for achieving inclusive and sustainable development in Pakistan, including measures to increase gender equality and enhance women’s participation of women in economic, social and political development; entrepreneurship opportunities for youth, women and minorities; climate change resilience; addressing water challenges, utilizing hydro-power potential, and strengthening the role of local governments in participatory democracy and inclusive development.

Dr Akmal Hussain authored the Report as part of activities of the Advisory Council on Inclusive and Sustainable Development established by UNDP to assist the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform in proposing recommendations around key development issues. Co-authors include Khawar Mumtaz, Khalid Mohtadullah, Dr Bashir Ahmed Khan, and Imtiaz Ali Qazilbash.
Providing 20,000 youth with skills training and employment opportunities

The Government of Japan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed an agreement to launch a US$3.9 million initiative aiming to empower more than 20,000 youth in Sindh and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa provinces. This initiative will help improve employment prospects and promote social cohesion through positive interactions amongst young people in deprived communities, helping them participate actively in the socioeconomic development of Pakistan.

H.E. Mr. Takashi Kurai, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan said Pakistan’s population is very young and ensuring job opportunities and income for youth is critical for development of Pakistan.

Mr. Ignacio Artaza, Country Director UNDP Pakistan, said the challenges posed by the ‘youth bulge’ in Pakistan are immense. Almost 1.8 million jobs are required every year to absorb the growing number of young people entering the job market.

The Youth Empowerment in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Project will provide opportunities that increase young people’s employment prospects and enhance social cohesion in areas that currently have limited scope for social and economic engagement. Youth-friendly community spaces will be developed to promote interactions between young people, and youth from underdeveloped areas will receive demand-driven skills trainings to help them gain productive employment in local industries.

About 31 percent of Pakistan’s population of 207.7 million comprises young people aged 15 to 29 years. With a youth unemployment rate of 10.8 per cent, it is crucial to invest in this ‘youth bulge’ and provide young people with the skills and knowledge they need to operate in an increasingly competitive employment market, and to help Pakistan’s youthful population to contribute to its sustainable development.

This project aligns with the Government of Pakistan’s Vision 2025 Roadmap and is an important step in helping Pakistan achieve its Sustainable Development Goals to engage young people, provide economic growth, productive employment and decent work for all, and to create just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

The Youth Empowerment in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Project builds on previous collaborations between UNDP and the Government of Japan that have supported the people of Pakistan in responding to a host of development challenges, from relief and rehabilitation work in FATA to electoral reform at the national level.
Government of Punjab and United Nations Pakistan hold policy dialogue session in Islamabad

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Pakistan and Punjab Planning and Development (P&D) Department held a one-day Policy Dialogue session on 20 January 2018 in Islamabad. A 15-member senior delegation from the P&D Department led by the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Jehanzeb Khan joined the UNCT Pakistan comprising of UN Heads of Agencies and senior UN officials from 13 UN agencies, to discuss practical ways of achieving the SDGs and fostering increased collaboration on policy innovations.

The Chairman shared that the Punjab Government invests approximately USD 6.5 billion annually in development projects. He expressed his desire for these large investments to generate better and lasting results to accelerate the SDG attainment.

The Government of Punjab is assigning utmost importance to the Agenda 2030 and to the SDGs and is undertaking initiatives to align Punjab’s development agenda with their imperatives. The UN is supporting the Government of Punjab in the localization of the SDGs agenda and its effective implementation.

On the occasion, Mr. Neil Buhne, the UN Resident Coordinator in Pakistan, said the policy dialogue is the first of its kind, with Government officials from the provincial government joining the UN Country Team to brainstorm ideas and actions to take forward the SDGs. He added that the UN with its work in Pakistan is privileged to partner with the government of the country to build strength to overcome the shared challenges.
A team of Pakistani innovators, led by Mr. Nabeel Siddiqui from ModulusTech, won ‘Special Commendation Award’ under UNIDO-GCIP Global Awards 2017 in Los Angeles, USA. ModulusTech has developed affordable, flat-pack housing for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) that can be assembled by three people in three hours with a unit cost of only $3,000. This alternative shelter that includes plumbing and electricity produces five times less greenhouse gas emissions that concrete buildings while improving their living conditions, and thus has the potential to address climate migration issues. This year, three teams – namely Modulus Tech, Biotech and Aerosync from the fourth cycle of GCIP Pakistan’s Call for Awards 2017– participated in this event. In 2015 and 2016, innovators of GCIP Pakistan won such Awards as well, demonstrating the high innovation and entrepreneurship potential in the country. GCIP is a joint initiative of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) to support SMEs and Startups in Pakistan to promote CleanTech Innovations.
Finding our paths: Pakistani women tell their stories of empowerment through decent work

Listen to the inspiring stories of women in Pakistan who have carved a place for themselves in the world of work. Their experiences are part of a Canadian-funded ILO project, which aims to promote gender equality at work and enhance women’s skills and employability in Pakistan.

World Employment Social Outlook Report 2018

“According to the ILO’s new estimation, based on improved data sets and methodologies, the global unemployment rate is expected to fall slightly to 5.5 per cent in 2018 (from 5.6 per cent in 2017), marking a turnaround after three years of rising unemployment rates. However, with a growing number of people entering the labour market to seek employment, the total number of unemployed is expected to remain stable in 2018, above 192 million.”

The Sentient Land

In order to address the shelter need of returnee families and to ensure the sustainability of the return process, UNHCR started implementing two-room permanent shelter units with the contribution of the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD). As many as 507 two-room shelter units were constructed in South Waziristan, Mohmand and Bajaur Agencies to address the shelter need of returnee families specially the most vulnerable families and those families without male guardian.
German-funded scholarships give young refugees hope and an education

The Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative Programme (DAFI) is a global scholarship financed by the Government of Germany. Established in 1992, DAFI provides scholarships for young refugees to study at universities and colleges in their host country. UNHCR’s DAFI programme has pioneered a holistic approach, empowering over 9,300 young refugees globally so far, to contribute knowledge, skills and leadership to their communities. In Pakistan, DAFI scholarships have supported more than 1,200 students since its start. The number of female candidates participating in education in Pakistan is increasing, and interest in the DAFI programme is growing. Twenty-nine-year-old Afghan refugee, Gulfar, is an aspiring DAFI scholar who is pursuing a law degree in Pakistan and wants to work for the protection of women and children in her country Afghanistan. Learn more about her in this video.

UNHCR’s Voluntary Repatriation Centre Peshawar

The voluntary repatriation centre in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provides services to Afghan refugees opting to return voluntary to Afghanistan. A returning refugee passing through various steps which has been showed in the video. The voluntary repatriation centre is a facility which not only serves as the starting point for UNHCR’s voluntary repatriation process but also provides many other services and facilities for the repatriating refugees. This short video aims to explain the steps involved in the repatriation process from the arrival of the refugees at the centre until their departures for the border at Torkham.

Helping rebuilding lives in FATA

Over the last decade, around 260,000 families were displaced as a result of unrest in FATA, Pakistan. FAO Pakistan with the help of JICA, UK AID and USAID and collaboration of FATA Secretariat contributed to securing the lives of returnees using sustainable agriculture development through its Early Recovery Programme.
Today we remember the six million Jewish men, women and children who perished in the Holocaust. Countless others also lost their lives as cruelty convulsed the world. Yet decades since the Second World War, we see the persistence of anti-Semitism and an increase in other forms of prejudice. Neo-Nazis and white supremacy groups are among the main purveyors of extreme hatred. And too often, vile views are moving from the margins to the mainstream of societies and politics. We must stand together against the normalization of hate. Whenever and wherever humanity’s values are abandoned, we are all at risk. All of us have a responsibility to quickly, clearly and decisively resist racism and violence. Through education and understanding, we can build a future of dignity, human rights and peaceful coexistence for all.

International Day of Women And Girls in Science
11 February 2018

“Both girls and boys have the potential to pursue their ambitions in science and mathematics, in school and at work. But systemic discrimination means women occupy less than 30 per cent of research and development jobs worldwide. We need concerted, concrete efforts to overcome stereotypes and biases. One starting point is banishing the predominantly male images of scientists and innovators on social media, in textbooks and in advertising. We need to encourage and support girls and women achieve their full potential as scientific researchers and innovators. Women and girls need this, and the world needs this, if we are to achieve our ambitions for sustainable development on a healthy planet. Throughout history, from Hildegard of Bingen to Wangari Maathai, women scientists have built our world. It’s time to support and invest in them.

Radio reaches the widest audience in the world. In an era of dramatic advances in communications, radio retains its power to entertain, educate, inform and inspire. It can unite and empower communities, and give voice to the marginalized. This year, with the Winter Olympics now under way, we also recognize the many ways in which sports broadcasting brings people together around excitement and achievement. On World Radio Day, let us celebrate both radio and sports as ways of helping people achieve their full potential. On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, let us remove physical and cultural barriers, build resilient societies and create opportunities that truly leave no one behind.

World Radio Day
Radio, sports can unite communities, help people achieve full potential
13 February 2018

International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust
27 January 2018

Radio, sports can unite communities, help people achieve full potential
13 February 2018
The United Nations has a long-standing partnership with the people of Pakistan in support of national development goals. The United Nations has also been providing humanitarian assistance in case of natural disasters and crises. Led by the Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, United Nations works in all eight administrative areas of Pakistan through 19 resident organizations. Straddling humanitarian assistance and sustainable development, the work of the United Nations in Pakistan includes key areas such as education, health, water and sanitation, nutrition, economic growth, employment and livelihoods, resilience against disaster, governance, gender equality and social justice. The One UN Programme for Pakistan, United Nations focuses on accelerating progress towards achievement of Millennium Development Goals, reducing poverty, promoting opportunities for youth as well as advancing gender equality and human rights both at national and sub-national levels.

United Nations encourages economic growth in Pakistan through supporting policies and programmes that link small farmers to markets, improving working conditions for women and supporting home-based and domestic workers. It will also assist the Government in strengthening democratic processes and institutions at the federal, provincial and local levels. Tackling the effects of climate change and reducing Pakistan’s vulnerabilities to natural disasters features especially prominently in the work of the United Nations in Pakistan.