

Media Update

11 October 2016

UN Women

Press Release

International Day of the Girl Child

Islamabad 11 October, 2016: UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, commemorated the UN International Day of the Girl Child on 8 October with a cricket day for girls.

The event took place at Pakistan Sweet Homes in Islamabad, and more than 70 girls from 4 different schools and 15 women from the expatriate community participated. A total of 350 spectators, organizers and cricket players took part in the event. Young girls from Mashal Model School, Millennium Roots Schools, National Special Education Center and Pakistan Sweet Homes played a number of cricket matches in an all-day tournament to celebrate the day.

The UN International Day of the Girl Child promotes girls' human rights, highlights gender inequalities existing between girls and boys and addresses the various forms of discrimination and abuse suffered by girls around the world.

The world's 1.1 billion girls are part of a large and vibrant global generation poised to take on the future. Yet the ambition for gender equality in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlights the preponderance of disadvantage and discrimination borne by girls everywhere on a daily basis. Only through explicit focus on collecting and analyzing girl-focused, girl-relevant and sex-disaggregated data and using these data to inform key policy and program decisions, can we adequately measure and understand the opportunities and challenges faced by girls and identify and track progress towards solutions to their most pressing problems.



With this in mind, the theme for this year's International Day of the Girl (11 October) is **Girls' Progress = Goals' Progress: What Counts for Girls**. While we applaud the ambition and potential of the SDGs to contribute meaningfully to the advancement of girls, and recognize how girls' progress is a positive, not only for girls, but also for their families, communities and society at large, we must also take this opportunity to consider how existing gaps in data on girls and young women, a lack of systematic analysis and the limited use of existing data, may significantly limit our ability to monitor and communicate the well-being and progress of half of humanity.

Much more can and needs to be done to harness the information required to ensure programs, policies and services effectively respond to the specific needs of girls. When we invest in girls' health, safety and education, including as a means to protect and promote their human rights – be it in times of peace or crisis - we empower them to reach for their dreams and build better lives for themselves and their communities. Only when investments in programs for girls on issues that particularly affect them - due to both their age and gender - are complemented with corresponding investments in data on girls, can we make real progress towards greater accountability in domains of critical importance to them.

Speaking at the event, Ms. Sangeeta Thapa, Deputy Country Representative of UN Women, congratulated all participants and said that cricket is an excellent way to promote girls' empowerment. "Sport creates confidence which is required for all girls to grow into strong and independent women", she said. Ms. Sarah Coleman, Chief of Child Protection at UNICEF, in her remarks said "This day is a wonderful testament to girl power". She congratulated all involved and encouraged the girls to continue playing sports, and to work hard for their goals.

Ms. Mahyad Tavakoli, Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy of Sweden, was chief guest at the event, and several other dignitaries from the diplomatic corps and government participated throughout the day.

UN Women and UNICEF are thankful to the Millennium Roots Schools, Pakistan Cricket Board and Pakistan Sweet Homes for their strong support in organizing the cricket day to promote girls' rights in Pakistan.





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