

Media Update

14 May 2015

United Nations

PRESS RELEASE

Pakistan's economy is growing despite macroeconomic imbalances

The United Nations launched the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific -2015

Bangkok / Islamabad, 14 May 2015: “Economic growth of Pakistan is expected to improve in the coming years, partly due to Government’s major efforts to address electricity shortages and other infrastructural bottlenecks. However, there is urgent need to make this growth more inclusive and broad-based by spreading its benefits to all parts of the country and segments of society” , said Dr. Muhammad Hussain Malik , former Chief, ESCAP Macroeconomic, Policy and Analysis Section, who presented the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2015 in Islamabad today, at the UN Information Centre together with Professor Ashfaque Hasan Khan, Dean School of Social Sciences at NUST, and Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).

The survey titled *Making Growth More Inclusive for Sustainable Development* shows that growth in the region’s developing nations will increase only slightly, to 5.9 per cent in 2015 from 5.8 per cent last year, with no significant change expected in 2016.

In Pakistan, economic growth picked-up to 4.1% in 2014 from average of 3.7% in the previous 3 years. Growth is expected to rise to 5.1% in 2015. Inflation is on the decline and budget deficit is being contained. Foreign exchange reserves have significantly improved. Market confidence in Pakistan’s outlook seems to have improved. In April 2014, the country issued

sovereign bonds in international markets for the first time in seven years and it was oversubscribed.

Professor Ashfaque Hasan Khan noted that Pakistan's economic growth has slowed down considerably over the last several years, giving rise to youth unemployment. He emphasized the need to readjust the country's fiscal and monetary policy to revive inclusive growth.

Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri said that for growth to catalyse sustainable development it is crucial to achieve macro-economic stability and to distribute its benefits at micro level.

Launching the Survey in Bangkok, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, UN ESCAP Executive Secretary emphasized the need to promote quality growth and shared prosperity in the region, calling on regional policymakers to integrate and mainstream inclusive growth by adopting a mixed set of measures to achieve better social and environmental outcomes to enhance public welfare.

The Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific has been monitoring regional progress, providing cutting-edge analyses and guiding policy discussion to support inclusive and sustainable development in the region since 1947.

For more information and downloading complete survey and other documents related to survey, please visit: <http://www.unescap.org>, or follow on Facebook at www.facebook.com/UNESCAP, on Twitter feed www.twitter.com/UNESCAP

(Executive summary of the survey and briefing notes on Pakistan are attached)

UNFPA

PRESS RELEASE

“Pakistan needs more midwives to provide reproductive, maternal and newborn health services”: *Community Midwifery Workforce Report reveals shortage of midwives in Pakistan*

Islamabad, 14 May 2015: The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan is holding a National Dissemination of Midwifery Workforce Plan on 15 May 2015 in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Since 2008, UNFPA has been partnering with the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) to strengthen the coverage and quality of midwifery services globally and in Pakistan. In June 2014, UNFPA, in collaboration with the World Health Organization, ICM and partners, released the second State of the World's Midwifery (SoWMy) report. The report reveals major deficits in the midwifery workforce in 73 countries, including Pakistan, where these services are most desperately needed. The report also recommends development of new strategies to address the shortfall of midwives to save lives of millions of women and newborns.

“Maternal deaths have dropped by nearly 50 per cent, down from an estimated 523,000 in 1990 to some 289,000 at latest count. It is not enough” said Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of UNFPA in his statement for the International Day of the Midwife 2015. He further notes, “Today, nearly 800 women continue to die every day from complications of pregnancy and childbirth. We must do more and we must start with training and providing more midwives”.

Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2013 estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, The World Bank and the United Nations Population Division shows that in Pakistan, every year an estimated 7,900 women are dying from pregnancy or childbirth complications. The SoWMy 2014 report shows that only 42% of the health personnel with midwifery skills are available to women

and newborns to provide services they need. One of Pakistan's most urgent priorities is to achieve universal access to Sexual Reproductive Maternal Neonatal and Child Health (SRMNCH) services to improve the health and life chances of mothers and newborns. UNFPA has been collaborating with Maternal Neonatal & Child Health Programs at provincial level, Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC) and Midwifery Association of Pakistan to strengthen the midwifery program in the country.

For instance, to address the shortage of qualified midwifery teachers and to improve the standard of midwifery education throughout Pakistan, UNFPA has been supporting the PNC to pilot the Bachelor of Science in Midwifery (BScM) Program at School of Nursing and Midwifery at the Aga Khan University. Through this program, 21 midwives graduated with BScM in November, 2014 out of whom, 18 graduates were from public sector and were supported financially by UNFPA.

More recently, UNFPA Pakistan commissioned a consultancy to develop a workforce plan to assist the country to match the demand for Community Midwifery with the supply. This report reveals that Pakistan needs an additional 33,190 midwives to be able to provide adequate SRMNCH services. A national dissemination of the Midwifery Workforce Plan will be held on May 15, 2015. The key objectives of the dissemination are to present the findings to the key stakeholders, advocate for incorporating the Workforce Plan in the costed Provincial Integrated RMN&CH plans and to raise awareness about the need for effective health workforce planning forecasting.

“Midwives are in the frontline and are making enormous contributions to the health of mothers and newborns” said Ms. Sarah Masale Deputy Representative/ Officer in Charge, UNFPA Country Office, Pakistan. “Greater investment in midwifery is the key to ensure that no woman loses her life while giving life”.

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United Nations

MESSAGE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

International Day of Families

15 May 2015

The theme of this year's International Day of Families – “Men in Charge?” – highlights the importance of gender equality and children's rights in contemporary families.

Around the world, more women are becoming recognized as the equal partners and decision-makers in families that they should be, thus helping to ensure a conducive environment for the full and harmonious development of children.

Yet in too many countries, discrimination against women and disregard for children's rights remain built into family laws and Government policies, and prevailing social norms often condone and justify many discriminatory practices.

The social and economic costs are felt by all. Discrimination and neglect often lead to violence, threatening women's and children's health and limiting their chances to complete education and fulfil their potential. The cycle tends to continue into the next generation, as children experiencing violence are more likely to resort to violence in their adult lives.

Equitable social and economic development depends on fair legal frameworks and social norms that support the rights of women and children. Discriminatory laws and practices that do not give equal rights to all, and that suppress women's and children's rights, have no place in contemporary families, communities, societies and nations.

On this International Day, let us resolve to change legal and social norms that support male control over women, reinforce discrimination and prevent the elimination of violence against vulnerable family members. As we shape a new sustainable development agenda and strive for a world of dignity for all, let us stand united for women's and children's rights in families and societies at large.
