



Media Update

2 March 2015

PRESS RELEASE

USAID, AMAN TECH, AND UNDP: WORKING TOGETHER TO EMPOWER YOUTH THROUGH VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN PAKISTAN

Karachi, February 27, 2015 – Today, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), AmanTech, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) signed an agreement to work together to improve access to and quality of vocational training.

Speaking at a signing ceremony, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson said, “So many young people lack the skills and credentials they need to fill the many jobs that are available.” He added, “Our partnership with AmanTech and UNDP will train and create a skilled pool of over sixteen thousand workers that the private sector needs.”

In his remarks, Ahsan Jamil, Chairman of AmanTech said, “Aman Foundation’s motto is Transforming Lives, and AmanTech’s students are proof of this. The skills imparted to them here improve their standard of living. I thank USAID for strengthening Aman’s ability to empower the youth of Pakistan. I also thank the American Pakistan Foundation (APF) who facilitated our efforts to this end.”

In his remarks, Marc-André Franche, Country Director, UNDP, said, “USAID’s support will enable UNDP and our partners to effectively improve skills and employment opportunities for more than 13,000 young people in the garment industry over the next three years. This is an important step that will empower young girls and boys to fulfil their potential as the architects of a prosperous and peaceful Pakistan and ensure long term economic growth in the country.”





Under the agreement, AmanTech will provide vocational training to underserved youth, certifying the graduation of at least 3,600 students, and also provide placement services, over a period of three years. UNDP will train over 13,000 youth, in partnership with the garment industry in Karachi, thereby enabling young girls and boys to be gainfully employed.

U.S. Consul General Brian Heath, USAID Provincial Director Leon S. Waskin, Aadil Mansoor, Assistant Country Director, Crisis Prevention and Recovery Unit (CPRU), UNDP

Harald Thorud, Programme Adviser, CPRU-UNDP, AmanTech CEO Zaheer Hussain, and Aman Foundation CMO Shehryar Ahmad also joined Ambassador Olson at the signing ceremony at Aman Foundation's headquarters in Karachi.

UNDP

PRESS RELEASE

By the Youth, For the Youth UNDP prepares for the National Human Development Report on Pakistan's youth

About 64 percent of the country's population is below 29 years of age. Pakistan's youth is a critical force for shaping human development in the country. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Pakistan set out its vision and aims for Pakistan's National Human Development Report (NHDR) 2015 on youth, today in Islamabad.

The report covers three drivers of youth empowerment – education, employment and engagement - with the objective to track the challenges faced by the young people in Pakistan and improve the policy landscape.

Guided by Lead Authors Dr. Adil Najam and Dr. Faisal Bari, the NHDR is intended to be 'by the youth, for the youth'. Thus, the aim is not just to



develop a report but to ignite a national level conversation through an intensely participatory process spanning discussions, focus groups, radio call-in shows, social media engagements and contests with young people throughout Pakistan.

To provide a robust foundation of quantitative data, fieldwork for a nation-wide Youth Perception Survey was undertaken, and the country's leading statisticians came together to agree on the approach for sub-national Human Development and Youth Development Indices which will, eventually, be amongst the key components of the final report.

Marc-André Franche, Country Director UNDP in Pakistan said, "It is anticipated that the NHDR 2015 will not only generate a sustainable conversation between policymakers and young people in Pakistan, but will identify relevant, evidence-informed policy interventions to improve the opportunities for Pakistan's youth. The findings of this report will catalyse and guide us in creating the essential opportunities for education, employment, political and social engagement for young people."

WFP

PRESS RELEASE

AJK Government in collaboration with WFP and MI launches Wheat Flour Fortification Initiative to combat micronutrient deficiencies

Islamabad: The launching ceremony of AJK Wheat Flour Fortification Initiative was held in Islamabad under the aegis of National Fortification Alliance. The State Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir in collaboration with World Food Programme (WFP) and Micronutrient Initiative (MI) in its efforts to scale up nutrition interventions is committed for State wide wheat flour fortification.





An estimated 300,000 tons of fortified wheat flour shall be produced annually while engaging with 11 flour mills in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK), reaching 65% of the population which are 2.6 million people including 500,000 women of child bearing age.

43.7 percent or over 10 million children under five years are stunted in Pakistan. The stunting prevalence in AJK is 31.7 percent whereas 46 percent are anemic compared to 62 percent in all the country. There is very high prevalence of other micronutrients deficiencies such as Vitamin A, D and Zinc. Only 7.3 percent of children 6-24 months receive the minimum acceptable diet, due mainly of poor dietary diversity.

Fortification is globally considered as one of the most cost-effective strategies to address micronutrient deficiencies with long term impact and high return rate as evidenced by the Copenhagen Consensus 2008 and Lancet Series on Maternal and Child Nutrition 2008, 2013.

Javed Iqbal, Minister for Food, AJK committed that the Government is ready to support policy, legislative and implementation measures for wheat flour fortification and this will be an important strategy to resolve AJK's micronutrient deficiencies. Ensuring mandatory fortification of wheat in Pakistan can contribute towards reduction in anemia, said Dr. Baseer Achakzai, Secretary National Fortification Alliance.

Lola Castro, WFP Pakistan Country Director emphasized that increasing the micronutrient intake of the population through food fortification initiatives, mainly iron, folic acid and other essential micronutrients, is critical to reduce the prevalence of anemia and other micronutrient deficiencies in a sustainable way in the country and in AJK region as Pakistan is the 9th major wheat flour producer in the world with 25.3 million tons wheat flour produced in 2014 which is also exported. Pakistan wheat flour per capita consumption is also one of the highest in the world. She further acknowledged that this



little investment will have a longer term effect on the population's nutritional status.

It is estimated that micronutrient malnutrition alone causes a loss of 2.6% of GDP (Pakistan Economic Survey 2011-12, Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan 2102) in Pakistan, a loss that can be ill afforded. Considering the high cost of hunger and undernutrition, stemming these trends is both an economic and social imperative said Aslam Shaheen Chief Nutrition Planning Commission and SUN Focal Person Government of Pakistan.

Dr. Tausif Janjua, Country Director MI informed that this will only cost 10 paisa per kilogram of wheat flour to be fortified, but the impact will be huge, especially in reducing the maternal anemia. He further mentioned that initially the premix cost will be subsidized which will be gradually removed following the successful example of Universal Salt Iodization in Pakistan making it fully sustainable.

AJK Flour Mills Association and Pakistan Flour Mills Association representatives also assured their full support and commitment to this initiative and ensured that industry is willing to invest for the betterment of their population.

The speakers mentioned that under Vision 2025, it is a national priority to reduce malnutrition, particularly the prevalence of anemia and other micronutrient deficiencies and food insecurity in order for Pakistan to achieve its full potential, and wheat flour fortification, recognized as one of the most cost effective and high return nutrition intervention, is part of that essential strategy in Pakistan.

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Photo Caption (From Left to Right): Mr. Javed Iqal, Minister for Food, AJK unveiling the inaugural plaque alongwith Mr. Aslam Shaheen, Chief Nutrition, Ministry of Planning, Government of Pakistan, Dr. Baseer Achakzai, Secretary, National Fortification Alliance, Ms. Lola Castro, WFP Pakistan Country Director and Mr. Tausif Janjua, Country Manager, MI Pakistan.

ILO

PRESS RELEASE

International Buyers Formalise their Cooperation for a More Responsible and Competitive Textile Industry

(Karachi- 27 Feb 2015): A total of 14 brands in the Garment and Textiles Sector convened in Karachi today and agreed on a governance structure for the operations for the Buyers' Forum in Pakistan convened by the Netherlands Government, International Finance Corporation and the International Labour Organisation.

This follows a meeting in December that saw the establishment of a Buyers' Forum to help international buyers ranging from Walmart's and Levi's to Hema and Primark speak with one voice in order to improve labour standards in Pakistan's garment and textiles industry.

The forum agreed to work on knowledge management and sharing of best practices, public private partnerships and key thematic areas like Labour Inspection, Occupational Safety and Health as three major objectives to work on in future.



This forum is inspired by the Bangladesh model, where buyers jointly tackle complex challenges that are both factory specific, and that thread across the sector and supply chain for stable and sustainable improvement, productivity and competitiveness.

Ambassador Marcel de Vink of the Kingdom of the Netherlands apprised the participants that the Netherlands Government jointly with the ILO is planning to support the improvement of Pakistan's labour inspection system through a project worth \$1 million. Part of this programme would also focus on engaging with buyers and streamlining private audits.

Country Director, ILO Pakistan, Mr. Francesco d' Ovidio shared that the Buyers' Forum should work towards encouraging engagement of suppliers and agents to promote environmental, labour and health & safety compliance through promoting enterprise-level advisory services and training across the value chain to impact those industrial units where compliance gaps are stark. He also shared that on Feb 17, 2015 ILO has signed a Partnership Agreement with the Pakistan Textiles Exporters Association for promoting Labour Law Compliance in Textile Sector in Faisalabad.

The preparatory meeting was held on the side of the largest trade fair in Pakistan, the Pakistan Expo. This provides an opportunity to showcase the positive steps being taken to promote better business initiatives.

Alamgir Feroz from El Corte Ingles, representing the buyers' forum said that the meeting is an important initiative by the IFC, the Netherlands' Government and the ILO and it will help improve the national image of Pakistan and open avenues for the textile sector to explore better trade initiatives.

The participants agreed to convene the next buyers meeting in April 2015.





UN Women

PRESS RELEASE

28 FEBRUARY 2015

British High Commission holds Conference on International Women's Day

The British High Commission in Islamabad today hosted a conference in advance of International Women's Day. The conference focused on women's empowerment and the importance of supporting women in achieving their potential. The conference was held in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women Pakistan), United Nations Development Programme Pakistan (UNDP Pakistan), and the UK's Department for International Development Pakistan (DFID Pakistan).

The daylong Conference included panel discussions on a range of topics including the role of men women's empowerment and the role of media in women's rights. The discussions invited high profile panellists working for women rights awareness in Pakistan. The panellists include Nigar Nazar, CEO Gogi Studios, Shahid Nadeem, Executive Director Ajoka Theatre, Omar Aftab, CEO Women Empowerment Group, Qadeer Baig, Country Representative, Rutgers World Population Foundation Pakistan, Asma Shirazai, Senior Vice President, BOL TV, and Aasiya Nasir, Minister for National Assembly.

The conference also gave an opportunity to students from Lahore University of Management Sciences, Bahria University, Iqra University, ARID Agriculture University, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) and Riphah University to showcase their presentations on different topics related to women empowerment in all aspects of society.

Richard Montgomery, Head of Department for International Development Pakistan, Jamshed M Kazi, Country Representative of UN Women Pakistan,





Marc Andre Franche, Head of UNDP Pakistan and Jennifer Cole, Political Counsellor, British High Commission also joined the panel discussions

Speaking at the event, Richard Montgomery, Head of DFID Pakistan said:

“Today’s event provided a wonderful opportunity for us to hear the diverse views of the distinguished panellists and those of Pakistan’s future leaders who will undoubtedly go on to shape opinions in the future. It is important for both men and women to have a conversation on men’s role in addressing the challenges facing women and how they can assist in women empowerment. Equality between men and women is a fundamental right. Reducing gender discrimination will not only lead to a fairer society, but a stronger economy and a more prosperous country”

Marc Andre Franche, Country Representative UNDP, said:

“UNDP supports a range of efforts to improve the position of women in Pakistan, including in the justice sector, police force, community organizations, parliamentarians and aspiring women candidates. Empowered women and girls have a truly transformative role to play in Pakistan. Evidence consistently shows that where women are given opportunities, societies develop more rapidly. We will continue to take steps to empower women and achieve gender equality as a way to fight poverty.

In promoting the HeForShe movement in Pakistan Jamshed M. Kazi, Country Representative, UN Women emphasized the need for a united effort to galvanize momentum:

“With women constituting half the population of Pakistan, the HeForShe campaign will encourage ‘the other half’ to speak out and take action against inequalities faced by women and girls. We are engaging men as champions for change; a change where women can live a life free of inequalities and discrimination”.

