

Media Update

21 September 2017

UNDP

Media Advisory

INCEPTION WORKSHOP

When: *Tomorrow, Friday 22 September, 2017 (9:30 am – 12:15 pm)*

Where: Islamabad Hotel, Melody Market, Islamabad

What: “Improvement of Central Karakoram National Park (CKNP) Management System as Model of Mountain Ecosystems in Northern Pakistan”

Programme:

Registration of Participants	0930-1000
Welcome Remarks by Syed Abu Ahmad Akif, Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change	1000-1015
Remarks by: H.E Stefano Pontecorvo, Italian Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Santa Molè, Director, Italian Agency for Development and Cooperation (AICS)	1015-1035
Documentary	1035-1050
Presentation of objectives and expected results of the project by Mr. Abduvakkos Abdurahmanov, Technical Specialist, UNDP Pakistan	1050-1110
Presentation of the Annual Work Plan for 2017 by Mr. Usman Manzoor, Programme Officer, UNDP Pakistan	1110-1130
Discussions	1130-1200
Closing Remarks by Mr. Ignacio Artaza, Country Director, UNDP Pakistan Refreshment / Lunch	1200-1215



UNESCO

Press Release

100,000 out of school children in Pakistan the target of UNESCO-Education Above All Foundation initiative

Islamabad, 21 September – The Education Above All Foundation (EAA), through its programme Educate A Child (EAC), and UNESCO have partnered on a programme to benefit 100,000 out-of-school children in Pakistan.

Through our partnership with EAA Foundation, the project will support the expansion of UNESCO's on-going cooperation with the Government of Pakistan on girls' education and focus on 14 remote districts with low primary school enrolment rates. Through advocacy and school improvement interventions, the project will work closely with parents, teachers and communities to enrol children, prevent dropout and improve learning.

“This project will act on all fronts to advance inclusive, quality education in Pakistan, especially for girls,” said Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO. “With the EAA Foundation, initiated by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, we share the conviction that this is the only path to fight poverty and build lasting peace.”

Project activities include capacity building of school management committees and district education officials, including for the establishment of vital facilities such as compound walls and toilets, which have a positive impact on school attendance. It will also support teachers in improving their teaching and management skills in multi-grade classrooms.

In implementing this joint project, which will invest \$12.8m, the [UNESCO Office in Pakistan](#) will continue to work closely with provincial and local education authorities, as well as non-governmental organizations with long records of accomplishment in the targeted districts.

The announcement of the initiative came during the week of the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly in New York, where the EAA Foundation representatives are part of the Education 2030 Steering Committee on



Sustainable Development Goal 4.

The EAA Foundation has provided longstanding support to UNESCO to enhance access to quality, inclusive education for the most marginalized and to protect education in insecure environments and conflict zones, notably in Iraq, where this partnership has ensured projects on curriculum development, teacher training, literacy and higher education.

For more information contact:

Zafar Hayat Malik, UNESCO: zh.malik@unesco.org

Reem Rifai, Education Above All Foundation: rrifai@eaa.org.qa

United Nations

HUMAN RIGHTS

Office of the High Commissioner

Press Release

Report highlights rising reprisals against human rights defenders cooperating with the UN

GENEVA (20 September 2017) - A major new UN report warns that a growing number of human rights defenders around the world are facing reprisals for cooperating with the UN on human rights.

The report by the UN Secretary-General says individuals and groups have suffered reprisals and intimidation ranging from travel bans and asset-freezing to detention and torture.

“It is frankly nothing short of abhorrent that, year after year, we are compelled to present cases of intimidation and reprisals carried out against people whose crime – in the eyes of their Governments – was to cooperate with UN institutions and mechanisms,” said UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Andrew Gilmour, the senior UN official designated by the Secretary General to address the issue.



“We should see these individuals as the canary in the coalmine, bravely singing until they are silenced by this toxic backlash against people, rights and dignity – as a dark warning to us all,” Gilmour said, as he presented the report to the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

“We are aware of cases where individuals we are communicating with have been abducted, detained, held incommunicado, or disappeared,” he added.

“There are also many cases involving prolonged arbitrary detention, as well as torture and ill-treatment, with some victims threatened, blindfolded and beaten. One case involved forcible psychiatric treatment; others have involved solitary confinement, sexual assault and rape in detention, against both men and women,” Gilmour said.

The report, the eighth of its kind, names 29 countries* where cases of reprisal and intimidation have been documented – significantly up on the previous highest number of 20. Eleven of the States are current members of the Human Rights Council. Some have featured in the annual report on reprisals nearly every year since it was instituted in 2010.

The cases are of “grave concern”, the report says, highlighting that many are perpetrated or condoned by State officials. Many other incidents go unreported due to fears of further repercussions, while details of some known cases have been withheld so as not to place victims at further risk.

“People engaging with the United Nations experienced intimidation, harassment, threats online and offline, derogatory media campaigns, travel bans, arbitrary arrests and detention, enforced disappearances, torture and ill-treatment, disbarment, and dismissal from their posts, amongst other measures,” the report says.

“Beyond the grave impact on the life of persons concerned and their relatives, intimidation and reprisals also systematically undermine United Nations action on human rights and shake partners’ trust in the organization,” it adds.

All the cases highlighted in the report occurred from June 2016 to May 2017 and involved individuals and groups which have cooperated with UN human rights mechanisms, used UN procedures, submitted communications under procedures established by human rights instruments, or provided legal or other assistance to other people. It also covers families or supporters of

victims.

Gilmour told the Human Rights Council that the report was by no means exhaustive and the problem was much more widespread.

“Since this report is limited to reprisals against people cooperating with the UN, the cases covered in it represent only a small portion of a far more generalized backlash against civil society and others challenging State authorities, especially human rights defenders,” Gilmour said.

He highlighted a number of recent cases which took place after the finalisation of the report, including that of Egyptian lawyer Ebrahim Metwally, detained at Cairo airport on 10 September en route to meet the UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances in Geneva, who was reportedly tortured and is still being detained. Allegedly a letter from the Working Group was itself included in the case filed against him.

Gilmour also noted that since June 2016 members of Bahraini civil society attempting to cooperate with the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms have been interrogated, intimidated, subjected to travel bans, and even arrested or detained, causing an atmosphere of fear. Civil society representatives coming directly from Bahrain have significantly decreased over the last year, which is noted in the current session of the Council. Gilmour also expressed deep concern over the ongoing situation of a Bahraini human rights defender, Ms. Ebtessam Abdulhusain Ali Alsaegh, who after returning from Geneva, “was interrogated at length at Bahrain airport, had her passport confiscated, and a few weeks later was beaten and sexually assaulted”.

The report urges all States to stop reprisals, investigate existing allegations, provide effective remedies and adopt and implement measures to prevent recurrence. It says governments which have been challenged about the cases either did not reply or failed to address the concerns in the responses they provided.

The patterns of cases suggest some States have a strategy to prevent people cooperating with the United Nations on human rights, the report adds.

Assistant Secretary-General Gilmour was assigned to his role in October 2016 by the Secretary-General after the UN noted an alarming increase in the number of cases of intimidation and reprisals and decided a more

comprehensive approach was needed to tackle the problem.

*Countries named in the report (in alphabetical order) are: Algeria, Bahrain, Burundi, China, Cuba, Egypt, Eritrea, Honduras, India, Iran, Israel, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Venezuela.

Read the report (A/HRC/36/31) online at:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session36/Pages/ListReports.aspx>

For more information and media requests, please contact: Rupert Colville - [+41 22 917 9767](tel:+41229179767) / rcolville@ohchr.org

Tag and share - Twitter: [@UNHumanRights](https://twitter.com/UNHumanRights) and Facebook: [unitednationshumanrights](https://www.facebook.com/unitednationshumanrights)

