

Media Update

22 May 2015

UNFPA

PRESS RELEASE

“End Fistula, Restore Women's Dignity” ***UNFPA and Partners Celebrate International Day*** ***to End Obstetric Fistula in Pakistan***

Islamabad, 22 May 2015: On the occasion of the 3rd International Day to End Obstetric Fistula on 23 May 2015, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Pakistan and partners call for collective actions and investment in maternal health to *“End Fistula, Restore Women's Dignity”*. The continued prevalence of fistula is a clear signal that we are not yet doing what needs to be done to protect the lives and health of women. An estimated 2 million women live with the condition in developing countries and more than 3,500 cases of obstetric fistula occur each year in Pakistan. Thousands more women simply suffer in silence, unaware that they can seek medical assistance.

The global Campaign to End Fistula, launched in 2003 by UNFPA and partners, has catalysed progress towards eliminating fistula through its three-pronged strategy of prevention, treatment and social reintegration. Over the last 8 years the collective efforts of the UNFPA's campaign have surgically treated more than 4100 fistula cases, rehabilitated over 550 fistula patients and trained around 1,000 health professionals to treat and manage fistula and obstetric complications.

“Let us decide, as a global community, that the world we want is one where fistula no longer exists” said Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of UNFPA, *“Let us, once and for all, put an end to this assault on women's and girls' health and human rights, which steals from them their very dignity and*

destroys the most fundamental of human qualities: hope. Much of the world has already virtually eliminated fistula. It is time to finish the job. Let us all work together to wipe fistula off the map”.

UNFPA Pakistan and partners are undertaking a series of advocacy events at national and provincial levels to create awareness on the importance of skilled obstetric care and to fight against stigmatisation of women with fistula. Following the *Regional Fistula Conference* (Lahore, March) that brought together 350 participants from across Pakistan and neighbouring countries, a series of advocacy seminars have taken place in Baluchistan (03 May) and KP Province (28 May). The events are bringing together over 480 participants including key officials from Department of Health, MNCH Program, National Program for Primary Health Care, President of the Society of Obstetricians & Gynecologists of Pakistan, health care providers, civil society representatives, volunteers, families, media and development partners to discuss the prevention, treatment and social reintegration of fistula for Pakistan’s women and girls.

This International Fistula Day appreciates the courage and willpower of Fistula survivors. Women like Razia from Punjab whose husband died in the road traffic accident when she was six months pregnant. She developed recto-vaginal and vesico-vaginal fistula while delivering a dead baby in 2007. *“I was disowned by in-laws and with my parents support I went to the UNFPA-supported Fistula Hospital in Karachi for treatment and emotional healing. I became dry after series of repeated complex fistula surgeries”* said Razia. She got married and adopted a two year old baby and living a normal life with dignity. Razia has become a good-will ambassador and representing Pakistan at the World Health Assembly side-event on Fistula in Geneva on 22 May to celebrate the International Fistula Day 2015 with the World.

“There has been considerable progress, much more needs to be done. The time has come to put an end to obstetric fistula and restore women's dignity” said Mark Bryan Schreiner, UNFPA Pakistan Officer-in-Charge. *“We need to put the rights and dignity of women and girls including the invisible, disenfranchised and voiceless in the post-2015 agenda to transform the vision of ending preventable maternal injuries and to address the circumstances that perpetuate it, including lack of access to skilled birth attendants, child marriage and early childbearing, and gender discrimination.”*

About the United Nations Population Fund:

UNFPA leads the global Campaign to End Fistula with the support of a wide range of partners. Since the launch of the Campaign in 2003, support has been provided by UNFPA to more than 50 countries, resulting in fistula treatment and care for an estimated 57,000 women and girls and training of thousands of health-care personnel in fistula prevention and management. The Campaign's overall goal is to make the condition as rare in developing countries as it is in the industrialized world.

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UNDP

MEDIA ADVISORY

You are cordially invited to the Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Review – Pakistan Launch and Policy Dialogue for press coverage.

What:

Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Review – Pakistan Launch

When:

Monday 25 May 2015, 10:00 am - 1:45 pm

Where:

Nazara Hall, Serena Hotel, Islamabad

Who:

- Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs, Statistics and Privatization
- Mr. Mushahid Ullah Khan, Ministry of Climate Change
- Representative, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



- Marc-Andre Franche, UNDP Country Director

Programme:

1000-1100 - Session 1:

Opening remarks : Ministry of Climate Change and UNDP Pakistan

1100-1120- Session 2:

Presentation and discussion of the findings

1125 – 1200- Session 3:

Next steps and moving forward

1200 - 1300: Q&A

1345: Lunch

Media contact: Tabinda Siddiqi, Young Professional Officer, Communications Unit, UNDP Pakistan, Tabinda.siddiqi@undp.org

WFP

MEDIA ADVISORY

You are cordially invited to the SUN (Scaling Up Nutrition) Annual Review Workshop

When: 25 May 2015, 08:30 AM

Where: Serena Hotel, Islamabad, Kehkashan Hall

Chief Guest at the event will be the Secretary Planning Commission of Pakistan, Mr. Hasan Nawaz Tarar

Programme:

08:30

Recitation and Introduction

08:45

Introductory remarks by WFP representative, Ms. Lola Castro

08:55

Welcome and key note address by the Secretary Planning Commission of Pakistan, Mr. Hasan Nawaz Tarar

09:10

Overview and Objectives: SUN Movement in Pakistan

09:35

Group Photograph

09:45

Refreshments

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United Nations

MESSAGES OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

International Day for Biological Diversity

22 May 2015

The variety of life on Earth is essential for the welfare of current and future generations. The conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity can help solve a range of societal challenges.

Protecting ecosystems and ensuring access to ecosystem services by poor and vulnerable groups are essential to eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. Reducing deforestation and land degradation and enhancing carbon stocks in forests, drylands, rangelands and croplands generate significant social and economic benefits and are cost-effective ways to mitigate climate change.

Any sustainable development framework must provide the enabling conditions for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, for more equitable sharing of benefits, and for reducing the drivers of biodiversity loss. The sustainable development goals and the broader post-2015 development agenda, which are under negotiation now, provide an opportunity to mainstream biodiversity and promote transformational change in how economies and societies use and regard biodiversity.

The globally adopted Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Targets provide a useful model that Member States can use in considering how to implement the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. Meeting the Aichi Targets and addressing biodiversity loss more generally would contribute significantly to the post-2015 development agenda.

On this International Day for Biological Diversity, let us recommit to global action to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss, for people and for our planet.

International Day to End Obstetric Fistula

23 May 2015

Obstetric fistula is a devastating yet completely preventable and, in many cases, treatable injury of childbirth. It leaves women, and many girls, incontinent and often stigmatized, abused and isolated from families and communities. At least 2 million women and girls live with the condition, and 50,000 to 100,000 new cases occur every year.

The fact that fistula persists primarily among the poorest and most marginalized women and girls in the world is an egregious outcome of social, economic and gender inequalities, the denial of human rights and inadequate access to quality reproductive health services, including maternal and newborn care. We can and must put an end to this needless suffering.

We mark this International Day with the theme, “End fistula, restore women's dignity”. I call on world leaders to commit to ending the scourge of fistula in our lifetime. To achieve this goal, every fistula-affected nation needs to develop an inclusive, costed and time-bound national strategy and action plan. The international community must also significantly intensify support to nations with the greatest need.

To address the neglected health and human rights issues of fistula, UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, and its partners, launched the global Campaign to End Fistula. In the twelve years since this effort began, much has been accomplished, including providing relief to more than 57,000 women and girls through fistula surgical repairs. However, much more needs to be done.

Echoing the December 2014 United Nations General Assembly resolution on ending fistula, I urge the international community to speed up its efforts to end this condition. This needs to be part of a far-reaching and inclusive sustainable development agenda to improve sexual and reproductive and newborn health, strengthen health systems, eliminate health inequities and increase levels and predictability of funding.

We have a moral obligation, as a global community, to complete the unfinished agenda of eradicating fistula. Together, let us keep our promises to support universal human rights and ensure the health and dignity of women and girls everywhere.
