

Media Update

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UNFPA

PRESS RELEASE

High growth rate of population having a negative effect on Pakistan's development program

Islamabad, 5 August 2015 - A National Consultative (NCF) forum on the follow up to the ICPD Review and its links with the development agenda beyond 2015 was held on August 4-5, 2015 in Islamabad. The overall objective of the forum was to: a) share results of the ICPD Review and; b) to prepare a roadmap for a National Action Plan aimed at reinforcing the integration of the ICPD Beyond 2014 into national development plans to achieve national development objectives, specifically in strengthening the delivery of comprehensive health and family planning services that also address the needs of young people.

The National Consultative Forum (NCF) was organized by the Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform and the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination in close collaboration with UNFPA Country Office, Pakistan. The forum was inaugurated by the Federal Minister for Planning Development and Reform, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal and was attended by about 100 participants including senior federal & provincial Government officials, Donors agencies and development partners, Civil Society and Academia. Speaking at the inaugural session the Federal Minister stated that his presence at the forum underscored & highlighted the commitment that present government gives to population & development. He stated that this was one area in which Pakistan had been a leader in developing & Asia countries but has unfortunately not kept up with the progress achieved by other countries in the region. He stated that Pakistan was paying a big price for not having given enough attention to population issues that has resulted in

a very high growth rate of population having a negative effect on Pakistan's development programs.

Discussions during NCF were focused on the country's demographic challenges and population issues. Further these discussions focused on four thematic areas which included ICPD and sustainable development, population dynamics changing age structure, population movements sexual and reproductive health rights gender quality, equity and empowerment.

Some of the key recommendations which emerged during these consultations highlighted the need for population to be the forefront in our development planning. Vision 2025 of the Government of Pakistan needs to be strengthened so as to highlight the population factor as the development issue. Involve the private sector, work with the religious leaders, sensitize economists & financial managers about the significance of family planning in our development planning.

Other key priorities for the implementation of the ICPD Beyond 2014 were identified and the importance for national ownership of the process was emphasized with key recommendations being made in these areas which will be part of the consolidated report of the forum.

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo, Egypt in 1994 had set forth objectives and actions for sustainable development by 2015. An operational review of the implementation of the Programme of Action was conducted during 2012-2014, responding to not only new challenges and the changing development environment but reinforcing the integration of population and development agenda in global processes. The review also took into account the need for a systematic, comprehensive and integrated approach to population and development issues.

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UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is an international development agency that promotes the rights of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity. UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programmes to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.