

Media Update

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UNDP, UN Women

Press Release

New research shows major efforts are required to enhance women's representation in Pakistan's civil service

Islamabad, 2 March 2018 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) jointly released a study of women's representation and access to decision-making roles in the civil service under UNDP's global Gender Equality in Public Administration (GEPA) initiative at a launch event today. The study found that societal barriers remain to women's representation and advancement in the civil service. The recommendations of the study will support the Government of Pakistan and its development partners to develop evidence-based programming to address barriers to gender equality in public administration.

The case study found that while civil service promotions are based on years in service, gender stereotyping and social norms affect civil service postings and women tend to be concentrated at entry level positions. It also found that women in Pakistan face entrenched societal attitudes and a multi-faceted approach that accounts for socioeconomic realities must be devised to increase women's access to decision-making positions in public administration.

“It is commendable that women's labour force participation in Pakistan has increased by 50% in the past 15 years. However, only one in four women currently participate in the labour force, meaning that there is a vast treasure trove of talent unutilized. As one of the largest wage employers in the country, the public sector is an important entry point for women. Enhancing women's role in leadership and decision-making will thus have an immense



impact on gender equality and on Pakistan’s successful achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals,” said Naoko Takasu, Deputy Country Director, UNDP Pakistan.

“In taking forward the Beijing Platform of Action, Pakistan is committed to achieving 30 percent representation of women in leadership positions. This case study shows that to achieve meaningful representation of women at all levels of decision-making requires concentrated action that acknowledges and addresses the barriers they face,” said UN Women Country Representative, Jamshed Kazi.

To enhance women’s access to decision-making in public administration, the case study recommends the development of a strong evidence base on women’s representation in the civil service using systematic real-time reporting to inform future policy decisions; capacity building to achieve gender mainstreaming in government institutions through gender responsive budgeting; and the establishment of a supportive environment for women in the civil service by fostering women’s networks and South-South engagement.

The *Gender Equality in Public Administration Pakistan Case Study 2017* is one of 15 in-depth case studies conducted around the world with UNDP support. The Pakistan case study was conducted using a new methodology developed in collaboration with the OECD and explores the development of women’s representation and access to decision-making roles in the civil service, surveys women’s perceptions of barriers and opportunities, and proposes policy and programmatic interventions.

The case study launch event was attended by the UN Resident Coordinator Neil Buhne, UNDP Deputy Country Director Naoko Takasu, UN Women Country Representative Jamshed Kazi, Chair of the National Commission on the Status of Women, Khawar Mumtaz, Director Programmes Federal Judicial Academy, Huma Chughtai and Director Bureau of Statistics, Rabia Awan and featured a panel discussion on “Addressing Impediments to promote Gender Equality in Public Administration”.

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