

Media Update

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UNFPA

PRESS RELEASE

Project Launch: Saving Lives of Women and Girls in Cross Border Areas in Pakistan

Islamabad, 17 September 2018: Nearly 1.4 million Afghan refugees and 700,000 undocumented Afghans currently live in Pakistan. Many are women and girls who have suffered unspeakable trauma on their journey to safety. Based on MISP¹ estimates are more than 56,000 pregnant women, with in a year, who urgently need maternal health care to save them and their babies.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is the lead UN agency for sexual and reproductive health, currently providing life-saving services to ensure every childbirth is safe. But shortages of supplies and trained midwives continue to threaten the lives of mothers and their children in camps and hosting areas.

UNFPA in collaboration with Government of Pakistan and funding support of the Government of Australia are launching a three year Sexual and Reproductive Health program today, 17th September 2018. This programme aims to increase access of Afghan women and girls, temporarily displaced persons, and host communities to quality Sexual Reproductive Health services in order to prevent unplanned pregnancies and ensure that no mother dies while giving life.

In this regard, Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR) in partnership with the United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA) jointly organized the programme launch on September 17th 2018 at Serena, Islamabad, Pakistan. Muhammad Saleem Khan, Chief Commissioner, Commissionerate Afghan Refugees (CAR), while welcoming the guests, explained the aim of the

¹ The Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) is a series of life-saving interventions required to respond to sexual and reproductive needs at the onset of a humanitarian crisis.



programme. *“The programme aims to target 360,000 individuals is one of the best ways to ensure the health, well-being and security of families and communities. CAR will facilitate and provide strategic oversight on this initiative as a means of ensuring that maximum benefits are achieved at the end of the three years. He stressed that all implementing partners and stakeholders would have to make concerted efforts for the women and girls in Pakistan.*

Dr. Sharman Stone, Ambassador for Women and Girls, Australia also spoke on the occasion and highlighted *the role of sexual and reproductive health services in improving the lives of women, girls and communities. She said, “These services are critical to empowering women and reducing maternal and child mortality. By helping women stay healthy, we help them participate equally in society, education and the economy”.*

UNFPA Representative in Pakistan, Dr. Hassan Mohtashami conveyed *“UNFPA is committed to protecting those who are in transit. Our humanitarian programmes are protecting women, girls and young people in 60 countries today. In Pakistan, we have responded to major crises and disaster areas since 2010.”*

Other dignitaries that spoke at the event included, H.E. Margaret Adamson, High Commissioner of Australia who stressed that *“Governments and civil society have a collective responsibility to contribute to international and national efforts to improve the safety of women and girls and create opportunities for them so that they can live their lives with dignity and respect”.*
