

# Media Update

1 October 2018

---

## UN Habitat

PRESS RELEASE

### Celebration of World Habitat Day 2018, 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2018

#### Improving Municipal Solid Waste Management is critical for sustainable urban development

The first pilot Integrated Resource Recovery Center in Pakistan established in Sector G-15, Islamabad, in 2014 by UN Habitat in collaboration with Dr. Akhtar Hameed Khan Memorial Trust (AHKMT), and support of UNESCAP, was visited by the Federal Minister for Climate Change, senior government officials and a large number of stakeholders, community member, civil society organizations and universities.

The event was organized in commemoration of the World Habitat Day which is celebrated on the first Monday of October globally. It brings attention to UN-Habitat's mandate to promote sustainable urban development policies that ensure adequate shelter for all. This year's theme is **Managing Municipal Solid Waste**. It is estimated that 20 million tons of solid waste is generated annually in Pakistan with annual growth rate of about 2.4 percent.

Rapid urbanization has resulted in a corresponding increase in the volume and complexity of solid waste. Open burning of waste is estimated to account for a quarter of the Pakistan's reported carbon emissions. Dumped waste is also a major cause of diarrheal diseases. In order to solve the problem it is imperative to shift from the conventional end-of-the-pipe waste management system towards a resource management approach. A community-based approach to waste management addresses these problems. Integrated Resource Recovery Center (IRRC) is a decentralized community-based recycling and composting facility which can be built and operated at low costs by using limited mechanical technology, ensuring low



operational costs and with minimal equipment breakdowns, while creating job opportunities.

United Nation has been promoting decentralized and Integrated Resource Recovery Centers (IRRCs) in secondary cities and small towns in Asia-Pacific including Pakistan with the objective to recover value from waste and provide livelihood opportunities to the urban poor. UN Habitat provides technical assistance for establishment of IRRC.

Mr. Jawed Ali Khan, Habitat Programme Manager, UN Habitat at this occasion stated that the IRRC offers a highly cost-effective way of improving waste management and cleaning the environment in the fast-growing cities of Pakistan. IRRC model in Islamabad demonstrates the potential for community-based waste management to improve public health, mitigate climate change and create safe jobs. For every dollar invested, the IRRC model offers USD 10 in benefits. The benefits are particularly significant in relation to improved public health and climate change mitigation, although employment creation also plays a part. The IRRC diverts 90 per cent of waste from centralized disposal and is a factor of ten cheaper than providing centralized disposal facilities.

Mr. Muhammad Irfan Tariq, Director General, Ministry of Climate Change appreciated the efforts for establishment of IRRC in Islamabad and suggested that community-based waste management approaches offer a 'best solution for cleaner Pakistan and value for money solution for donors and governments. He suggested for replication and up-scaling of this successful model to other areas in the country

Ms. Sumaira Gul, Program Manager, AHKMT informed the visitors that this pilot intervention has created a very positive impact on environment and is generating demand from the housing societies and other communities and creating livelihood opportunities.

Ms. Almas Shakoor, National Coordinator, Shehersaaz, highlighted that the IRRC model would also help address multiple targets under the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Marine Life, in the case of settlements on the coast or major rivers) and SDG 15 (Life on Land) and Paris agreement to reduce GHG emissions.