

# Media Update

29 April 2019

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## UNICEF

PRESS RELEASE

### Youth Must Step Forward to Resolve Their Problems

Islamabad, 29 April 2019 – United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with School of Leadership organized an event here today to celebrate the achievement of the Red Code team, comprising three young Pakistani girls, Sara Farooq Khan, Sana Farooq Khan and Mahin Usman, that was recently declared one of the winners of the Generation Unlimited (GenU) Global Youth Challenge. The Minister of State for Climate Change, Ms. Zartaj Gul was the chief guest.

The GenU Global Youth Challenge is an initiative launched by UNICEF to engage young people and encourage them to find innovative solutions to issues from their everyday life.

Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Zartaj Gul said, “In Pakistan, 22 million people continue to defecate in the open, out of which at least 10 million are women and girls. Not only does this put the health and wellbeing of these women and children at risk, but they are also faced with safety and security hazards. We must not allow this to go on.”

“I congratulate UNICEF on the initiative of launching the GenU Global Youth Challenge and call upon the youth of Pakistan to step forward and join us in working towards resolving the issues they face, particularly girls, in their daily lives. The present government is deeply engaged in bringing about social change and I assure you that in taking menstrual hygiene management forward, we will lead from the front, she added.”

A total of 32 teams from 16 countries participated and presented their ideas in the Challenge. On 12 April 2019, five global winners were announced. The team ‘Red Code’ from Pakistan was one of them; others included teams from



Thailand, Zimbabwe, Sudan and North Macedonia. Each winning team will receive USD 20,000 and tailored mentorship for scaling up their respective projects.

Congratulating the Red Code team, United Nations Resident Coordinator, Ms. Neil Buhne said, “Today we see what happens when we give young people the chance to develop creative solutions to the issues they face in their daily lives. Their bright ideas shared at the global stage will now benefit their communities.”

“The United Nations will continue to work with the Government of Pakistan in partnership with young people and for young people, to help them learn, develop employability skills and find pathways to jobs and opportunities,” he added.

In 2018, UNICEF Pakistan Country Office invited young people between the ages of 14-24 from across the country to participate in the Challenge and present innovative ideas on tools, models and services around hygienic menstrual management for girls and women.

Expressing her delight at the performance of the young Pakistan team, the Acting UNICEF Representative in Pakistan, Ms. Ellen Van Kalmthout said, “It gives us immense pleasure that young people, including girls, have found a platform in the Generation Unlimited Youth Challenge to give voice to their own life experiences with sensitive issues, and generate innovative ideas to create practical solutions.

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### **About UNICEF**

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere.

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