

# Media Update

23 May 2019

---

## UNDP

PRESS RELEASE

### UNDP's new documentary raises awareness about need for conservation of Brown Bears in Northern Pakistan

23 May 2019, Islamabad— The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Pakistan marked the International Day of Biodiversity with the launch of its new documentary '**Deosai – Wilderness in Peril**', produced in partnership with the Serena Hotels, to raise awareness about the conservation of the brown bear population in Northern Pakistan.

The 15-minute documentary aims to raise awareness about the endangered Himalayan brown bear in the unique Deosai Plateau, well-known for its rich flora and fauna of the Karakoram alpine steppe eco-region.

The Himalayan subspecies of the Brown bears are one of the oldest and most significant inhabitants of the Deosai plateau. The population of these bears — once known to be over 10,000 in number — has now plummeted to an estimated 54 bears residing in the plains. Deosai National Park remains the only habitat for these wild mammals which has witnessed a steady increase in numbers of the otherwise fast receding population of the Himalayan brown bears.

Produced together by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Walkabout Films the documentary examines how climate change and human activity are endangering the Himalayan Brown Bear population in Northern Pakistan. The original English documentary and a version dubbed in Urdu are available on the internet to facilitate public awareness and educational purposes.

*“Thanks to Serena Hotels, PTCL, and all the individual contributors to our cause, our campaign has been very successful so far. But this is an ongoing effort and we all have a role to play, by informing people about the dangers of biodiversity loss, acting as responsible tourists, promoting environmentally-friendly behaviours,*



*mobilizing public opinion or demanding action by decision-makers,”* said Mr. Ignacio Artaza, Resident Representative a.i., UNDP.

The screening of the documentary was followed by a panel discussion on Biodiversity and Eco-system conservation moderated by Ms Sana Jamal. The panelists included Mr Asifullah Khan, Secretary, Forest Wildlife and Environment, Gilgit-Baltistan, Mr Ignacio Artaza, Resident Representative a.i. UNDP, Dr. Farida Begum, Head of Department, Environmental Sciences Department, Karakorum International University, and Dr. Fozia Parveen, Environmental Activist.

The launch ceremony and panel discussion held at the Serena Hotel, Gilgit was attended by Government representatives, local community members, environmental activists, media representatives, and students from local universities.

The Sustainable Development Goal number 15 aims to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss. UNDP believes that biodiversity and healthy ecosystems are essential for improving and sustaining human wellbeing.

CEO Serena Hotels, Mr. Aziz Boolani said, *“The loss of biodiversity is one of the key challenges facing Pakistan right now. At Serena Hotels, we have been providing continuous support towards environmental initiatives and have taken responsible tourism practices to create awareness.”*

To see the full documentary in English [click here](#)

For additional information, please contact Ayesha Babar at [ayesha.babar@undp.org](mailto:ayesha.babar@undp.org) or +92 (51) 835 5650

---

*UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in nearly 170 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.*

[www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)

\*\*\*

