

# Media Update

30 May 2019

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## WHO

PRESS RELEASE

### **Don't let tobacco take your breath away Quit now and say no to second-hand smoke**

Islamabad, 31 May, 2019 – On the eve of this year's World No Tobacco Day, the World Health Organization (WHO) is calling on people protect their lungs by not only quitting tobacco smoking but also saying no to second-hand smoke. Enough scientific evidence is available to prove that tobacco is harmful in all its forms and disguise. It kills over 8 million people every year. Tobacco smoking and second-hand smoke can cause lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma and tuberculosis. Tobacco smoke in itself is a very dangerous form of air pollution.

#### **Tobacco has a negative impact on lung health**

Tobacco smoking is the primary cause for lung cancer, responsible for over two thirds of lung cancer deaths globally. Tobacco smoke contains over 7000 chemicals, at least 69 of which are known to cause cancer. Second-hand smoke exposure at home or in the work place also increases the risk of lung cancer. Additionally, tobacco smoking is the leading cause of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, a condition where the build-up of pus-filled mucus in the lungs results in a painful cough and agonizing breathing difficulties. The risk of developing chronic obstructive pulmonary disease is particularly high among individuals who start smoking at a young age, as tobacco smoke significantly slows lung development. Tobacco also aggravates asthma, which restricts activity and contributes to disability. Furthermore, tuberculosis damages the lungs and reduces lung function, which is further exacerbated by tobacco smoking.

#### **Alarm bells in the Eastern Mediterranean Region including in Pakistan**

Around 38% of men and 4% of women are smokers. In some countries, as many as 57% of men and 29% of women smoke. There is huge burden of tobacco use in Pakistan. As many as 19.1 % adults use tobacco in any form, men 31.8 % and women 5.8% Among the youth (13-15 years of age), the prevalence is 13.3 and 6.6 % among boys and girls respectively. As per Global Adult Tobacco Survey that was conducted in Pakistan in 2014, the current adult tobacco smokers and smokeless tobacco users were 12.4 % and 7.7 % respectively and exposure to second hand smoke was 48.3 %. On the conservative estimates keeping in view the increase in population, tobacco attributable deaths may amount to 227,000 per year.

“Smoking among young people is particularly worrying,” says Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean. “It has reached 42% in boys and 31% in girls”. This includes smoking shisha, which is more popular among young people than cigarettes. “By 2025, smoking is expected to rise in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, contrary to the trend in the rest of the world,” explains Dr Al-Mandhari. “This will lead to an escalating epidemic of lung disease regionally”.

### **Don't let tobacco take your breath away**

- Quit smoking to: reduce the risk of lung cancer; slow the progression of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; and improve asthma symptoms.
- Raise awareness of the harmful effects of tobacco use and second-hand smoke exposure.
- Discourage the use of tobacco in any form.
- Advocate for your rights, and let things other than tobacco take your breath away.

Governments made commitments to reduce tobacco use by 30% by 2025. Its time to accelerate tobacco control legislation and the implementation of FCTC and MPOWER measures to reduce demand for this deadly product.

“Policies are in place to help achieve this target,” says Dr Al-Mandhari. “The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the MPOWER measures to reduce demand for this deadly product can help us beat tobacco and save lives.”

“Stop tobacco from taking your breath away. Tobacco kills one person every 4 seconds. Do not be that person and do not contribute to the death

toll,” says Dr. Palitha Mahipal, WHO Head of Pakistan. He said tobacco is deadly in any form or disguise. Tobacco killed 100 million during the last century and if current trends persist, tobacco, by the end of this century, will kill a billion people or more unless urgent action is taken.

Dr. Palitha said that a recent high level WHO Mission on tobacco taxation has held extensive technical discussions with the Federal Bureau of Revenue, met with high ups and advocated for an immediate elimination of the third-tier and enhanced tobacco taxation and we would see it happening. “We have high hopes that the Prime Minister, who himself is a champion, and our Health Minister, would leave no stone unturned to protect the health of the people.

Dr. Palitha advocated for:

- Strict Tobacco Control laws
- Large-sized pictorial health warning on tobacco packs
- Implementation of “Plain Packaging”
- Comprehensive ban on Tobacco Advertising Promotion and Sponsorship
- Enhanced Tobacco Taxation and implementation of “Health Tax” on tobacco products
- Continued Health awareness campaigns

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# WHO

MEDIA ADVISORY

## Commemorating World No Tobacco Day 31 May 2019

**When:** Friday, 31 May 2019, 5:00 p.m – 8 p.m

**Where:** Ramada Hotel, Club Road, Islamabad, Pakistan

**What:** Seminar, Commemorating the World No Tobacco Day

**Who:**

Chief Guest: Dr Zafar Mirza, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Health

Dr Palitha Mahipala, WHO Representative/Head of Mission in Pakistan

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World Health Organization

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**UNDP**

PRESS RELEASE

**Well-researched national policies can lead to sustainable urbanization: UNDP's new report**

30 May 2019, Islamabad— ‘The benefits of urbanization can be fully reaped if well-researched national policies and plans are put into place,’ finds the latest issue of Development Advocate Pakistan on ‘Sustainable Urbanization’. The report was released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) in Islamabad today.

Pakistan is urbanizing at a rate of 3 percent per annum, the fastest in South Asia. Since 1951 to 2017, the percentage of population living in urban areas has increased manifold-17.7 percent to 36.4 percent. Urban centers have also grown more rapidly in terms of population size compared to rural areas. Growing urbanization has transformed and placed cities at the center of the development agenda. Economic growth, in large part, is fueled by rapid urbanization in cities. This has opened avenues of employment, social development and revenue generation. However, the growth of cities has come at the cost of increasing inequalities and negative impacts upon the environment. Unequal service provision, congested roads, absent municipal services, water shortages etc. are hallmarks of several ‘poor’ sections or urban settlements.

The report launch was followed by a panel discussion on challenges and opportunities that urbanization brings to Pakistan, including social, economic, environmental and governance related solutions, in an effort to identify gaps and develop a way forward. The discussion was moderated by Umer Malik, Policy Analyst, UNDP while the panelists included Jehangir Khan Sherpao, renowned architect and head of Asian Architects Association, Hina Lotia, Director Programmes LEAD Pakistan and Aniqqa Arshad, Research Economist, PRIME Institute.

The full report on 'Sustainable Urbanization' can be accessed [here](#).

Photograph can be downloaded [here](#).

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**FAO**

PRESS RELEASE

## **Pakistan's efforts to control Foot and Mouth Disease win award in Rome**

Ministry of National Food Security and Research has been nominated as co-winner of the E. Saouma Award for the project "Development of the National Control Program for Foot and Mouth Disease in Pakistan" funded by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Technical Cooperation program (TCP).

The award is in honour of former FAO Director General, Mr. Edouard Saouma for his conception and implementation of the Technical Cooperation Program, and is presented to national institutions that have implemented with particular efficiency a project funded by the TCP. The TCP was created to enable FAO to make its know-how and technical expertise available to member countries upon request, drawing from its own core resources. The TCP provides assistance in all areas pertaining to FAO's mandate and competence that are covered by the Strategic Framework to respond to government priority needs. The TCP is an established and highly valued component of UN FAO action in the field, allowing the rapid mobilization of resources either to respond to emergencies or to meet technical assistance needs.

Productivity of livestock in Pakistan has been generally low. One of the main reasons is frequent occurrence of infectious diseases particularly Foot

and Mouth Disease. FMD reported in animals in pre-partition has been seen since independence in Pakistan. The disease was usually seen as a mild febrile infection with mild lesions in cattle and buffaloes with a seasonal pattern (usually wheat harvest time or change of weather) up to early 1970s. Now the disease is endemic and wide spread in Pakistan and occurs throughout the year. FMD is currently the most widespread livestock infectious disease in the country and is economically harmful to livestock herders and family farmers.

The award has been bestowed to the Ministry for their project “Development of the National Control Program for Foot and Mouth Disease in Pakistan”, which started in November 2015 and ended in March 2017. The project developed a national control program for FMD in Pakistan and demonstrated how different components of this control program can be effectively implemented under local conditions. The project also built capacity of veterinary field staff of the provincial Livestock and Dairy Development Departments in epidemiology and control of FMD.

FAO Representative Ms. Mina Dowlatchahi when announcing the award to H.E Minister Sahibzada Muhammad Mehboob Sultan said, “I am very pleased of the award the Ministry has received as the recognition of the highest level of engagement of Government of Pakistan in the control of FMD and animal health agenda in the last few years. Thanks to the Ministry NFS&R efforts and with the technical support of FAO, Pakistan has moved from level 1, (where epidemiology of FMD is well understood in the country) to level 2 (where the virus circulation is reduced in high risk areas and the impact of FMD is reduced in targeted sectors). This is in accordance with the OIE scale in its drive to reach level 5 or FMD free status. FAO will continue working with the Ministry of Food Security and Research to support the government efforts for FMD and PPR free Pakistan.”

As a fall out of the TCP project, the Ministry of Food Security and Research has formulated and launched in December 2018 a national government funded program (UTF) with the support of FAO, and mobilized the support of JICA in a project called “Enhancement of Foot and Mouth disease control in Pakistan”. Aiming to control the FMD outbreaks in the four

provinces and Islamabad Capital Territory. Punjab Government has also launched a UTF project where livestock & Dairy Development Department Punjab launched a mass vaccination program against FMD in southern districts of Punjab that are rich in livestock.

The Saouma award will be presented to the Ministry of Food Security and Research in Rome, on 26 June 2019.

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