International Day of the Girl
11 October 2019

Every year on 11 October, the International Day of the Girl, United Nations and partners work with girls to amplify their voices and stand up for their rights. This year, under the theme, “GirlForce: Unscripted and unstoppable”, we will celebrate achievements by, with and for girls since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – the most comprehensive policy agenda ever for advancing the rights of not only women but girls.

“Nothing should hold girls back from equal participation in all areas of life,” says Knut Ostby, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (a.i) in Pakistan. “Girls in Pakistan are high achievers in academics and are assuming roles of greater responsibility in various sectors, including those which were once considered for boys only. Malala Yusuf Zai, Arfa Karim and many others are proud example for their country. It is incumbent upon us to provide them an environment that is conducive for their personal and professional development as well as equal opportunities of employment.”

In Pakistan, girls are getting more recognition as a potential force in the process of national development. More girls are attending and completing school, more are gaining the skills they need to excel in life and fewer are getting married or becoming mothers while still children. However, despite progress, girls still learn less, end up earning less and have fewer assets and opportunities. A lot more needs to be done to bring girls at par with boys.

To ensure that girls in Pakistan enjoy their rights, have equal opportunities and are not discriminated against at any stage in life, United Nations emphasizes and endeavors to:

- Promote and protect the rights of girls and increase awareness of their needs and potential.
- Eliminate violence against girls.
- Eliminate all forms of discrimination against girls in provision of services including health, nutrition, education, skills development, training and job opportunities.
- Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls.
- Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work.
• Promote girls awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life.
• Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of girls.

United Nations specialized agencies including UNICEF, UN Woman and UNESCO are working with their respective government counterparts, development partners, civil society and media to ensure that girls rights are recognized and delivered.

As 2019 is the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), United Nations continues to demand from the world leaders that they fulfil their commitments made in the CRC and take action to ensure that every child, has every right, especially girls.

Twenty-five years ago, more than 30,000 women from 200 countries arrived in Beijing for the World Conference on Women determined to recognize the rights of women and girls as human rights. What started as global women’s movements campaigning for sexual and reproductive health rights, political participation and equal pay, to name a few, expanded to movements organized by and for adolescent girls.

Globally today, girls’ movements are stopping child marriage, promoting girls’ education, standing up against gender-based violence, demanding action on climate change, tackling issues of self-esteem, engaging with relevant authorities to advocate for financial investments in their communities and for truly inclusive development that recognize their needs.

***