

Human Rights Council 37th Session

UNFPA STATEMENT ON PAKISTAN UPR OUTCOME REPORT

Thank you Mr. President,

UNFPA commends the Government of Pakistan on its UPR report which demonstrates its commitment to the enjoyment of human rights. UNFPA Pakistan wishes to make a few observations in supporting the government towards meeting the following challenges:

With regard to the **harmonization of the human rights standards and obligations at the federal and provincial levels**, UNFPA would like to pledge its ongoing support towards harmonization of policies and programmes across the national and sub-national levels, with a focus on enhancing access to the highest attainable standard of healthcare and other social services for all without discrimination.

Noting that **unmet need for family planning** among married women is one of the highest in Asia, the goal of UNFPA's 9th Country Programme is "to enable, by 2022, an estimated 5.8 million women to become new users of modern contraception and to make informed choices over their fertility that will favorably impact the demographic transition in Pakistan", UNFPA advocates for increased evidence-based allocation of domestic resources to health and family planning and will support policy development, capacity building of service providers for a human rights-based family planning, and the empowerment of women and youth to improve uptake of quality family planning services.

UNFPA commends the Government of Pakistan for the establishment of the **National Commission on the Status of Women**. UNFPA will mobilize resources to strengthen the Commission's capacity to advocate for women and girls' rights and to monitor related international obligations. UNFPA is currently supporting two Provincial Commissions (Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and aims to extend this support to a newly established Commission in the Sindh Province.

Concerning the **lack of standardized disaggregated data collection mechanisms on violence against women**, UNFPA observes that considerable work has begun in Punjab Province, with substantial technical and financial support to collect district-level data, including women of minority groups. UNFPA is also supporting the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province Commission to establish a Gender Management Information System and will extend similar support to the Sindh Province Commission.

Concerned that the **minimum age of marriage at 18 years** is not harmonized at federal and provincial level, UNFPA, through its 9th CP, will support the empowerment of young people through life-skills education and advocate for their protection from harmful practices. UNFPA recognizes that early child marriage is a significant factor in high fertility trends as well as maternal mortality and morbidity rates.

UNFPA has provided technical and material support to implement **the government's decision to include transgender persons in its national census in 2017** and would like to note that the methodology for this Census component requires strengthening in the future.