

Media Update - 21 March 14

> United Nations

Tharparkar Highlights The Need To Bridge Relief And Development Efforts - Says The United Nations

(Islamabad, 21 March 2014): The United Nations says that more funds are urgently required to scale up support for nutrition interventions, including sustainable development solutions, to tackle the nutrition crisis in the drought-affected Tharparkar region. Overall, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and FAO and their partners, including HANDS, Merlin and Muslim Hands, are seeking \$11.67 million to scale up nutrition and other support to over 1.3 million people for a year in Tharparkar and surrounding districts.

The United Nations and its partners have been providing nutritional support in Sindh since 2010, assisting 1.7 million children and 800,000 pregnant and lactating women through malnutrition management, nutrient supplementation, and health and nutrition counseling. The UN's scaling up plan would help establish 44 community-based malnutrition treatment sites, provide emergency health services, build and rehabilitate water harvesting structures, establish health and nutrition surveillance systems and provide livelihood support, concentrated animal feed and vaccination of small ruminants.

Those intervention would complement the support so far provided by Government authorities from all over Pakistan that in the last six months distributed more than 15,000 tons of food items, including wheat, rice and food packs to families in need and vaccinated 2.2 million livestock.

"The 2011 National Nutrition Survey tells us that 44% of children under five in Pakistan are stunted, 32% underweight and 15% suffer from acute malnutrition. Considering the situation in Tharparkar as exclusive to drought conditions is not accurate" said, Timo Pakkala, United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan, while highlighting the main causes of the recent surge in morbidity and mortality rates of children and adults in Tharparkar and surrounding districts.

He added that "Reports in early March 2014 highlighted a rising number of malnutrition-related, clinical admissions and child mortality in Tharparkar district. According to 2013 Nutrition Information System data summary, 21% of children are acutely malnourished, with areas adjacent to Tharparkar - mainly Umerkot and Sanghar - facing a similar situation.

Pakkala called the nutrition crisis in Pakistan a silent emergency requiring urgent attention and investment and added that the situation is bound to recur, unless root causes are addressed. "Resilience is what we are after here. Crisis and disasters are naturally unpredictable. Creating resilient communities is what bridges relief and development efforts. This requires investment. I encourage the Sindh Government to consider funding the scaling up of nutrition programmes in Tharparkar and other districts from its development budget." Pakkala said.

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Message by the Secretary-General on 'International Day For The Elimination Of Racial Discrimination' (21 March 2014)

This year, the world commemorates the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination for the first time following the death of former South African President Nelson Mandela.

This sad reality is also a reminder of his courageous struggle against apartheid and his inspiring victory over the racist forces that had imprisoned him for 27 years.

The United Nations General Assembly, in a show of solidarity with the anti-apartheid movement, established this Day to commemorate the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, when 69 people were killed and many others injured as police opened fire on a peaceful protest against South Africa's appalling pass laws.

Nelson Mandela's journey from prisoner to President was the triumph of an extraordinary individual against the forces of hate, ignorance and fear – and it was a testimony to the power of courage, reconciliation and forgiveness to overcome the injustice of racial discrimination.

He chose Sharpeville for the historic signing of South Africa's new Constitution in 1996. On that occasion, President Mandela said, "Out of the many Sharpevilles which haunt our history was born the unshakeable determination that respect for human life, liberty and well-being must be enshrined as rights beyond the power of any force to diminish."

Today, we remember Sharpeville as a symbol of the terrible toll of racial discrimination, and we honour those who lost their lives during the massacre. At the same time, we recall that President Mandela framed Sharpeville's legacy as an unwavering resolve to protect the dignity and rights of all people.

The lessons of South Africa's staunch defence of equality "out of the many Sharpevilles" in the country's history can be applied anywhere in the world, not only in response to organized,

institutional forms of racism but wherever this pernicious problem occurs, including in daily interpersonal relations.

I call on all people, especially political, civic and religious leaders, to strongly condemn messages and ideas based on racism, racial superiority or hatred as well as those that incite racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. On this Day, let us acknowledge that racial discrimination remains a dangerous threat and resolve to tackle it through dialogue inspired by the proven ability of individuals to respect, protect and defend our rich diversity as one human family.

Message by the Secretary-General on ‘World Water Day’ (22 March 2014)

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Water is at the core of sustainable development.

This year’s observance of World Water Day focuses on the links between water and energy.

Both are critical for eradicating poverty.

And they interact with each other in ways that can help – or hinder – our efforts to build stable societies and lives of dignity for all.

Climate change driven in great part by the unsustainable use of energy will exacerbate water stress and scarcity in many regions. Efforts to provide universal access to water and energy will be undermined if the current warming trend continues.

The many strong links between water and energy demand coherent, integrated policies and innovative strategies. Water must be used -- and electricity must be generated and distributed -- equitably and efficiently, so all users get a fair share.

These are the goals of the ongoing work of UN-Water and of the Sustainable Energy for All initiative. These issues are also crucially important elements in our discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

On World Water Day, let us pledge to develop the policies needed to ensure that sustainable water and energy are secured for the many and not just the few.

Message by the Secretary-General on ‘World Tuberculosis Day’ (24 March 2014)

Tuberculosis is the world’s second most deadly infectious diseases among adults, after HIV/AIDS. Every year, TB kills 1.3 million people and causes nearly 9 million to fall ill.

The tragedy is that TB is curable, yet one third of those who have it – some 3 million people – do not get the treatment they need. Most are poor. Many are from marginalized populations such as migrant workers, refugees and internally displaced persons, prisoners, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities.

Progress in recent years has proven that we can tackle this threat with concerted efforts. Between 1995 and 2012, global health interventions saved 22 million lives and successfully treated 56 million people suffering from TB.

To accelerate results, we need to increase access to health services and mobilize communities, hospitals and private providers to reach more people and treat them faster. We must also invest more in research to find diagnostic tools, drugs and vaccines.

Everyone with TB should have access to the services they need for rapid diagnosis, treatment and cure. This is a matter of social justice. It is also an issue of global health security, given the rapidly emerging problem of patients with deadly, extensively drug-resistant TB going undetected. Even when they are diagnosed, many lack access to effective treatment.

On World Tuberculosis Day, I call for intensified global solidarity to eradicate this preventable disease. By caring for the 3 million people who do not have the treatment they need, we will foster a better future for all humankind.

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