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Human Development and Inequality - Panel Discussion II with UNDP Pakistan

UNDP Pakistan

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Panel Discussion II with UNDP Pakistan

Human Development and Inequality

Welcome Address

Mr. Knut Ostby

Resident Representative, UNDP Pakistan

Panelists

Dr. S Akbar Zaidi

Executive Director, Institute of Business Administration

Dr. Waqar Masood

Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Revenue, Minister of State and Former Secretary Finance, Government of Pakistan

Dr. Sania Nishtar

Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation

Ms. Ayesha Khan

Senior Researcher at Collective for Social Science Research and Author “The Women’s Movement in Pakistan: Activism, Islam and Democracy”

Moderator

Dr. Aasim Sajjad Akhter

Associate Professor of Political Economy, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad

As one of the first countries to pledge its commitment to the 2030 Agenda on the SDGs, Pakistan understands the simple truth that equality is the cornerstone of sustainable development. The Asia-Pacific region has witnessed the steepest rise globally in human development, but at the same time the region continues to grapple with wide-spread, multi-dimensional poverty. Poverty is much easier to address as compared to inequality. All sets of data prior to COVID-19 shows that poverty rate fell remarkably in South Asia, however, what it does not show is that the inequality rate also increased a great deal. So whenever there has been economic growth, rather than development, there has been a rise in inequality. Inclusive growth is mainly about reducing poverty. However, growth should also be focused on women, youth, and rural population so that they can join the race and benefit from the growth. Discussion about the Ehsaas Program emphasized that the program is linked with the theory of change. The creation of a ministry has consolidated all the federal entities, covering the digital infrastructure which helped during the COVID-19 cash roll out. The political involvement of women is essential for reduction in gender inequality in Pakistan. Women politicians and their male allies can better work towards gender equality policies when supported by civil society and strong allies in government bodies.

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