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Second periodic report submitted by Pakistan under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, due in 2022*

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Introduction

1. The Government of Pakistan (GoP) signed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) on 3rd November 2004 and ratified it on 17th April, 2008. In accordance with Articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, which stipulate that a State Party must submit its implementation report in accordance with its treaty obligations, the Government of Pakistan is pleased to present its 2nd Periodic Report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR).
2. This report mainly contains information and developments from 2017 to 2022 which have been obtained from various stakeholders through detailed consultative meetings and through information made available by the Government. Furthermore, this report has been prepared in coordination with various Ministries and Departments both at the Federal and the Provincial levels. The guidelines adopted by the CESCR on 18th November 2008 have been followed for the preparation of this report.
3. Although Pakistan ratified the ICESCR in 2008, yet prior to this date the Government of Pakistan had been making efforts through several legislative and administrative measures for realization of economic, social and cultural rights of the people of Pakistan. The Constitution of Pakistan in several articles envisages the realization and protection of economic, social and cultural rights of its citizens. At the provincial level a series of legislations have also been promulgated which aim to safeguard the economic, social and cultural rights of the Pakistani citizens. Moreover, Pakistan has ratified several international conventions which directly or indirectly resonate with ICESCR.
4. This report contains information regarding the implementation of Articles 1 to 15 of the Covenant with emphasis on legislative, institutional, administrative and policy measures taken by the Government to ensure full realization of rights mentioned in the Covenant as well as the progress achieved therein.

Applicability of the Covenant

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 6 of the concluding observations (E/C.12/PAK/CO/1)

5. The Constitution of Pakistan protects the economic, social, and cultural rights of the citizens of Pakistan. These Covenant rights are incorporated into the Constitution of Pakistan either as fundamental rights or as 'Principles of Policy'. While fundamental rights are enforceable and justiciable, Principles of Policy are guiding principles of the policy of the State. The Supreme Court of Pakistan in *Asad Ali Khan vs. Province of Punjab (2021)*,¹ held that "although Principles of Policy are not enforceable by the Judiciary, nor can they on their own be made a basis for adjudging any law to be void, however in drafting legislations and policies the State is required to be guided by these directives, and the laws must reflect these principles. Furthermore, all acts of the Organs and functionaries of the State must align with these directives. The State in performance of its functions cannot be inconsistent in this respect".
6. Several Federal and Provincial institutions play an important role in the protection of rights guaranteed under the Covenant. For example, the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP) has taken some important initiatives to strengthen rule of law and improve the service delivery of justice system. LJCP devised special training sessions for training of the Judicial Officers and Prosecutors from all over Pakistan in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) at Punjab Judicial Academy. The National Judicial Policy Making Committee (NJPMC) designated these trained Judicial Officials to try Gender-based Violence (GBV) cases and Gender-based Violence courts were established to exclusively conduct the trial of women related cases. At the time of compiling of this report (63) courts have been assigned to adjudicate Gender Based Violence cases in Punjab, (1) court has been assigned to adjudicate GBV cases in Balochistan, (27) courts have been assigned GBV cases

¹ Asad Ali Khan vs. Province of Punjab (2021 PLD 770).

in Sindh, (33) courts have been assigned GBV cases in KP and (01) court has been designated to adjudicate GBV cases in Islamabad.

Devolution of powers

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 8 of the concluding observations

7. The National Finance Commission Award (NFC) assists provinces with gaining more financial empowerment. The NFC Award is a series of planned economic programs in Pakistan enacted since 1951. Constituted under the Article 160 of the Constitution, the program was developed to take control of financial imbalances and equally manage the financial resources of four provinces to meet their expenditure liabilities while alleviating the horizontal fiscal imbalances. As per the Constitution, the program designs financial formulas of economic distribution to provincial and federal government for five consecutive years. Stipulations and directions mentioned by the Constitution, the provisional governments and federal government competes to get higher share of the program's revenue to stabilize their own financial status. Furthermore, the provinces have been delegated powers to levy taxes and increase resources/ funds for expenditure on public services in their provinces.

Data collection

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 10 of the concluding observations

8. Pakistan Bureau of Statistic (PBS) being the National Statistical Office is mandated for collection & compilation of data with transparency and its dissemination for evidence-based policy making/informed decision making on all social & economic issues. Data collected by PBS is widely used by policy makers, national/ international agencies, academia, researchers & students. Keeping in view to improve the data collection system, PBS brought several changes in view of Government's vision of "Digital Pakistan".

9. PBS is collecting and compiling information regarding socio economic indicators including health, education, housing, water, sanitation, hygiene and employment, through census and surveys. Information collected by PBS can be disaggregated by gender, region and at district level, reports and microdata of surveys are available on PBS' website. Keeping in view the SDGs and changing Ground realities, PBS has taken the initiative of revising the questionnaires. Already existing modules of existing surveys have been reviewed and updated by considering the concept of SDG "Leaving no one behind". Further new modules have also been included for reporting of SDG including, migration, disability, information communication & technology and food insecurity.

10. PBS has also undergone "Digital Transformation" and shifted from manual approaches to electronic data collection with built-in monitoring system linked with GIS for reliable, timely and credible data for its major activities. Furthermore, Currently PBS has been planning to conduct the 7th Population and Housing Census 2022 keeping in view the quality assurance of data PBS plan to digitalize the census. The 7th Population and Housing Census will be the "Digital Census", the first one in the history of Pakistan and will not only enable PBS to provide timely data for policy planning but also enable real time monitoring for provision of quality data.

National Commission for Human Rights

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 12 of the concluding observations

11. The NCHR, as an autonomous body functions independently of the Government and is directly accountable to Pakistan's Parliament. It exercises full financial autonomy and has summoning and investigative powers. On a yearly basis, the NCHR's financial and performance reports are presented to Parliament.

12. Following the expiry of the last Commission's tenure in May 2019, the new Chairperson and members of the NCHR have been appointed and the Commission has started its operations. In 2021, NCHR in collaboration with European Union-funded Huqooq-e-Pakistan Project (HeP) launched its country-wide consultative process for the Commission's four-year strategic plan. The NCHR has 175 budgetary sanctioned posts. In 2018-2019, the total budget allocated to the NCHR was increased by 126% from the previous year (to PKR 92 million). The initial budget for 2019-2020 is PKR 93 million plus an additional allocation of PKR 20 million (a total of PKR 112 million). For the Financial Year 2020-21, the Budget allocation was PKR 97.7 million. The salaries of Chairman and Members of the Commission are considerably more than the highest-ranking members of the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR).

13. NCHR has developed the Biennial Work-plan (2019-2021). Furthermore, the annual report of NCHR was submitted to the Parliament before expiry of term of the Commission. The report highlighted that significant progress was made with regards to the redressal of complaints besides *suo-motu* notices and investigations on various matters including the encounter of Naezebullah Mehsud and murder of a transgender in Sahiwal. The Report also served as a guideline to curb the menace of human trafficking, torture, and bonded labour. According to the Annual Report 2018, NCHR received 2435 complaints, 195 of which were *suo-motu*.

Human Rights Defenders

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 14 of the concluding observations

14. In 2018 the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) developed the 'NCHR Policy Guidelines on Protection of Human Rights Defenders' to ensure the safety of HRDs and enable them to carry on their activities in a conducive environment. Under the policy guidelines NCHR pledged to assist where needed in any manner possible, all Human Rights Defenders individually and in groups in carrying out their core functions.

15. At the federal government level, a 'Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances' was constituted in March 2011 under the Pakistan Commissions of Inquiry Act 1956 (Repealed by Pakistan Commission of Inquiry Act 2017). The Commission, comprising of a chairman and two members, serves as a legal forum for families of alleged disappeared persons to lodge complaints. During investigation of cases, they are kept informed about progress of their cases and in person hearings are conducted. The system is free of cost as the lodging of complaint is free and the complainants do not require legal representation. Furthermore, the hearings are held at the provincial capitals to save expenses of the complainants to travel to the federal capital. During investigation of cases, the Commission has been receiving full co-operation from all stakeholders including Federal and Provincial Governments, Intelligence and Law Enforcing Agencies.

16. The Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearance has been able to dispose majority of the cases. The total number of cases of alleged enforced disappearances received up to August 2021 was 8122. By August 2021, 5853 cases were disposed. Out of the 56 cases reported in August 2021, 45 persons were traced of which 35 were returned to their homes, 05 were found to be confined in internment centres, 04 were confined in prisons, 01 was found dead, and 11 petitions were dismissed as these were not cases of enforced disappearance.

17. Further, the Federal Government has introduced the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021, which proposes insertion of a new section 52-B (enforced disappearance) in PPC to criminalize enforced disappearances. The bill also seeks to insert new sections 512 and 513 in the PPC Penal Code, after section 511. It further states that enforced disappearance is unconstitutional and is against international commitments made by Pakistan through ratification of the ICCPR.

18. The Actions (in Aid of Civil Power) Regulations, 2011 have been formulated strictly in conformity with the International Human Rights Standards. The abuse or misuse of force during operations has been made punishable under the Regulations. All detainees

apprehended during operations are kept in declared and notified Internment Centers. The internees' cases are being regularly reviewed by the Oversight Boards notified by the Provincial Governments. Comprehensive provisions including welfare of detainees, de-radicalization, release and disposal of cases are contained in the law. Moreover, the medical condition of the detainees' hygiene and mental health is given due consideration.

19. In addition to the foregoing, the parliament enacted the Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act, 2021. The Act protects the journalists' right to life and security of person and the right to carry out their work without threats, intimidation, harassment or fear of persecution or targeting. The Act mandates the Government to take all steps to protect journalists and media professionals from all forms of abuse, violence and exploitation at the hands of any person, institution (private or public) or authority.

20. The Commission for Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals under the Act shall report their findings to the Government on any institution or organization who is involved in violating or attempting to violate these rights. Furthermore, the Act empowers the Commission to provide redressal to journalists by inquiring into their complaints of threats, or acts of torture, killing, violent attacks, arbitrary arrest, arbitrary detention and harassment, and determining cases that are eligible for compensation from relevant federal and provincial funds.

Maximum available resources

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 16 of the concluding observations

21. In Pakistan, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) collects revenue for the Federation. The taxes levied are compatible with taxpayers' conditions, including their ability to pay in line with personal and family needs. It is in the process of eliminating exemptions and distortions from the law. The major focus is to tax where there is a taxable income. In this regard, few steps have been taken to reduce the burden on persons belonging to low-income segments and to contribute to the redistribution of income and wealth. Withholding tax provisions have been reduced to 23 from 38 to directly affect the public and lower-income groups. Withholding tax on mobile phone users has been reduced from 12.5 % to 10% which will further be reduced to 8%. Withholding tax on cash withdrawals from banks has been eliminated.

22. An automated system of refund process has also been introduced which includes tax incentives to small and medium enterprises and women entrepreneurships, elimination of tax on electricity bills of the taxpayer appearing on Active taxpayers list, exemption from income tax on import of 850CC motor vehicles, and exemption on import of printed books and agricultural equipment has been placed. The above measures, coupled with automation drive, linkages with other databases and enforcement measures are resulting in enhanced revenues without an adverse impact on the poor. Furthermore, the FBR aims to eliminate the zero-rating tax regime completely by 2023-24.

23. In addition to the foregoing, the Federal Tax Ombudsman strives to help improve tax processes and promote good governance in FBR beside providing prompt relief to aggrieved taxpayers. The core function of Federal Tax Ombudsman revolves around the disposal of complaints of tax maladministration promptly, justly, fairly, independently investigated, and to rectify any injustice done to a taxpayer by actions of the tax employees of FBR/Revenue Division, Government of Pakistan.

Corruption

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 18 of the concluding observations

24. The Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA) 1947, the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) 1860, the National Accountability Ordinance (NAO) 1999, Right to Access of Information Act 2017 are existing laws to deal with corruption in Pakistan. In addition, departmental rules at all levels provide legal and administrative basis for action against irregularities.

25. There are two Anti-Corruption Authorities i.e., National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) at Federal level and four Anti-Corruption Establishments (ACEs) operating at Provincial level, which are empowered to investigate into various cases of public sector corruption. NAB's primary function is detection, investigation and prosecution of white-collar crime. Additionally, Accountability Courts have been established under NAO and deal with the cases sent by NAB. The Central and Provincial Special Courts have been set up under the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1958, to deal with the cases sent by FIA and ACEs, respectively. National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NAS) 2002 and NAO are cited as comprehensive policy approaches to root out corruption from Pakistan.

26. Besides offices/authorities like Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA), Public Accounts Committees (PACs), the Judicial Commission, Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), Auditor General of Pakistan, there is another set of institutions like the State Bank of Pakistan, the Competition Commission of Pakistan and the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan set up to check financial irregularities and incidences of corruption and corrupt practices. Furthermore, there are twelve independent institutions of Ombudsman at the federal and provincial levels in Pakistan that work independently to serve and protect citizens' interests.

27. NAB is tasked with eradicating corruption through a multifaceted strategy of awareness, prevention, and enforcement. Accordingly, NAB has adopted 'Accountability for All' Policy. Under this Policy NAB investigates inquiries, verifies complaints in accordance with the law, and pursues the cases in accountability courts, high courts and the Supreme Court for expeditious and effective disposal of cases. Under Section 33 of NAO, 1999, NAB is mandated for awareness and prevention. Under NAB's Awareness and Prevention Strategy, NAB has engaged different Governmental, Non-Governmental Organizations, Civil Society, and other segments of society to join hands with NAB's awareness and prevention drive to create awareness among the people, especially the youth, Universities/Colleges, and schools' students. In this regard, NAB has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Higher Education Commission to create awareness among students against corruption as youth is considered a cutting edge in this fight.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 18 a) of the concluding observations to strengthen the mechanism and procedures for combatting corruption and money laundering at the Federal and Provincial levels, NAB has introduced a concept of Combined Investigation Teams (CITs) for effective inquiry /investigation of white-collar crimes to benefit from the experience and collective wisdom of supervisory officers. The experts of the relevant fields i.e., Land Revenue, Engineering, Audit, Construction, Banking and Finance are attached as members of the CIT for effective and logical conclusion of the inquiries/investigations. The Investigation Officers (IOs) of NAB are regularly trained to augment their skills and expertise in the field of white-collar crimes investigation. State of the art Forensic Science Laboratory has been established at NAB HQ to cater to the need for analysis of the questioned documents, identification of fingerprints and digital forensics, required in the investigation of high-profile cases not only for NAB but also for other agencies. The Monitoring and Evaluation System (MES) at NAB enables Chairman and Senior Management of NAB to continuously monitor progress on mega corruption cases for timely and logical conclusion of the same.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 18 b) of the concluding observations

28. NAB has enhanced both the quality and quantity of its human resources, improvement in operational strategy, steady and strategic approach towards efficient handling of corruption and money laundering cases. NAB has not only built the capacity of its own officers through training by engaging national and international experts, but also rendered training to other Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) like FIA, ANF, SECP and Police.

29. NAB has secured a conviction rate of more than 60 percent which is the highest conviction rate compared to other anticorruption agencies. Till August 2021, NAB has recovered an amount of Rs. 794.760 billion directly and indirectly. A total of 10378 inquires had been registered till December 2021 of which 9386 were finalized and 1006 are still under

progress. Furthermore, NAB has authorized 4709 investigations from which 4423 have been finalized and 311 are under progress. Lastly, NAB has filed 3506 cases out of which 2077 cases have been decided with 1176 convictions and 716 acquittals. 99 cases were withdrawn or terminated and 1232 are still under progress.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 18 c) of the concluding observations

30. NAB has widely circulated its contact details including email, telephone and addresses for the public for reporting of corruption. NAB has a systematic and robust mechanism to receive complaints from the public through postal mail, fax, email and in-person as well as official complaints of corruption from different ministries/departments. Further, there is an in-house Chairman NAB's Inspection and Monitoring Team (CI&MT) which deals with complaints against its own officers and officials. NAB used to receive applications from victims of corruption (complainants and witnesses) for their protection and take appropriate measures under Section 31E of NAO, 1999 through concerned courts and district management for safety, security, and protection of victims of crime and their families.

31. Further legislative endeavors include the enactment of the federal Whistle-blower Protection and Vigilance Commission Act, 2019, the Witness Protection, Security and Benefit Act, 2017, the Public Interest Disclosures Act, 2017, the Balochistan Witness Protection Act, 2016, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Whistle-blower Protection and Vigilance Commission Act, 2016, the Punjab Witness Protection Act, 2018, the Sindh Transparency and Right to Information Act, 2016, the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017, and the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act, 2013.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 18 d) of the concluding observations

32. *Response in para 27.* Furthermore, NAB has constituted 66 prevention committees at federal and provincial levels out of which 28 committees have been finalized and their recommendations have been forwarded to concerned quarters for implementation. Organizing seminars to highlight the deteriorating effects of corruption on society and the social fabric of the country, at multiple levels like educational institutions and different departments of federal and provincial governments, is also a salient feature of NAB awareness regime. This also sensitizes the government functionaries to "Say No to Corruption." NAB commemorates 9th December every year as "International Anticorruption Day" by involving each segment of society including civil society, media, and the public etc. at federal and provincial levels to create awareness against the menace of corruption.

Non-discrimination

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 20 of the concluding observations

33. The GoP is in the process of amending the Article 25 of the Constitution. The proposed amendment will prohibit direct or indirect discrimination on grounds of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, color, age, disability, religion or language. It will also mandate the State to promote the achievement of equality, by taking measures designed to promote those disadvantaged by discrimination and undertake legislation to enforce and ensure equality for all citizens.

34. Comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation has also been adopted for all vulnerable and marginalized segments of the society. The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018 guarantees basic rights for transgender citizens and prohibits any discrimination against them in their enjoyment of fundamental rights of voting, inheritance, education, work, property, access to public areas. Under the Act, the MoHR has established a Transgender Protection Centre as well.

35. The Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act 2020 has been promulgated to protect and secure the rights of ownership and possession of property owned by women. Additionally, the ICT Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2020 was promulgated to safeguard to prevent any discriminatory acts against persons with disability. The Act improves access for people with disabilities to fundamental services like as health care,

education, employment, transportation, and communication, while also prohibiting disability discrimination, particularly provision of equity in the employment for persons with disabilities in the public and private sector without discrimination. A Council on the Rights of People with Disabilities has also been established which is entrusted with multiple functions such as implementing the act, taking possible steps to protect people with disabilities from discrimination, exploitation, and inhuman treatment, monitoring government and private organisations, and issuing performance score cards on a regular basis for their efforts in implementing the act.

36. Moreover, the implementation of the recently enacted ICT Senior Citizen Act, 2021; a Senior Citizens Council is being established, as the nomination from concerned quarters have been invited; Rules of the ICT Senior Citizens Act, 2021 have been drafted; All the relevant stakeholders and civil society have been engaged to establish state of the art old-age-home at Islamabad.

37. The Government also launched “Ehsaas” program, the objective of which was to reduce inequality, invest in people, and lift lagging districts. The details of the program are provided in paras 112 to 118 below.

Criminalization of same-sex relations

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 22 of the concluding observations

38. The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan ensures that no legislation in Pakistan can be promulgated against the teachings of Islam. Same-sex relation is against the teachings of Islam; therefore, the Government of Pakistan is not obligated to allow same-sex relations in Pakistan.

Persons with Disabilities

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 24 of the concluding observations

39. The definition of person with disability in the Disabled Persons (Employment and Rehabilitation) Ordinance 1981 has evolved with the promulgation of the ICT Rights of Person with Disability Act, 2020. Section 2(f) of the Act defines disability as long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that prevent individuals from fully and effectively participating in society on an equal footing with others. Thus, bringing the definition of disability in line with that provided in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability. The 2020 Act addresses the denial of reasonable accommodation as an act of discrimination and imposes a duty on the State to ensure that every person with a disability is given the right to be respected for his individual dignity and lead a decent life.

40. Directorate General of Special Education (DGSE), an attached department of Ministry of Human Rights, functioning at ICT level, has planned to conduct a pilot survey to collect data of PWDs in ICT. This survey is under process in the 10 selected Union Councils of suburbs of ICT. A Policy for Empowerment of Persons with Disability 2021 along with Action Plan is under submission to Ministry of Human Rights.

Afghan refugees

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 26 of the concluding observations

41. Pakistan continues to host nearly 3 million Afghan citizens. Despite severe security and economic constraints, Government of Pakistan extends all possible facilities through administrative and policy decisions approved by the Federal Cabinet. The Government has over the years adopted policies that ensure efficient and generous management of Afghan refugees and repatriation on voluntary basis in a dignified manner. Pakistan is adhering to the protection principle under the international protection norms and standards despite not being a signatory.

42. In Pakistan, more than 1.4 million Afghan refugees are registered and possess valid proof of registration (PoR) cards, which facilitates their free movement across the country and ensures their access to basic amenities and opportunities like employment, health care, education, water and other public services at par with Pakistani citizens. In 2018, under the Afghan Citizen Card project, the Government of Pakistan documented around 84,000 previously undocumented refugees who are now living without any police harassment or adversarial conditions. Any instances of harassment or hostility, if reported, are immediately dealt with and mitigation measures are taken. There is no discrimination against Afghan refugee children in respect of provision of education and despite economic challenges, has generously supported access of Afghan children to public and private education institutions. The Government of Pakistan is currently deliberating with the Government of Afghanistan to ensure the dignified return of Afghan refugees under the Afghanistan Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity.

43. Although Pakistan has not ratified the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, the Government is dealing with Afghan refugees as per the non-refoulement principle of international law. Afghan refugees living in Pakistan are being facilitated in accordance with the national policy on management and repatriation, Tripartite Agreement, Solution Strategy for Afghan Refugees and Afghanistan Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity. Recently, the Prime Minister of Pakistan also allowed Afghan refugees to operate bank accounts.

Internally Displaced Persons

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 28 a) of the concluding observations

44. At the national level, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) focuses on displacement caused by natural disasters, while the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) coordinates the response to those triggered by violence along with other stakeholders. In addition to these, the Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs) in KP, Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan coordinate the response at the provincial level. NADRA is responsible for issuing CNICs and registering IDPs. Registration of IDPs has enabled hundreds of thousands of people, including large numbers who live outside camps, to receive assistance. Immediate relief has generally included shelter, cash grants, food, water, sanitation and healthcare services.

Persons belonging to minority groups

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 30 of the concluding observations

45. The Constitution of Pakistan has nine distinct provisions that deal with the matter of non-discrimination based on religion and otherwise. The Principles of Policy provide guiding principles to the State when enacting laws and making executive decisions which also emphasize on the need to eliminate discriminatory practices and provide an equal platform to all the citizens of Pakistan. Members of minority communities in Pakistan enjoy equal rights as citizenry of the State and work in every field of life: from scientific to judicial, to armed forces, diplomats and civil services, politics to business, medicine, engineering, journalism and education etc. The electoral process in Pakistan has been made more inclusive to ensure representation of minorities.

46. The State Party has taken several legislative measures and policies that translate constitutional principles into firm state actions for the promotion and protection of rights of minorities, including non-discrimination. Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) defines penalties against wrongdoers of actions against minorities. Section 153(A), of PPC criminalizes promotion of enmity between different groups, on the basis of race, religion, language, caste or community; Section 505(2), criminalizes publication of any material that may incite group differences; Section-295, relates to injuring or defiling place of worship with intent to insult religion of any person; Section 295-A, concerns malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting their religion beliefs; Section 296, relates to disturbing religious assembly; Section 297 prohibits trespassing on burial place; and Section

298, penalizes uttering of words with deliberate intent to wound religious feelings. In addition to the PPC, Police Order, 2002 also contains special provisions to ensure protection of the rights of vulnerable sections of society. The political representation of minorities, prohibition on hateful statements against minority groups and labour laws that relate to them showcase the protections they are provided.

47. The Government has notified the National Commission for Minorities with extended terms of references. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony is also preparing a National Interfaith Harmony Policy in consultation with stakeholders. Human Rights Wing of Ministry of Human Rights is giving special attention to the protection of rights of minorities under the National Action Plan to improve Human Rights situation in Pakistan.

Members of the “scheduled castes” or Dalits

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 32 of the concluding observations

48. Article 25 of the Constitution guarantees equal protection of law to all citizens. In practice, equal protection of law is ensured by the right of individuals to challenge governmental actions in courts and the power of the courts to invalidate acts, which are determined to be unconstitutional.

Equality between men and women

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 34 a) of the concluding observations

49. The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan ensures that no legislation in Pakistan can be promulgated against the teachings of Islam. The two pieces of legislation are being reviewed to identify discriminatory provisions so that they may be amended in the light of injunctions of Islam.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 34 b) of the concluding observations

50. Response already provided in other paras.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 34 c) of the concluding observations

51. To ensure the necessary legal assistance and support to women and ensure their access to provide legal remedies, the Legal Aid and Justice Authority Act, 2020 has been enacted which provides legal, financial and other assistance for access to justice to the poor and vulnerable segments of society in criminal cases and for matters ancillary thereto. The Legal Aid Authority under the said Act has been established and fully functional. The Board of Governors of the Authority has been notified. The Director General of the Authority has been appointed who is the administrative head of the Authority.

52. The Government of Pakistan has also established a statutory endowment fund called the Access to Justice Development Fund (AJDF). One of the objectives of the AJDF is legal empowerment by providing funding under the Legal Empowerment Fund Window, a share of which is utilized for free legal aid/assistance to deserving litigants. The funds are provided through District Legal Empowerment Committees (DLEC). Till date, an amount of PKR 60 million has been released to DLECs established in 114 Districts across the country and legal assistance granted to 2832 deserving litigants across Pakistan. Furthermore, the MoHR Human Rights Relief and Revolving Fund provides financial assistance of up to Rs. 50,000 to deserving and needy women. The Women in Distress and Detention Fund provides rehabilitation to women released from incarceration and shelters/crisis centres - an amount of Rs. 46 million is available with MoHR for disbursement under this head. Four crisis centres in Sindh are also giving out legal aid, with dedicated panels of pro bono lawyers. The Social Welfare Department, Balochistan provides free legal aid and financial compensation to victims of discrimination, women with disabilities and religious minorities. The Punjab Bar Council’s Legal Aid Society provides legal aid to marginalized men and women.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 34 d) of the concluding observations

53. Awareness raising and sensitization of women, general public and government officials is a regular feature of the MoHR's programs. In this regard, during 2019-2021, the Ministry has conducted a series of sensitization and awareness raising conferences, workshops, Seminars on Human Rights related laws including Rights of Women, Children, Minorities and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) as well as human rights related legal provisions. In this regard, Digital Campaign on 16 days of Activism campaign focused on laws related to GBV, institutional and remedial services available for GBV prevention, 32 Awareness Raising & Sensitization workshops/trainings, seminars on Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Amendment) Act, 2022, Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Act 2020, inheritance rights of women, domestic violence, anti-rape laws, honour killing laws and Rehabilitation, Institutional, Referral mechanism & other protective measures available for protection of human rights violation victims. The implementation of public awareness raising campaign on human rights in digital, print and electronic media to sensitize rural and urban communities for behavioral change towards certain human rights issues particularly gender-based violence, child abuse, etc. It also aims to enhance people's understanding and knowledge about respect for human rights in Islam, fundamental human rights enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan and domestic national laws for human rights along with awareness on international human rights principles, protection mechanism and democratic governance for a peaceful society by dissemination of information on human rights in schools, colleges, universities and public & private sector organizations.

Representation of women in decision-making positions

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 36 of the concluding observations

54. Articles 25(3) and 26(2) of the Constitution of Pakistan 1973 encourages the State to take special measures for the protection of the rights and interests of women and children, like job quotas in the government as well as reserved seats in educational institutions. There are 20 percent reserved seats for women in the Parliament and provincial assemblies. The current level of women's representation in the national and provincial legislatures of Pakistan is amongst the highest in the region. Women in Pakistan serve at the highest positions of decision making. Women are members of the Cabinet; hold portfolio of Ministries, chairperson of NCHR, General officers in the Army and hold other important decision-making positions.

55. The Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) is a cross-party forum and a nerve center for women parliamentarians and contributes tremendously to amplifying the voices of women in politics. In a landmark move, the first female judge was appointed as a Supreme Court Judge in Pakistan in 2021. Furthermore, 10 percent of seats are reserved in Government employment. The Social Welfare Department considers UN general recommendations 30 (GR30) as framework for advancement of gender equality as envisaged in international instruments with special focus on CEDAW guidelines.

56. The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa notified Women Empowerment Policy to ensure social, economic, and political empowerment of women in KP. The department is ensuring women participation in the decision-making process through institutional Reforms, establishment of Ombudsperson Secretariat, formation of KP Women Commission on the Status of Women (KPCSW), establishment of District Committees on the Status of Women (DCSW) at each district of KP wherein 07 women members including 01 Chairperson will be notified by Government of KP, establishment of District Protections Committees under the KP Domestic Violence against Women (Prevention and Protection) Act 2021 to facilitate and provide justice to domestic violence victims, appointment of Chairperson Panahgah Welfare Board and appointment of women managers in Social Welfare Institutions i.e. Special Education Institutions, Welfare Home (orphanage) and Darul Aman (Shelter Homes) as well as posting of two female Gender Specialists at Secretariat level.

Unemployment and underemployment

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 38 of the concluding observations

57. According to the Labour Force Survey 2018-19, female labour force participation has increased between 2017-18 and 2018-19 from 14.76 % to 16.34 %, which shows the State Party's commitment to facilitate the employment of women. The regularization of the informal economy and extension of labour laws is a gradual process and is a key action under the NAP on Business and Human Rights. It is also one of the top priorities of the KP Labour Department. In this regard, the most recent initiative taken is the formalization of the informal sector i.e., Home-Based Workers (HBW). The Department recently has sent a Home-Based Workers Bill & policy to the Law Department which has been vetted and approved by the Provincial Cabinet.

58. The Government has taken special initiatives for the development of youth. The Prime Minister, National Youth Development Framework (NYDF) was developed on the basic principles of 3Es: Education, Employment and Engagement. A comprehensive program "Prime Minister's Kamyab Jawan Program" was designed comprising of six components: (i) Prime Minister's Hunarmand Program (Skill for All); (ii) Prime Minister's Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES); (iii) Prime Minister's Start up Pakistan; (iv) Prime Minister's Green Youth Movement (GYM); (v) Prime Minister's National Internship Program; (vi) Prime Minister's Youth Engagement Platform (Jawan Markaz). Furthermore, two initiatives namely, Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES) and Hunarmand Pakistan (Skills for All) have been launched.

59. In 2021, Balochistan Provincial Assembly passed major labour legislations including the Balochistan Factories Act, 2021; Balochistan Shops and Establishments Act, 2021; Balochistan Industrial and Commercial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 2021, and Balochistan Payment of Wages Act, 2021. These laws will prohibit workplace discrimination in line with the Constitution of Pakistan and ratified international labour standards by prohibiting victimization against workers for demanding their rights or for complaining against the employers; requiring separate washing facilities for women in offices; allowing evening work of women allowing employers to provide transport facilities to such women workers and providing for establishment of day-care centers for worker's children, instead of linking day-care centers to women workers only.

Gender pay gap

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 40 of the concluding observations

60. KP Labour Department advocates the equality of all workers and fully supports reduction of gender pay gap. For its reduction, certain legislative and administrative initiatives have been taken. An exclusive section 26 against gender-based pay is inserted in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Payment of Wages Act, 2013. Amendments in KP Factories Act, 2013 and KP Shops & Establishment Act, 2015 have also been made to include sections regarding women empowerment. On the administrative side, measures are taken to ensure its compliance, which include making it mandatory to pay wages to the workers of the factories through banks.

Right to just and favorable conditions of work

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 42 of the concluding observations

61. The National Labour Policy 2010 focuses on protecting legitimate rights and interests of workers and employers. The Government is presently working on strengthening labour protection laws. In December 2021, the Ministry of Human Rights carried out consultations with all relevant departments to seek their inputs for an in-depth analysis of labour laws and prosecution mechanisms to address the issues of child labour, forced labour and trafficking in persons (TIP) and share its recommendations. Representatives from the Ministry of Interior, Law and Justice, National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), National

Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC), National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), ICT Labour and Prosecution Departments, Provincial Home, Labour, Human Rights and Prosecution Departments attended the consultations, and a committee was constituted to compile all the input from federal and provincial stakeholders and submit its recommendations.

62. In addition to this, the Ministry of Human Rights also launched a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights in 2021. The Action Plan aims at preventing human rights violations resulting from business activity, and addresses income and wealth inequality, wage inequality and gender disparity, inequality of opportunity, lack of due diligence mechanisms for occupational health and safety, poor working conditions and wages, unregistered workers, informal economy, and child and bonded labour.

63. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Balochistan and Punjab, the National Labour Protection Framework in line with Article 7 of the Covenant has been developed and it is being implemented. The government of KP has set various targets to ensure maximum protection of labour rights. These include drafting of rules of the provincial law on child labour and its notification. In this regard, draft rules under law i.e. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Prohibition of Employment of Children Act, 2015 are expected to be vetted/finalised soon. Furthermore, an ADP scheme of Rs. 241.705 million regarding child labour survey in the province including the merged areas is underway. UNICEF has committed to contribute 120.754 million to this survey and data collection activity will be completed within a span of four months.

64. KP is also in the process of reactivating and strengthening the Child & Bonded Labour Unit in the Directorate of Labour, the Child & Bonded Labour Unit (C & BLU). 12 new posts have been created for this unit including 7 posts for social mobilisers. Service rules for these posts have been notified and the recruitment process has also begun via the Public Service Commission. Furthermore, human resource has been enhanced in other offices of KP; new offices have been approved in Newly Merged Tribal Districts with a total staff of 70 and 5 new offices have been approved in some of the districts where there was no labour office and 62 more staff members posts have been approved to strengthen the existing offices.

65. The KP Directorate of Labour is in the process of digitization/computerization of all its data which will be uploaded on its official website. Software for the MIS system has also been developed and all the necessary hardware has been procured. Training of inspectors on the use of tablets and software is underway and upon completion, real-time inspections and data flow would be possible, which will be used for reporting as well.

Minimum wages

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 44 of the concluding observations

66. Since labour is a devolved subject after the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, the minimum wage rate in Pakistan is legislated periodically by Pakistan's four provincial governments. In KP, minimum wage was fixed for workers of the formal sector by the provincial minimum wage board. For the year 2021, a minimum wage of Rs 21,000 was fixed for all adult, unskilled, juvenile, and adolescent workers employed in all commercial and industrial undertakings. To ensure its full compliance, under section 6 of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Payment of Wages Act, 2013, Labour Department has introduced the system of payment of wages to workers of industrial establishments through scheduled banks. This helps the Department to easily detect violations of the law and the concerned officials take immediate necessary action. In 2021, 49670 workers were paid their wages through banks and a total fine of Rs. 3,793, 400 was imposed on those who violated the law.

67. The Government of Balochistan has also adopted the Balochistan Minimum Wages Act, 2021 to regulate minimum wage and other allowances. Previously in 2019, through a notification in Balochistan, the scope was extended to more workers of minimum wage receipts, and it has been focused on the recent recommendation of Minimum Wages Board as well.

68. The Punjab Minimum Wages Act 2019 regulates minimum wage in the province of Punjab. Currently, the minimum wage of unskilled labour has been notified as Rs. 20,000 per month and the minimum wage of other categories of workers has also been enhanced proportionally. The field echelon of the Directorate of Labour Welfare is effectively implementing the Minimum Wages Act.

69. The Government of Sindh promulgated the Sindh Minimum Wages Act, 2015 for the regulation of minimum rates of wages and various allowances for different categories of workers employed in certain industrial and commercial undertakings and establishments. The Sindh Minimum Wages Board recommended minimum wages to skilled & un-skill workers of industrial and commercial establishments. Presently, Minimum Wage is fixed at Rs.17500/- per month for unskilled workers and (Rs.17,000/- to Rs.23,000/-) for skilled, semi-skilled & highly skilled.

Bonded labour

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 46 of the concluding observations

70. The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992 abolished the bonded labour system throughout Pakistan, discharged bonded laborers from obligation of bondedness, and put an end to outstanding loans. The law mandated establishment of provincial governments to set up District Vigilance Committees (DVCs) for the effective implementation of the law and rehabilitation of the bonded labour. In Punjab, a comprehensive monitoring mechanism is in place through District Vigilance Committees, constituted under the Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act, 1992. Sindh enacted the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act in 2015 while The Balochistan Forced & Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 2021 has recently been promulgated as well fine and punishment for violations than the 1992 Act. Furthermore, at the federal level “Child Domestic labour” has been included in the list of occupations listed in Part-I of the Schedule of the Employment of Children’s Act, 1991 and because of gazette notification, has been banned in ICT.

71. A National Child Labour Survey is being conducted in collaboration with UNICEF which also covers Child Domestic Labour. The survey will be completed in 2022. In GB and Punjab, child labour survey data collection has been completed. The findings of the study will provide information for taking evidence-based policy, legislative and programmatic measures for eradication of child labour.

72. In KP, the *peshgi* system has been regularized under a provincial law on bonded labour i.e. “The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bonded Labour System Abolition Act, 2015.” Once the rules under the 2015 Act are formulated, the Department will reactivate and re-establish the District Vigilance committees (DVCs) at District level. KP Labour Department in collaboration with other stakeholders has also prepared an Action Plan for elimination of bonded labour, in its provincial labour policy. Under this Action Plan, administrative measures like introduction of work contract, legalizing advances with mode of repayment, linking the families with micro- credit institutions, working on alternative solutions for rehabilitation of effected children and families, like, linking the families with social protection schemes, and social safety nets shall be taken.

73. Efforts are being made to strengthen the Labour Department and the Labour courts for better and efficient service delivery. It has been proposed to capacitate the Labour Department, labour courts and the Directorate of labour to be able to cope with the needs of the day and to be able to effectively implement the labour laws. This will ultimately result in the provision of workers’ legal rights. Additionally, 7 new offices with 70 staff members, 10 in each office, have been approved by the Finance Department for the newly merged seven tribal districts of the province. Moreover, 63 posts of various cadres have been sanctioned for the establishment of 4 new offices in the settled districts of the province and strengthening other offices by providing various staff. The induction of 133 new staff members would enhance the existing strength of the Directorate from 452 to 585, which would help by improving the inspection machinery and as a result better implementation of laws would take place. Inspection set up of this Department is given below.

Occupational health and safety

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 48 a) of the concluding observations

74. The rules under the Sindh Occupational Safety and Health Act 2017, have been notified. In Punjab, the Occupational Safety and Health Rules are under preparation, which will ensure effective implementation of the Act. The Balochistan Occupational Safety and Health Bill, 2021 and the draft KP law on Occupational safety and Health are under process. However, for the time being, chapter III of the Balochistan Factories Act, 2021 will ensure necessary measures for occupational safety and health in the industries, as more provisions have been incorporated in the Balochistan Factories Act, 2021.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 48 b) of the concluding observations

75. Since 2014, the Government of Pakistan has embarked upon an ambitious plan to reform the entire Labour Administration system under an umbrella program ‘Strengthening National Capacity for International Labour Standards Compliance in Pakistan’ (SLISP) jointly designed by the Government of Pakistan and the International Labour Organization (ILO). One of the key areas under this umbrella program is the existing Labour Inspection system in Pakistan. With nearly US\$ 1.3 million in financial support of the Government of the Netherlands, the ILO revitalized the country’s labour inspection system, working in close collaboration with the Government of Pakistan and workers’ and employers’ organizations.

76. Ending on 31st March 2019, SLISP advanced standalone Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) laws in Sindh and Punjab, which taken collectively account for Pakistan’s largest industrial areas. SLISP delivered extensive training to 450 Labour Inspectors on Effective Labour Inspection, OSH and Accident Investigation as well as working to strengthen the Labour Inspection Information Management System (LIMS). SLISP also supported the government to develop their annual Labour Inspection reports and profile the Labour Inspection apparatus of Pakistan.

77. Additionally, in KP the Labour Department is working on expanding its presence in almost all parts of the province. For this purpose, 7 new offices with 70 staff members have been approved for the Newly Merged Tribal Districts of the province. Besides, 63 posts of various cadres have been sanctioned for the establishment of 4 new offices in the districts and strengthening other offices by providing various staff.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 48 c) of the concluding observations

78. The KP Workers Compensation Act, 2013, chapter II (Worker’s Compensation) details the process on how workers could be compensated in the event of occupational accidents and diseases. The Punjab Workmen’s Compensation Act, 2013 as well as the Sindh Workers Compensation Act, 2015 and the Balochistan Factories Act 2021 made it compulsory for the employer to compensate the workers for any injury or death caused while performing his duties.

Trade union rights

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 50 of the concluding observations

79. The right to join an association is guaranteed under Article 17 of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Keeping in view this provision, labour laws in Pakistan allow formation and joining of trade unions/associations to both the employers and the employees.

80. At the federal level, the Industrial Relations Act 2012 consolidated the law relating to formation of trade unions and federations of trade unions, determining the collective bargaining agents, regulations of relations between employers and workers. It clearly states that workers have the right to form trade unions and join organizations of their own choosing without previous authorization. The Act further provides how to avoid and settle any disputes or differences. Both the National and Provincial Industrial Relations Acts do not restrict the workers from forming and joining the associations/unions of their own choosing.

81. After the devolution of the subject of labour, each Province enacted its own Industrial Relations Act. Under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Industrial Relations Act, 2010, workers are entitled to the right of freedom of association and collective bargaining. They can peacefully assemble to bargain for their rights and hence there is no bar on workers to organize and claim most rights. Although the KP law does not mandate registration and formation of unions, whenever workers of an establishment want to register a union, the Directorate of Labour Khyber Pakhtunkhwa registers them, if they fulfill the criteria.

82. The Balochistan Industrial Relations Bill, 2021 has recently been vetted by the Law department which has been reviewed by the ILO and ILO compliant. All workers have complete rights to participate in trade unions except for those belonging to the Armed Forces, Police, and essential services. In Punjab, workers are free to exercise their right to organize, as envisaged in the Punjab Industrial Relations Act, 2010. Sindh also enacted the Sindh Industrial Relations Act in 2013.

Right to social security

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 52 i) of the concluding observations Employees Old Age Benefits Act 1976 was enforced to achieve the objective of Article 38 (c) of the Constitution, by delineating compulsory social insurance and extended Old-Age Benefits to insured persons or their survivors. An online facilitation system called the EOBI Facilitation System for Employers and Employees is operational for greater efficiency.

83. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Employees Social Security Institution (ESSI) has initiated its efforts to extend the umbrella of social safety network to the workers in the brick kiln industry of the province. Once ESSI is successful in bringing the workers of the brick kilns under their umbrella of social safety networks, the Directorate of Labour will initiate a process of registration of these brick kilns. For now, registration is not easy as these workers have more than one employer at the same time. However, once they are registered under the social safety network, they will be bound under one specific kiln, which will make it easy for the department to register them.

84. The Balochistan Social Security Law is being vetted and necessary provisions have been incorporated in it to progressively cover all workers and provide a sufficient level of benefits to enjoy an adequate standard of living.

85. The Punjab Employees Social Security Institution (PESSI) is providing primary healthcare facilities to their secure workers, their families, and dependents across the province. There are 21 Social Security Hospitals having 1810 beds and 249 Medical outlets falling under the jurisdiction of Director Medical where comprehensive treatment to insured workers is provided. PESSI is continuously improving health service delivery by establishing new hospitals, medical outlets, and providing tertiary care in its main hospital. It is also making efforts to increase the registration of workers. For secured workers, the facility of E-cards, Hospital Management Information System, Punjab Mazdoor Card Cash Benefit Mobile App, PESSI Office Digitalization, Amnesty Scheme Domestic Workers registration app has also been introduced for efficiency and transparency.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 52 ii) of the concluding observations

86. The Poverty Alleviation and Social Security Division (PASS), being the relevant federal department, is managing the following social security schemes under one window social security schemes:

Ehsaas Kafaalat (Unconditional Cash Transfer) Program (EKP)

87. EKP is the core program of Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), which was initiated in 2008. Its long-term objectives include meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to eradicate extreme and chronic poverty and promote empowerment of women. Beneficiaries of EKP are identified/selected through scientific mode of National Socio Economic (NSER) survey based on Proxy Means Test (PMT), which determines the

welfare status of the household on a scale between 0-100. Currently, the number of Ehsaas beneficiaries stood at around 6.5 million which will be increased further. The PMT cut-off score for eligibility is decided based on available fiscal space and all families falling under the approved PMT cut-off score are provided cash assistance under EKP.

88. BISP's annual disbursement under Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) Kafaalat program rose from Rs. 16 billion in FY 2008-09 to Rs. 169 billion (including Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program) in FY 2020-21. BISP transferred approximately Rs. 1,104 billion (including Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program) till June 2021 as UCT to its beneficiaries. The quarterly cash grant has been gradually enhanced by the Government from Rs. 3000/- per family to Rs. 3,600/- in FY 2013-14, to Rs. 6,000 in FY 2019-20. As decided by the Government, quarterly cash assistance will be further enhanced to Rs. 6,500/- per family in 2022.

89. In order to improve efficiency and transparency of payments to its beneficiaries, BISP switched from delivering cash through Pakistan Post to technology based Alternate Payment Mechanisms (APM) in the form of Benazir Smart Card, Mobile Phone Banking, Benazir Debit Cards (BDC), and Biometric Verification System (BVS). Currently, all BISP beneficiaries are being paid through BVS mode.

Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program (EECP).

90. The first phase of the program (EECP-1) was launched in April 2020 to help poor families affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. A total amount of approximately Rs. 180 billion has been disbursed to around 14.9 million (including Kafaalat beneficiaries) beneficiaries @ Rs. 12,000/- per beneficiary in all provinces. The second phase of the program (EECP-2) was launched in June 2021 keeping in view the increase in economic hardships due to the 3rd wave of Covid-19. Until September 2021, an amount of Rs. 25.51 billion was disbursed under EECP-2 to around 2.13 million additional beneficiaries (other than Kafaalat beneficiaries) @ Rs. 12,000/- per beneficiary.

91. As approved by the BISP Board as well as the Federal Cabinet, families living along the Line of Control (LoC) are being provided cash assistance by BISP under the Special Relief Package launched in June 2020. Under this program, additional beneficiaries (other than Kafaalat beneficiaries) are being provided emergency cash assistance @ Rs. 24,000/- in two installments of Rs. 12,000/- each. To date, 35, 613 beneficiaries have been identified under the program in 2021, an amount of Rs. 262.64 million has been disbursed to 21, 887 beneficiaries.

92. In pursuance of Ehsaas Financial Inclusion Strategy, BISP has designed and launched a pilot project for opening of Savings Accounts (Mobile Wallets) and provision of Financial Literacy to Ehsaas Kafaalat beneficiaries. After evaluating the pilot, a detailed road map and action plan will be prepared, and Mobile wallet and Financial Literacy programs will be launched across the country which will pave the way for formal interaction of Kafaalat beneficiaries with the economy. Major achievements of the social security schemes include the development and implementation of automated Payment Complaint Management System (PCMS) with enhanced features.

93. BISP in coordination with Finance Division and World Bank has developed an institutional mechanism for periodic increase/update of cash transfers. A committee has been constituted which will review the level of cash transfers (unconditional as well as conditional) on an annual basis and propose any increase/adjustment if deemed necessary, keeping in view all relevant factors, such as inflation, available fiscal space, number of beneficiaries, existing division between unconditional and conditional cash transfers, prevailing international best practices etc.

Protection of the family, mothers and children

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 54 of the concluding observations

94. The Government of Pakistan is taking necessary legislative and policy measures to give equitable rights to minority communities in Pakistan. The Landmark Hindu Marriage

Act, 2017 was enacted by Parliament on 17th March 2017. The Act focused on resolving issues like provision of basic documentation of marital status, inheritance, from a deceased husband, re-marrying, divorce, separation or adoption by prescribing a registration mechanism and imposed penalties against violators. The Act is applicable to the extent of Islamabad, the Capital Territory, Provinces of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Sindh Assembly had already enacted the Hindu Marriage Act in 2016.

95. Moreover, MOHR is also in the process of finalizing the Christian Marriage and Divorce Bill. Several consultations were held with representatives of Christian religious denominations. In amended draft, the age of marriage for both male and female has been proposed to be 18 years. The bill aims to facilitate the process of marriage and divorce registration.

Minimum age for marriage

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 56 of the concluding observations

96. All provinces are making legislative efforts to prohibit marriage of all persons, both male and female, below the age of 18. Sindh Assembly has already passed the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2013 prohibiting marriage of all persons below the age of 18. The Balochistan Government has finalized the Child Marriage Restraint Bill, which will prohibit marriage between persons below 18 years of age. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Social Welfare Department has prepared and processed Child Marriage Restraint Bill to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years for girls. After several awareness sessions and consultative meetings with stakeholders, a draft bill was prepared and is expected to be placed before the Provincial Cabinet soon.

Forced conversion and forced marriage

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 58 of the concluding observations

97. In 2017, an amendment to Section 498(B) of the Pakistan Penal Code 1860 was made and higher penalties for forced marriages was incorporated. Recently, in October 2021, the Federal Shariat Court of Pakistan endorsed the setting of a minimum age for marriage for girls and dismissed a petition that challenged certain sections of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 (CMRA) as un-Islamic.

98. In addition to this, the Government has also taken steps to prohibit forced conversion. The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) was recently strengthened. Moreover, the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) undertook comprehensive training of all lower judiciary in Balochistan, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. By the end of 2020, some 175 judges and 150 members of the prosecution department had been trained. The Government of Punjab has initiated a program to sensitize trainers involved in training of public officials on issues of religious rights and freedoms. Interfaith harmony seminars are being arranged in Punjab and other provinces to raise awareness regarding religious rights and freedom.

99. The judiciary, as an institution, also takes all complaints of forced conversion very seriously and directs relevant authorities to conduct proper administrative and judicial enquiries to ensure justice. Prominent examples include the case of two girls Raveena and Reena who were allegedly victims of forced conversion. The High Court immediately referred the girls to the Ministry of Human Rights' (MoHR) Family Protection and Rehabilitation Centre for Women (FPRC) and appointed a Commission consisting of the Minister for Human Rights; Chairperson, NCSW; and two members of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan as *amicus curiae* to assist the Court in the matter. After comprehensive judicial inquiry under the supervision of Islamabad High Court and human rights experts, the testimony of both Raveena and Reena was taken whereby they said that they converted on their own free will, after which the matter was disposed of as it was determined that this was not a case of forced conversion. Another example is the successful disposal of the alleged conversion of 17 years old Hindu girl named Payal, whereby an

investigation team was swiftly constituted after the registration of a police case and it was held by the Court that Payal had willingly converted to Islam.

Violence against women and domestic violence

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 60 a) of the concluding observations

100. The Government is conducting extensive awareness campaigns and training of law enforcement agencies to effectively implement and enforce anti-honour killing law enacted in 2016. Additionally, Police Stations, Helplines, Women Complaint Centres, and designated Women Desks at Police Stations have also been set up in all provinces to aid and assist in monitoring and implementing these laws. For monitoring purposes, the Gender Crime Cell at the National Police Bureau is compiling data on crimes against women including sexual violence, acid throwing, domestic violence, honour killing, and harassment at the workplace. The data is compiled from multiple sources including registered cases in police stations (FIRs), registered court cases and news reports on crimes against women. According to its data, since January 2018 to June 2021, a total of 1710 honour Killing cases, 6527 murder cases and 14456 rape cases were reported in the country. The law enforcement agencies use this statistical data to monitor implementation of laws and to make effective arrangements for their enforcement.

101. The NCSW has also developed standardized indicators on VAW, and based on these indicators, a template has been developed and shared with Gender Crime Cell at the National Police Bureau with the request to provide information on a quarterly basis on reported cases of VAW from all over Pakistan. The NCSW, in collaboration with UN Women is also in the process of establishing a National Gender Portal. NCSW is also working in collaboration with MoHR to develop indicators (including for domestic violence) for the Human Rights Management Information System (HRMIS) that will assist the State in policy making.

102. According to a report by NCSW there has been a 50% reduction in acid crimes and the rate of reporting on acid crimes has increased under the amendment Acid Crime Law (2011). NCSW is also monitoring the implementation of the Cyber Crime Act, 2016, especially when women victims are involved.

103. To facilitate implementation of these laws the KP Government has notified Child Courts in the Province and Peshawar High Court has recently notified twenty-one of its Judicial Officers to deal with cases of Gender Based Violence until GBV Courts are notified. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women assisted the provincial government in the drafting and finalization of the Domestic Violence against women (Prevention and Protection) Act 2021 which was passed in January 2021. A Women Protection Bill is also under consideration in the Provincial Assembly KP which will cover all aspects of women related crimes, reporting cognizance, prosecution as well as victim and witness protection.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 60 b) of the concluding observations

104. For prompt investigation of cases involving violence against women, women friendly helpdesks have been established. A Gender Protection Unit (GPU) has been established at the Islamabad Police Facilitation Centre in F-6, Islamabad in May 2021 to help women and child victims of sexual harassment, rape, and bonded labour. This has made the process of investigating such crimes more effective by encouraging victims to report at the center in the presence of a well-trained team of female police officers, legal officers, psychologists, and medical officers.

105. 98% of all Police Stations across Punjab have women friendly help desks whereas three Women Police Stations are also functional in Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Faisalabad. Human rights and women rights desks have also been established in police stations in 15 districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The KP Integrated Victim Support Network has been set up for networking of relevant services providers (police, hospital, social welfare shelters, etc) which is to be introduced in five districts – Swat, Peshawar, Mardan, Charsadda, and Abbottabad. Every Police Station and District Police Office in KP has female Police Officer's

Desk to attend to female complainants. The cases against women are immediately reported to the Inspector General of Police, KP and they are pursued in courts through District Public Prosecutors. Women victims and witnesses are the responsibility of the Police Stations under the District Police Officers and are supervised by the chain of command. Seminars and Special Training Courses have been designed for police officials dealing with investigation of cases relating to women.

106. In May 2020, the first-ever Women's Police Reporting Centre was inaugurated in the Kurram district. In the same month, women police unit was constituted in Rawalpindi police station, in accordance with which lady police officers and lady police constables were deputed in 12 police stations of Rawalpindi to address and resolve complains and issues of women in an effective way.

107. Meanwhile in Sindh and Balochistan, District Complaint Cells, Women Complaint Cells, Safe Houses, Police Helplines and Police Stations have been set up. Meanwhile, in January 2021, the Balochistan government launched 'Balochistan Women Helpline: 1089, for registration of complaints against women harassment at home and workplace. The women can register their complaints on the helpline regarding domestic violence, harassment at workplace and property issues.

108. For effective punishment of the perpetrators and to ensure speedy justice, the NJPMC in November 2019 directed all provincial High Courts to establish special Gender Based Violence (GBV) Courts. There are now currently 36 designated GBV Courts in the province of Punjab are 36 judicial officers are assigned to GBV cases. In the province of Sindh, 27 courts have been designated as GBV Courts and 46 judicial officers have been assigned to GBV cases. In KP, the number of designated GBV courts is 29, and 32 judicial officers are assigned to GBV cases. In Balochistan, there is one GBV court, and 1 judicial officer is assigned to GBV cases. In Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 2 GBV courts have been designated and one judicial officer has been assigned to GBV cases. Recently, Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021 has also been promulgated which provides for the establishment of Special Courts for GBV and gives it a statutory basis.

109. The perpetrators are awarded penalties commensurate with their crimes. In recent cases, for example, that of alleged rape and murder of a minor girl in District Nowshera from KP in January 2020 and for a similar case in Hangu reported in February 2020, the culprits were successfully arrested. Similarly, convicts in a rape and murder case of a minor girl from District Mardan were handed life imprisonment by an anti-terrorism court in 2018.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 60 c) of the concluding observations

110. The Federal Judicial Academy has initiated a nation-wide sensitization program of judges which includes the subject of "International Human Rights Conventions, ratified by Pakistan and the Role of Judges in their Implementation" with a focus on gender sensitization within the training. Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) had launched a project in 2018 to organize sensitization sessions for capacity building of prosecutors and court officials on women specific laws. Till July 2021, 12 capacity building workshops were arranged, and 467 prosecutors and court officials were sensitized. Additionally, MoHR and Sindh Judicial Academy (SJA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 26th April 2019 to collaborate for strengthening the capacity of the High Court judges in the province of Sindh in application of domestic and international laws and human rights. Under this MoU, 3 training programs / workshops on "Human Rights Safeguards in the Administration of Justice in Sindh" have been organized where a total of 83 participants including 55 Judges and 28 prosecutors participated in the said workshops till July 2021. MoHR plans to train 360 judges and 360 prosecution lawyers in Sindh and 175 judges and 150 prosecution lawyers in Balochistan.

111. Furthermore, in Sindh UNODC trainings under Rule of Law Roadmap Program have been conducted to train police, judiciary and public prosecution officers. UNDP is also conducting training of judiciary in Punjab and KP. In KP, a total of 75 training courses were conducted with 63 training courses held for judicial officers and 12 for court staff. Total number of judicial officers and court staff trained in KP is 2167 (1536 judicial officers and

631 court staff). In Punjab from 2016-2019, 22 training programs were held to sensitize 1,168 judges and court staff on laws related to gender and discrimination.

112. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judicial Academy has also conducted various trainings on women's rights, gender mainstreaming, women empowerment and women's right to inheritance. The Balochistan Judicial Academy has carried out several trainings with Judges, Prosecutors, Commissioners, Magistrates, Investigation Officers and newly enrolled lawyers of Balochistan Bar Council on various topics including Juvenile Justice System, Women and Children's Rights; Inheritance Laws, Harassment of Women, Child Rights and prevention of early marriages.

113. Balochistan Judicial Academy has also organized workshops for judges, prosecutors and state counsel on child rights and child justice by addressing international covenants, as well as national and domestic legal framework. It has deliberated upon Gender Based Violence/ Women Violence through sensitization and advocacy of judicial officers and court personnel. BJA has included training courses on child rights, protection, and justice; human rights; forensic science-based investigation techniques; principles of judicial conduct; policy recommendations from the National Judicial Policy and International Covenants in its Annual Work Plan 2020.

114. Additionally, for the recently established gender-based violence courts and child rights courts across the country, training has been held for judicial officers. For GBV Courts, 88 judicial officers were trained in July 2019; whereas 38 judicial officers and 104 prosecutors were trained in December 2019 at Punjab Judicial Academy. For child rights courts, 165 judges, 23 prosecutors and 5 government officials were trained to ensure capacity building and proper enforcement of child protection laws.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 60 d) of the concluding observations

115. The government has made extensive efforts to ensure that women and girls across the country were made aware of their rights, freedoms and the legal remedies available in case of violation of their rights. To raise awareness about women's rights, International Women Day, Rural Women's Day, Girl Child Day, International Human Rights Day, 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence and National Working Women Day are commemorated at national level. MoHR relies on popular media persons to act as brand ambassadors to sensitize people about importance of girls' education and rights. An effective campaign was also launched through truck art; with strong messages for girls' education and empowerment. Moreover, a campaign regarding family laws and women's inheritance was conducted by MoHR with support of the Council of Islamic Ideology Council in 2020, with the Chairman publicly speaking out in support of women's right to inheritance. Messages on issues of child and forced marriages, women rights, birth registration processes and sexual harassment at workplace were telecast on public and private media channels.

116. The state television channel, PTV has dedicated 30% of its time to gender-based advocacy through advertisements, sitcoms /dramas and talk shows. "*Qanoonboltahai*" (The Law Speaks) is being telecast to provide legal awareness to women under the supervision of highly qualified lawyers. In 2018, Rs. 32.984 million was allocated for Awareness Campaign on women's rights through print and social media regarding the government's initiatives because of this number of daily searches on Facebook increased from 2000 to 17000 gradually. In FY 2019-2020, Rs. 50 million was allocated for mass awareness campaigns.

117. The national and provincial commissions have also played their part in raising awareness. NCSW raised awareness through print media, social media and electronic media including television play on child sexual abuse, public messages on TV, and a six-part awareness program on violence on Radio Pakistan. The posters were distributed to NGOs, gender crime cells and other agencies. An extensive college program was also designed in Punjab as a result of which 96 colleges were provided with Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material about the issue of violence and more than 40,000 students were sensitized.

118. The Punjab CSW developed advocacy material regarding awareness of pro-women laws and recent amendments about protection and promotion of women rights, including the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, inheritance and property rights of women, prevention

against early age marriage and forced marriage, and registration of birth and deaths. Awareness sessions were conducted in women colleges and universities and brochures, pamphlets, etc. were distributed, in 36 Districts of Punjab. PCSW launched awareness campaigns through print media, SMS, rikshaws, schools/universities along with 16 Days of Activism campaign to raise awareness on women's rights. In 2017, Rs.20.500 million was allocated to Directorate of Women Development and PCSW for various awareness campaign and information to women on legal issues and rights at regular basis.

119. The KP CSW arranged campaigns for awareness raising on pro-women laws and workshops in collaboration with CSOs and religious leaders. Moreover, Women Development Department in Balochistan with support of UN Women has conducted awareness sessions on "How to Respond to Gender Based Violence & Access to Service Providers" for different communities of Quetta, Sibi, and Khuzdar districts. In KP periodic visits to schools, colleges, universities are being held to create awareness and educate people about how and where to report cases of violence against women.

Access to Legal Assistance: Response provided at para 52-53

120. Shelters: Various shelter homes (*Dar ul Amans*), women crisis centers and safe houses are functional at the federal and provincial level to provide residence and rehabilitation to marginalized women. The Women's Shelter working under MoHR provides shelter to women and children. In the ICT, a Family Protection & Rehabilitation Centre for Women (FPRCW) was established, which provides counseling and legal and medical aid to women. Services available at FPRCW include psychosocial, and legal counseling, individual and group therapy to overcome depression and trauma, medical and legal aid, outreach visits, reconciliation, reintegration and social rehabilitation. FPRCW also provides temporary accommodation and food, basic education, professional vocational training and runs its own toll-free helpline service (111-12-13-14).

121. In Balochistan, 3 Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Centers for Women (SBBCW) are functional at Sibi, Khuzdar, and Quetta and 3 more centers are being established at Ketch, Loralai, and Naseerabad districts. In addition, Dar-ul-Aman shelters are also facilitating hundreds of women each year. Besides, a 50-bed old home for women is also under construction in Balochistan.

122. Similarly, the Government of Sindh has established Women Complaint Centers (WCC) and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Centers for Women through which, during last two years, more than 500 victims of domestic violence and honor killing rape, acid throwing, child custody and dissolution of marriage have been given legal aid and socio-psychological counseling. They have also provided 154 women with psycho-social counseling in cases of violence, 150 women received psycho-therapeutic counseling, 64 received legal counseling and 27 received free legal aid. 7 complaint cells have also been established to respond to victims of gender-based violence. In addition, safe homes and protection centers have also been established at district level in Sindh under the supervision of the Deputy Commissioners of the districts to provide shelter and relief to women victims of violence.

123. In Punjab, women survivors of violence are provided with shelter, welfare and rehabilitation services in women's shelters (*Dar-ul-amans*) in all 36 districts. Systematic research on shelter homes by the PCSW shows marked improvement in the services being delivered by these *Dar-ul-amans*, including legal, health and psychological services. A Violence against Women Centre (VAWC) in Multan was established in March 2017, at the cost of PKR 232 million. The center provides 24/7 services including but not limited to first aid, police reporting, FIR lodging, prosecution, medical examination, forensics and post-trauma rehabilitation under one roof. All these facilities are run and managed by female staff. The project was initially estimated to provide protective and rehabilitation services to 1200 women a year. The staff at that center is trained to provide professional services to victims of offences such as domestic violence, rape, harassment and family disputes.

124. The Provincial Government of KP has established 4 female shelter homes in districts Peshawar, Mardan, Swat and Abbottabad while 2 additional shelter homes are being established in Haripur and Mansehra. The Social Welfare Department is also running 9 welfare homes for destitute and orphaned children. There are two welfare homes dedicated

to female children in districts Nowshera and Malakand. KPCSW conducted monitoring visits to Darul Amans/women shelters in Peshawar and Swat. The UN Women and Social Welfare and Women Empowerment Department were supported in review and revision of SOPs for Darul Amans/women shelter homes through a one-day workshop.

125. Medical Assistance: NCSW has lobbied with provincial governments for the establishment of a one-window facility for women victims of violence in all major hospital across the country. Government of Sindh has sent directives to all districts to establish one-window facilities for women victims of violence – two hospitals located in Karachi and Khairpur have been established. Efforts are underway to ensure that such facilities are provided across the country.

126. Helplines: To provide legal advice on human rights violations, the Ministry of Human Rights has established a helpline (1099). Similar helplines have also been established at the provincial level. KP has established a toll-free helpline BOLO (*Speak*) for the assistance of survivors of GBV and women with disabilities. Punjab has also established a women's helpline (1043) to provide a platform to register their complaints and grievances. Public Prosecution Department Punjab has established 17 Legal Advice Centers for women at the district level, where female prosecutors provide legal aid. Sindh also has a helpline (0800-70806) and the Sindh Legal Advisory Call Centre to provide legal advice to women and victims of gender-based violence. In January 2021, the Balochistan government launched 'Balochistan Women Helpline: 1089' for registration of complaints against women harassment at home and work place.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 60 e) of the concluding observations

127. The response is provided in earlier paras.

Birth Registration

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 62 of the concluding observations

128. In Pakistan a birth certificate is known as a Child Registration Certificate (CRC) or B-form. In the wake of the 18th Constitutional Amendment, the subject of minors and their registration has been devolved to the provinces. The relevant government agencies/departments include National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) and local union councils under the respective Provincial Local Government Departments. All of them have initiated programs for the registration of children at birth. NADRA has automated the registration process and it facilitates the process of acquiring Child Registration Certificates. In Punjab, the Local Government & Community Development Department (LGCDP) is responsible for birth registration. The Sindh Government, in rural communities, is using mobile phones to empower Lady Health Workers to register newborn children. UNICEF is extending technical support to the Government to achieve universal birth registration by 2024. The local government staff has been trained in Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and KP on effective registration. UNICEF has assisted the government to build the capacity of local authorities and communities on digital birth registration in 7 districts of Punjab which includes providing training to Union Council Secretaries on the use of android-based mobile phones and tablets for birth registration. The representatives visit families in their communities, using digital devices to enter data into the dashboard, which is verified by the Union Council Secretary, who then issues a registration number to the child and part of the process also involves informing and convincing parents about the importance of birth registration. The digital system enables quick and cost-free birth registration, saving parents the time and money previously required in purchasing forms and submitting them to several offices.

129. The governments of Sindh and Punjab, being cognizant of the issue of birth registration, have partnered with Telenor, a leading telecommunications company, and UNICEF to digitize birth registration through the use of technology, and a mobile application for door-to-door birth registration was launched to improve the existing process of birth registration and thereby result in a higher number of birth registrations. This Digital Birth Registration (DBR) was a promising initiative introduced in selected districts of Punjab and

Sindh in collaboration with UNICEF and Telenor Pakistan, which used facilitators (e.g., lady health workers and nikah registrars) who would directly access families with new-born and mobile technology to enter data for birth registration using a mobile application.

Economic exploitation of children

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 64 a) of the concluding observations

130. At ICT level, the relevant authority is the Directorate of Labour under ICT Administration (Ministry of Interior). Under the Rules of Business, 1973, the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development has the mandate to oversee labour laws and ensure their compliance with international commitments. The Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development has notified a Child Labour Cell within the Ministry for the purpose of coordinating efforts on elimination of child labour and for devising a consensus based national action plan with technical assistance of the ILO Country Office.

131. In KP, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Prohibition of Employment of Children Act, 2015 is in place that prohibits the employment of children in any work except for light work for a maximum of two hours a day if this is part of their training or with family members and restricts the employment of adolescents in any work considered hazardous in the law. Besides, in 2018, the first provincial child labour policy has also been announced. In this policy, various priorities are set to be achieved through coordinated efforts of all stakeholders. As far as strengthening labour inspection of child labour is concerned, the inspecting staff of KP Labour Department was notified under the relevant law on child labour. They regularly inspect various shops and establishments to ensure implementation of this law. Moreover, to further strengthen the inspection team of child labour, for the very first time, 7 posts of social mobilizers are sanctioned. They would not only conduct inspection but also create awareness among workers and employers regarding this issue. Rules for these posts have been notified and the recruitment process has also been initiated by the KP Public Service Commission by advertising the posts.

132. In Sindh, the Sindh prohibition of Employment of Children Act, 2017 prohibited the employment of children and regulated the employment of adolescents in certain occupations and work.

133. In Punjab, the Punjab Restriction on Employment of Children Act, 2016 prohibited the employment of children (below the age of 15 years) and restricted the employment of adolescents in certain occupations that are considered hazardous. The Prohibition of Child Labour at Brick Kilns Act, 2016 was also enacted. For the capacity development of labour inspectors, two state-of-the-art training centers namely the Industrial Relations Institute (IRI) and the Saeed-Ahmed Awan Centre for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment (SAA-CIWCE) are performing their duties efficiently and quality training is being imparted to all relevant personnel. In addition, the Department has also imparted numerous trainings (“Training of Inspectors on Effective Labour Inspection”) to its field formations in coordination with the ILO under the project titled as “Strengthening Labour Inspections System for Promotion of Labour Standards and Ensuring Workplace Compliance in Pakistan Project (SLISP)”. The Department has also conducted comprehensive training on Labour Inspections for almost all Inspectors in affiliation with the ILO. So far, 5 training courses have been arranged for 153 inspectors/officers.

134. The Government of Balochistan is also undertaking legislative reforms in collaboration with ILO. It is making efforts to formulate legislation particularly in the areas of child labour, freedom of association and collective bargaining, and setting of minimum wages, through the review and reform of various labour laws, which in turn will strengthen the application of international labour standards. Technical consultations took place, followed by a special meeting of the Provincial Tripartite Consultation Committee to finalize the recommendations. The requisite Bills are under consideration of the Balochistan Government. The Government of Balochistan, in collaboration with ILO, has taken an initiative to encourage youth employment to eradicate child labour.

135. In 2019, the Balochistan Assembly passed a resolution to eradicate child labour in coal mines and efforts to raise the minimum age for hazardous work are underway. The Balochistan Employment of Children (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 2021, has recently been promulgated. The Department of Labour plans to first give an orientation to the Labour Inspectorate and then to ensure its implementation in the labour market of Balochistan.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 64 b) of the concluding observations

136. The KP Labour Department is mandated to ensure effective implementation of the provincial law on child labour i.e. “The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Prohibition of Employment of Children Act, 2015” and to report on various violations and subsequent penalties. Until the month of July 2021, 23 prosecutions have been carried out against those employers who were involved in violations and a total fine of Rs. 45,500 was imposed in the fiscal year. In Punjab, child labour is prohibited through stringent enforcement of Child Labour laws and punitive action is taken against the delinquents through the Police Department.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 64 c) of the concluding observations

137. At the ICT level, Pakistan Bait ul Mal has established 159 centers for rehabilitation of child laborers where children withdrawn from workplaces are given free education and stipend. More than 15,000 students are enrolled in the centers and more than 5,000 have passed the examination out of which 4,500 have been admitted to government schools for higher education. Furthermore, a National Commission on the Rights of the Child has been established under the National Commission on the Rights of the Child Act, 2017 which is mandated to oversee child rights violations throughout the country, provide for examining international instruments and review of existing policies on child rights. A Child Protection Institute has also been established under the ICT Child Protection Act, 2018 to provide care and protection services to vulnerable children including victims of child labour and exploitation.

138. The National Commission for Justice and Peace provides legal counselling and financial assistance to vulnerable people. It has dealt with close to 800 cases and has also launched an advocacy campaign against bonded labour in brick kiln factories. The main implementation mechanism for the laws that are in place are through District and Provincial Vigilance Committees Against Bonded Labour which aim to enforce the legislation, oversee rehabilitation of victims and to aid District and Provincial administration in implementing the Act properly.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 64 d) of the concluding observations

139. In March 2019, a national survey on child labour was launched with support of the President of Pakistan after a gap of 23 years in all provinces for the elimination of child labour. MoHR took the lead for this survey in collaboration with Provincial Governments and UNICEF. The Bureau of Statistics carried out the survey and funds were allocated through an Annual Development Program scheme, whereas UNICEF provided technical support.

Poverty

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 66 of the concluding observations

140. The following steps have been taken by BISP to improve its Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) program (also termed as Ehsaas Kafaalat Program).

141. New Payment Model: BISP has designed a Refined Biometric Verification System (BVS) Based Payment Mechanism in coordination with all stakeholders i.e., Ministry of Finance, State Bank of Pakistan, Auditor General of Pakistan, Controller General of Accounts, NADRA and Pakistan Telecommunication Authority to further improve the transparency and efficiency by building in more safeguards in the payment mechanism. Through the BVS model a new biometric based system has been introduced to ensure transparency in the entire payments eco-system and curb any fraud. Beneficiaries can now

get payments from any BVS Point of Sales, BVS ATMs and BVS enabled branches of the banks and their partner banks. There has also been recent collaboration with the banks to build financial and digital literacy of the beneficiaries and every beneficiary has the option to open a Savings Account.

142. Monitoring Mechanism: BISP has introduced a robust mechanism to monitor Ehsaas Kafalat related disbursement activities through BISP MIS and coordination of BISP HQ/BISP field offices with Provincial Administration and focal persons of the partner banks. Salient features include direct integration between BISP MIS and Bank MIS through various applications and web services allowing for real-time reporting of all transactions data by the banks and for analysis/reconciliation to identify suspicious activities.

143. Furthermore, BISP has field offices at Province/Region, Division and Tehsil levels to allow for disbursements to be monitored by field officers following BISP SoPs to ensure that payments are delivered to beneficiaries in an effective and transparent way. Meetings are held by BISP Provincial Directors General, Regional Directors and Divisional Directors with the District/Tehsil administration and Regional/Cluster/Zonal Managers of partner banks for prompt resolution regularly. BISP has also developed an automated payment complaint management system (PCMS) through which payment-related complaints can be launched and resolved in an automated manner. Initially, the PCMS was capable of handling only a few types of complaints. However, the PCMS has been refined to process all types of complaints reported during field activities. Moreover, the PCMS is also being integrated with Complaint Resolution Mechanisms (CRMs) of BISP partner banks to further enhance the efficiency of complaints resolution mechanism.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 66 a) of the concluding observations

144. All Kafaalat beneficiaries are informed through letters as well as through SMS service to enroll themselves to receive cash assistance. Moreover, all existing beneficiaries are also informed about their exclusion from the program through letters.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 66 b) of the concluding observations

145. Ehsaas has completed the National Socio-Economic Survey of over 32 million households from all provinces and regions, comprising approximately 99 % of the estimated caseload/households of the country. Year-wise progress on households' data collection is given in the following table which shows progress made till September 2021:

<i>Total Progress</i>	<i>2017-18</i>	<i>2018-19</i>	<i>2019-20</i>	<i>2020-21</i>	<i>Total</i>
	3 842 836	5 351 467	7 092 850	15 910 067	32 221 260

146. Moreover, 413 tehsil-level Ehsaas Registration centers for dynamic update of registry data and grievance redressal have been made operational in the country. It is however, appraised that eligibility criteria for Kafaalat beneficiaries were decided based on available fiscal space, therefore all persons below the poverty line could not be included in the program.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 66 c) of the concluding observations

147. BISP expanded Ehsaas Kafaalat (unconditional cash transfer) initiative horizontally (up to 15 million in Ehsaas Emergency Cash Assistance) and vertically (from Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 6000/-). BISP's annual disbursement under EKP/UCT rose from Rs. 16 million in FY 2008-09 to Rs. 225 billion (including Ehsaas Emergency Cash Assistance Program) in FY 2019-20. Since the last 2 years, BISP has increased the number of Kafaalat beneficiaries from 5.3 million to 6.5 million. As per the directions of the Federal Government, the number of beneficiaries will be further increased to 8 million.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 66 d) of the concluding observations

148. BISP, in coordination with the Finance Division, has developed an institutional mechanism for periodic update/increase of cash transfers. Under this, a high-level committee will review the level of cash transfers (unconditional as well as conditional) on an annual

basis and propose any increase/adjustment if deemed necessary, keeping in view all relevant factors, such as inflation, available fiscal space, number of beneficiaries, prevailing international best practices, etc. In its first meeting held on 28th May 2021, the committee proposed an increase of Rs. 166.33/- per month or Rs. 500/- per quarter from January 2022. The proposal has been approved by the prime Minister and the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) and ratified by the Federal Cabinet.

Right to adequate food and nutrition

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 70 of the concluding observations

149. Achieving food security and nutrition for its population is a high priority for the Government of Pakistan. Several important policy initiatives have been taken in this direction, which include the concept development of the National Zero Hunger Program, the Food Security Assessment Survey, the commitment of the Government for Sustainable Development Goals, particularly to the SDG-1 and 2 about poverty and Zero Hunger Challenges. To document all these initiatives and future strategies considering the SDGs, the Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFSR) prepared a comprehensive National Food Security Policy in 2018.

150. Furthermore, the Government also launched the Pakistan Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2018-25 (PMNS) to address the nutrition issue being faced by the country. The strategy guides and provides an overarching framework for developing a strategy plan for increased coverage or scaled up equitable and high-quality nutrition services including both sensitive and specific interventions. One of the main objectives of the Strategy is to protect, promote and support optimal breastfeeding and complementary infant and child feeding practices. In August 2020, Ehsaas Nashonuma was launched by the Prime Minister to address the issue of stunting in children and malnutrition of mothers and infants. The program delivers conditional cash transfers to vulnerable expectant women, mothers, and children up to two years of age. It provides them with cash stipends, specialized nutritious food, immunizations, antenatal and postnatal check-ups, and health-awareness sessions. Every fourth girl child gets a higher stipend compared to boy child.

151. Principally, Ehsaas Nashonuma is pegged on improving nutrition and health in the first thousand days of life. Across 15 most stunted districts in the country, 50 Ehsaas Nashonuma centres have already been opened at the district and tehsil level health facilities in the first phase of the program. In October 2021, a draft legislation was presented by lawmakers on Mandatory Food Fortification with technical assistance from Nutrition International to address the alarming levels of micronutrient malnutrition during a meeting at the National Assembly of Pakistan hosted by Parliamentary Taskforce on SDGs.

Right to Housing

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 72 a) of the concluding observations

152. Due to rapid urbanization and population growth, many people face issues in accessing adequate, reliable, and inexpensive housing. Issues in access to cheap accommodation result in housing insecurity among the lowest socioeconomic stratum.

153. In October 2018, the Government announced Naya Pakistan Housing Program (NPHP) to increase availability of affordable housing in the country. The program builds on the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) Policy for Promotion of Low-Cost Housing Finance. The Policy tackles both aspects of housing finance i.e., mortgage and construction finance. It introduces a subsidized mortgage financing policy to make housing affordable to low-income groups and provides a subsidized construction financing policy to incentivize builders/developers to increase the supply of low-income housing units. In line with the government's vision of offering a decent standard of living to low-income groups and their families, the Prime Minister inaugurated the balloting ceremony of low-cost housing project for low-wage workers in Islamabad on March 18, 2021, under the Naya Pakistan Housing Scheme.

154. The affordable housing project offering 1,008 apartments and 500 houses on low mortgage rate would make home ownership accessible to financially vulnerable families. The government offered a subsidy of Rs300,000 (\$1,922) for each housing unit under the chain of projects comprising of over 100,000 homes. At the same time, the second phase of another 1,504-home project was also initiated.

155. The subsidized rates would reduce the total cost of the apartment to Rs. 2,124,000 (US\$13,600) and the house price to Rs2,354,000 (US\$15,000). This subsidy would further reduce the monthly instalment and total cost of the house making it easier for the common man to own a house. They will get home ownership at a payment of 10 per cent of the total cost, while 90 per cent can be paid in easy instalments over a period of 20 years.

156. In October 2020, the Government of Pakistan introduced the Government Markup Subsidy Scheme, commonly known as Mera Pakistan Mera Ghar (MPMG) markup subsidy Scheme. Available in both conventional and Islamic mode, this scheme enables banks to provide financing for the construction and purchase of houses at very low financing rates for low to middle income segments of the population. State Bank of Pakistan is the executing partner with Government of Pakistan and Naya Pakistan Housing and Development Authority (NAPHDA).

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 72 b) of the concluding observations

157. The Government has taken several measures to ameliorate access to health and other public services for people living in the katchi abadis. (Details are provided in the subsequent paras).

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 72 c) of the concluding observations

158. In October 2021, the Chief Minister of Punjab reviewed proposals to make amendments to the Punjab Katchi Abadis (Amendment) Act of 2012 suggested by Directorate General of Katchi Abadis and Urban Improvement, which is part of the Local Government and Rural Development Department. The Act lays out criteria such as the existence of at least 40 dwelling units for a settlement to be considered for regularization; surveys by the district and town administrations; and an evaluation of revenue records and *aks shajra* of occupied land. The act also lays out the process of granting proprietary rights to dwellers, collection of development costs and land charges; and sets an important precedent by granting equal proprietary rights to husband and wife (or wives).

159. The Directorate General of Katchi Abadis and Urban Improvement, Punjab has made several proposals regarding the improvement of living conditions of the residents and suggested eradication of encroachments and preventing illegal occupation of land. The first proposal called for a revision of the requirement of dwelling units in rural areas to 20 from 40. The directorate also proposed an open auction of commercial areas in *katchi abadis* and the formulation of a new policy for land with potential for commercial use. Thirdly, the directorate proposed that this issue be addressed by requiring submission of *nikah namas*, or legal undertakings for transfer of ownership. The fourth and final proposal called for revising the land and development costs, which were initially tied to the current valuation of surrounding areas, under the 2012 Act, and which created a major hurdle for regularization of *katchi abadis* in areas with higher land prices, leading the dwellers to avoid and actively evade any efforts for pursuing or even applying for proprietary rights. These proposals have been sent by the CM's office to the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Legislative Business for final decision and recommendations.

Water and sanitation

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 74 of the concluding observations

160. The National Drinking Water Policy of 2009, formulated by the Ministry of Climate Change sought to provide access to safe drinking water, equitably and with special attention to women, by 2025. Under this Policy, the Pakistan Safe Drinking Water Bill has been proposed to ensure compliance with the National Drinking Water Quality Standards.

161. In 2018, a water policy package was approved that comprised of a National Water Policy (NWP) and a Charter by Pakistan's Council of Common Interests. The package proposed increase in the public sector investment for the water sector by the Federal Government from 3.7% in 2017-18 to at least 10% in 2018-19 and 20% by 2030, establishment of an apex body to approve legislation, policies and strategies for water resource development and management, and the creation of a Groundwater Authority in Islamabad and provincial water authorities in the provinces.

162. The policy embraces the recommendations of the National Drinking Water Policy 2009 and the National Climate Change Policy (2012) to counter the adverse effects of climate change, in particular extreme weather events. The policy provides for augmenting the country's water storage capacity through building of large and smaller dams to cope with seasonal variations in water supply. It calls for rehabilitation of the country's water infrastructure; regulating and curbing the current excessive abstraction of groundwater; reducing the demands of water user sectors, especially agriculture which uses 95% of available supply and strengthening the capacities of federal and provincial water resource development and management institution.

Right to Health

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 76 of the concluding observations

163. Sehat Sahulat Program (SSP) was launched during the pandemic to ensure the identified under-privileged citizens across the country get access to their entitled medical health care in a swift and dignified manner without any financial obligations. Generally, SSP covers almost all the surgical procedures and medical diseases for which hospital admission is required. Currently, the various provincial streams of SSP do not cover outpatient (OPD) services.

164. Launched in KP in August 2020, each eligible family is entitled to receive health coverage of Rs.1 million per year. Both public and private hospitals designated by the program will provide free treatment to residents of the province. State Life Insurance Corporation, which has been selected after a competitive bidding process, will be paid Rs. 2,849 per family annually. The program has also been extended to Punjab. Currently, underprivileged population (poor population, special persons and transgender community) in 25 districts of the Punjab, and all population of 11 districts of Lahore, Dera Ghazi Khan and Sahiwal divisions is eligible to receive healthcare facilities through Sehat Sahulat Program.

Sexual and reproductive health

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 78 a) of the concluding observations

165. In Pakistan, induced abortion is only permissible 'before the limbs or organs of the baby have been formed' for the purpose of 'necessary treatment' to save the life of a woman. However, under Section 338 of the PPC whoever in bad faith or for reasons other than saving the life of a woman, causes a woman with child whose organs have not been formed, to miscarry, is liable to a punishment of three years imprisonment if the abortion is performed by the woman's consent otherwise a maximum of ten years. This law provides the appropriate safeguards and balances the interests of protecting the life of the child and the mother. It provides discretion to be exercised considering medical advice.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 78 b) of the concluding observations

166. There is no restriction on providing post-abortion care services at both public and private sector health facilities. There has been a wide-scale expansion of health care services in Pakistan which is a strong reason for providing post-abortion care services in Pakistan. The Ministry of Health with the technical and collaborative efforts of Health Services Academy and other Government and NGOs across the country has developed and notified National Service Delivery Standards and Guidelines for high quality safe uterine

evacuation/post-abortion care in 2018. These standards and guidelines are evidence-based and periodically updated.

167. Sindh Government's family planning program caters for neo-natal and other needs. 2018-19 data shows 501,129 beneficiaries of this program. The Punjab health department in 2015 approved the Service Delivery Standards and Guidelines for High-Quality Safe Uterine Evacuation and Post Abortion care for implementation across all primary, secondary and tertiary level healthcare facilities.

168. The KP Government has established the Health Care Commission to control, monitor and regulate private hospitals, clinics and nursing homes. There are 1504 Medical Centers (including BHUs) available to women. The Number of Medical staff available for women in pregnancy related healthcare services in 2019 are 16,977 lady health workers, 6,157 nurses, 1,975 birth attendants, 1,034 LHV's. In addition, Women Medical Officers & Gynecologists are also available for basic and comprehensive EmONC services.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 78 c) of the concluding observations

169. The present National Narrative on Population in Pakistan approved by Federal Task Force headed by the President of Pakistan, reinforced right of parents to decide the number and spacing of their children. It has been widely disseminated in all circles through media and sensitization workshops. The spacing of births is a sensitive subject given the cultural and religious context in Pakistan, therefore, carefully designed awareness campaigns for service providers and community are undertaken. Capacity building trainings have been provided to health professionals that help them overcome the stigma surrounding abortion and teach them about abortion's legal status and empower women to decide upon the number and spacing of births.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 78 d) of the concluding observations

170. Pakistan has developed a National Population Action Plan with the target to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health by taking multi-pronged measures including involvement of all public and private sector health facilities. The Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Provincial Departments of Health and Population Welfare Departments in collaboration with international NGOs are improving access to sexual health information and services by training doctors, nurses, and midwives in clinics; holding counseling sessions on abortion, post abortion care and family planning; engaging women and men in communities through social mobilization to expand their knowledge on reproductive health and rights; development of educational material for social mobilizing on safe abortion, post abortion care and affordable contraception. Emergency contraceptives have been placed on the list of essential medicines.

171. There are more than 3000 service delivery points of Population Welfare Departments and more than 7000 service delivery points of Health Departments in the country to provide safe and affordable contraception to clients and improving access to contraception. Contraceptives are also easily accessible over the counter.

Right to Education

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 80 a) of the concluding observations

172. Article 25A of the Constitution of Pakistan enshrines free and compulsory education to all children without discrimination, from five to sixteen years of age. Pakistan's enrolment declined between 2014 to 2020. The Gross Enrolment Rate of primary age children declined from 91% in 2014 to 84% in 2020. Similarly, the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) at primary level declined from 67% in 2014 to 64% in 2020. The regional picture is complex. Some provinces saw no change in NER at primary level between 2014 to 2020 Balochistan (56%) and Punjab (70%), whereas others saw NER decline, such as Sindh (from 61% to 55%) and KP (from 71% to 65% (including newly merged districts).

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 80 b) of the concluding observations)

173. The Government is planning to collect the latest data on the out-of-school children and efforts are underway. Recently, in collaboration with Planning Commission and Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, provinces, federal areas and donors, a national consensus is being built to put together a 'National Plan of Action' to address out of school children in the entire country. The proposal will be shared with the National Economic Council to request additional financial support and add resource support from the donors to speed up the initiative in the entire country.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 80 c) of the concluding observations

174. A National Education Policy Framework 2018 has been formulated to overcome the multiple challenges faced by the education sector. One of the priorities of the Policy is to improve the quality of education. Since education is a provincial subject after the 18th amendment, each province has prioritized areas of interventions in the education sector and come up with their own set of initiatives.

175. The Punjab Education Sector Plan (PESP) 2019/20 – 2023/24 has been developed to address education challenges in Punjab. The Education Sector Analysis (ESA) for the PESP proposes interventions to achieve the objectives of promoting quality education in a safe, inclusive, and conducive learning environment for children, improving teaching and learning practices for better learning outcomes and Strengthen governance of the education sector for equitable access and high-quality education.

176. E-Learn is another project of the School Education Department (SED) in collaboration with Punjab Curriculum & Textbook Board and powered by Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB). It is the official repository of digital textbooks. Each book has been augmented with Video Lectures, Illustrations, Animations, Simulations and Interactive Assessments. Through this website, students can access 30 Science and Math textbooks for Grade 1-12 which have been augmented with 13,047 Video Lectures, 592 Simulations, 2100 Audio minutes and 1,830 Animations.

177. In Sindh, the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education Sindh has initiated free online curriculum-based learning materials that students may use to continue their education during school closure. They have created a learning portal for students to use digital materials to enhance their knowledge. The digital contents are dubbed for easy understanding of students. The Official YouTube Channel of Elementary & Secondary Education Department has been created for students which contains video lectures of different subjects of grades 1 to 10.

178. Moreover, Sindh has also launched the School Education Sector Plan & Road Map for 2019 – 2024. One of the categories of the Road Map is Adequate Equitable Provision of Learning Facilities under which district school infrastructure development plans based on needs assessment against enrolment targets will be prepared, implemented and monitored.

179. A gender review of education sector policies and programs was carried out, wherein it was found that out of 4560 High Priority Schools – those 4005 schools are included where girl students are enrolled (Both Girls and Mixed Schools). Moreover, out of a proposed total of 554 schools for up gradation - 419 schools are included where girl students are currently enrolled (Both Girls and Mixed Schools). Concurrently, 54 girls' schools have been upgraded under JICA assistance to elementary schools while 29 girls' schools have been constructed and handed over to authorities whereas 25 girls' schools are under construction.

180. In December 2020, the KP Assembly passed a bill to regulate the weight of children's schoolbags. KP was the first province to introduce such legislation. All the government and private educational institutions in KP are bound to abide by it, and a fine of Rs. 200,000 can be imposed on the violators. Meanwhile, the KP Government launched Second Shift at schools' program in the entire province from September 1, 2021. Under this program, the primary schools were upgraded to middle, middle to high, and the high schools would be upgraded to higher secondary schools. In the first phase, the second shift program is in 120 schools in 16 districts of KP. These include 76 boys and 44 girls' schools. Among the 76 boys' schools, 48 are primary that will be upgraded to the middle, and 20 are middle schools

that will be upgraded to high school. Out of 44 girls' schools, 28 will be upgraded from primary to middle, and 16 from middle to high. The 2nd shift program aims to manage dropout rate and balance the number of students in the overcrowded schools by bifurcating the number into the evening and the morning shift.

181. In Balochistan a five-year Balochistan Basic Education Program (BBEP) was initiated in 2016 with a €18 million grant from the European Union. The program achieved substantial progress despite widespread school closures linked to COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020. To make up for the academic time lost due to pandemic and as a follow up to the program, the Balochistan Education Support (BESII) was launched as a five-year education development program to support and strengthen education management systems. BESII builds on the overall education reforms that the Department of Education has. The BESII will contribute to improving literacy, numeracy, skills and qualifications by improving equitable access to quality primary and middle-level education for every girl and boy. These include tailoring enrolment drives to ensure that children return to education and providing alternatives for children who drop out due to economic impact of the crises. BESII will build on BBEP's achievements such as a new performance management system; the newly established Balochistan Assessment and Examination Commission; strengthened and expanded parent-teacher school management committees, local education councils and school development process. The Department of Secondary Education in Balochistan is responsible to implement this program.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 80 d) of the concluding observations

182. The National Sanitation Policy 2006 and the National Drinking Water Policy 2009 commit to the promotion of health and hygiene practices, to link and integrate sanitation programs with city and regional planning policies including education, and to provide clean drinking waters to all.

183. At the national level, Pakistan's Approach for Total Sanitation and Education Sector Reform are the two major programmatic entry points for realizing the need for and importance of water, sanitation and hygiene in schools. Accordingly, UNICEF, in consultation with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, developed WASH in School Strategic Plan (2017-2022). The objectives and targets of the strategic plan include providing latrines and adequate access to water by 2022. In addition to this, UNICEF has also worked in close collaboration with provincial governments to formulate similar strategic plans for WASH in public sector schools.

184. With support from UNICEF and Unilever, Pakistan, a new water supply system, four solar-powered water chillers and three hand-washing stations with running water and soap were installed at Hashimabad school in KP. This made it possible for 700 students to access safe drinking water and sanitation and stay safe.

185. In 2018, to ensure that every child has access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, no matter where they live, UNICEF initiated a program to support the Punjab government to build toilets and install handwashing stations across all public schools in the province. The initiative helped transform the hygiene culture at schools and in communities, as trained teachers helped children learn and share hygienic practices with their friends and families.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 80 e) of the concluding observations

186. The steps taken to improve quality and increase quantity of learning materials are provided in paras 203 to 211.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 80 f) of the concluding observations

187. The National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), is an autonomous body of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, mandated to support human development efforts in Pakistan particularly in the fields of adult literacy, universal primary education, primary health, poverty alleviation, and capacity building, and volunteerism. NCHD is contributing to promote literacy in the country for the last seventeen years.

188. The NCHD has established over 170,190 adult literacy centers across the country including AJK and Gilgit Baltistan. Basic literacy and numeracy skills have been imparted to around 3.98 million adults, mostly women, since 2002. The project has recently benefitted around 650 women of Chitral, Hunza and Ghizer districts. It has trained 170,200 literacy teachers and 17000 supervisors in adult literacy, social mobilization, management of literacy centers etc. NCHD, with the aid of UNESO Participation Program has completed development of six ICT/video-based training sessions for the capacity building of teachers and field officers of literacy and non-formal basic education (NFBE).

189. NCHD has helped to establish around 50 Community Learning Centers in 45 districts across Pakistan. It has also established the National Literacy Resource Center in Islamabad. Developed more than 100 booklets and primers on literacy, practical life skills, and income generating activities. Furthermore, it has successfully implemented a mobile based literacy program, and set up literacy centers in jails. Prisoners' literacy program is expected to provide literacy to more than 60% of the current illiterate population in the prisons of the country. It has also established the first National Training Institute for Literacy and Non-Formal Education in Pakistan.

190. Keeping in view the importance of data to develop and execute projects in the social sector, NCHD took up the task of compiling district and Union Council wise data on estimated number of illiterate adults and identification of potential locations, which are in immediate need of schools. They will use this to prepare district literacy profiles comprising all relevant information.

191. Under public-private partnership, NCHD received financial support from Pakistan Human Development Fund (PHDF) for establishing 2000 adult literacy centers in Pakistan to literate around 150,000 adult illiterates. The project was launched in December 2019 in 38 districts covering all the provinces, AJK, Gilgit Baltistan and Islamabad Capital Territory. Community mobilization process has been completed in all the 38 districts and 2200 teachers and local area supervisors have been trained.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 80 g) of the concluding observations

192. Inclusive education is one of the key elements of Pakistan's Vision 2025. At the national level, the government has outlined a general framework for disability inclusion in education mainly through policies including the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2002, operationalized by a National Action Plan in 2006; the Islamabad Declaration on Inclusive Education signed in 2005 by the federal and provincial governments; The National Education Policy (NEP) 2009 and the National Education Policy Framework 2018. Over 20 per cent of schools in Pakistan are catering to children with disabilities.

193. The ICT Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2020 endorsed the establishment of special educational institutions for persons with moderate to severe disabilities and provides that general education settings must be 'equipped and reasonably staffed' to implement inclusive education. The Balochistan Persons with Disabilities Act (2017) promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Free Compulsory Primary and Secondary Education Act (2017), the Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act (2014) and The Sindh Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2018 promote non-segregation and prohibit denial of admission to schools due to disability.

194. Provinces have also carried out analysis of their respective education sectors. The Balochistan Education Sector Analysis 2020–25 provides for the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools through the provision of inclusive education. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Education Sector Analysis 2019 includes a chapter on inclusive education, conceptualized in a broad sense to include marginalized groups of children. Furthermore, the Punjab Education Sector Plan 2019–2023 Situation Analysis lays down a strong foundation for addressing the exclusion of children with disabilities in education and other sectors.

195. Punjab Special Education Department has adopted a multi-pronged strategy to improve the learning outcomes of its students with special needs. It is also implementing teacher's capacity-building programs and is in the initial phases of introducing accessible educational programs through e-learning initiatives. The School Education Sector Plan and

Roadmap for Sindh 2019–2024 endeavours to increase the number of children with disabilities mainstreamed in formal schools.

Privatization of education

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 82 a) of the concluding observations

196. The public-private partnership laws currently in place in the provinces, and the laws governing the state’s public-private management entities, preclude any violation of a human right (of which free and compulsory education is one) of any individual by a private provider. No formal assessment on the human rights’ perspective is carried out, and efforts are currently underway by all provinces to conduct detailed private schools’ census to be able to effectively regulate the non-state providers. The existing regulatory frameworks for the compliance of existing laws by the private providers have been established by the federal and provincial governments.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 82 b) of the concluding observations

197. The Private Schools are being regulated at ICT level under Islamabad Capital Territory Private Educational Institutions (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2013. Under the Act, a Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority (PEIRA) has been established. PEIRA regulates, registers and ensures minimum quality standards in private educational institutions up to higher secondary level or equivalent. It has determined and enforced minimum quality standards that are mandatory for an educational institution, fee to be charged by the institution that is commensurate to the academic quality of an institution and on-campus educational services and facilities available to the students and ensure services of qualified and professional teachers are provided for imparting education and training to teachers are warranted. Furthermore, four of the largest public-private partnership programs between the state and non-state providers of schooling cater to over 3 million students (approximately 20% of all private sector enrolments) through regulatory frameworks and operations in part addressing the challenge of quality of education imparted in these schools. The four largest regulatory and management organisations are: a) Punjab Education Initiatives Management Authority (PEIMA); b) Punjab Education Foundation (PEF); c) Sindh Education Foundation (SEF) and d) Public Private Partnership Node, School Education & Literacy Department, Sindh (PPP).

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 82 c) of the concluding observations

198. In 2017, the Ministry of Education & Professional Training developed a policy guideline on Minimum Standards for Quality Education in Pakistan. This document on quality standards was developed through a participatory interprovincial process, and it delineates standards for learners, teachers, curriculum, textbooks, assessment and the school environment. The policy guideline describes the minimum targets and standards for learners, curriculum, textbooks and other learning materials, teachers, assessment, early learning and development Standards and School Environment. In addition to this, the National Education Policy Framework 2018 also identifies improving quality of education as a priority area for the State. The latest policy is also under process.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 82 d) of the concluding observations

199. As per the existing public-private partnership laws and agreements in place, no private provider being funded by the State can refuse admission to any student irrespective of his/her ability to pay any fee or due to any other reason unless the justification is in compliance with existing laws.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 82 e) of the concluding observations

200. The introduction of the Single National Curriculum (SNC) by the government in all public, private, and religious schools aims to eliminate social segregation in the education system of Pakistan. Furthermore, in view of the challenges to enhance the system’s capacity to cater to thousands of new classrooms each year, it relies significantly on the deployment

of the private sector to fill the gap in service provision. In order to minimise the social impact on differing standards of education offered in state and non-state schools, the federal and provincial governments have steadily increased allocations for funding private schools so that no school fee is charged from enrolled students.

Human rights education

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 84 of the concluding observations

201. The National Curriculum Council (NCC) was approved unanimously by all provinces with the objective of developing a minimum curriculum. In 2019, the Federal Government approved a uniform curriculum (Single National Curriculum) for all education institutions in the country. The SNC, developed by NCC has been adopted by Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Balochistan committed to adopting it as well.

202. The merger of madrassas, or religious institutions, into a unified educational system will be a crucial component of the SNC. There are approximately 30,000 madrassas/religious seminaries and 250,000 conventional schools in Pakistan. The Ministry of Education and the Federation of Religious Seminaries have agreed in principle to include madrassas in the scope of formal education under the SNC.

203. In addition to this, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (FE&PT) established the Directorate General of Religious Education (DGRE) to provide the facilitation to madrassas for registration and in other matters of madrassas. The main objective of the Directorate is to mainstream all madrassas of Pakistan, have them register with the Ministry of FE&PT, and facilitate their affiliation with the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education as well as Board of Technical Education for Secondary School Certificate (SSC) / Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) and in technical & vocational education examinations for the madrassas Students. In addition to this, the Directorate will also facilitate the madrassas to introduce contemporary subjects from SSC/HSSC. Most importantly, it aims to facilitate madrassas to enhance national harmony, peace, stability and socio-economic development in the country. The Directorate by September 2019 has so far registered 5,000 seminaries across the country.

204. In KP, textbooks for Grade I-XII have been developed to ensure that the content is inclusive and is free from religious, sectarian, ethnic, regional, cultural, occupational and socio-economic biases and that the text promotes harmony and peaceful co-existence through respect of diversity and tolerance.

205. The Government of Punjab has promulgated the Human Right Policy 2018, which encompasses a comprehensive set of education initiatives to ensure that all Pakistanis are able to access information on human rights. This includes the development of human rights education programs for primary and secondary schools, colleges, the community and for the public sector. The Syndicate of University of the Punjab included human rights and tolerance as a separate subject at undergraduate level. Moreover, curriculum in Punjab is being reviewed and revised systematically by making it coherent with the aim of social and interfaith harmony. Punjab School Education Department has introduced a supplementary study material that has been published and disseminated to students titled "Lets study together" to eliminate elements of discrimination for religious minorities.

206. The Sindh Assembly passed a resolution regarding inclusion of religious textbooks of Hindus in curriculum of Hindu minorities. The Government of Sindh has also initiated the process of including religious text based on Bhagwat Geeta for Hindu students in Sindh.

207. The Ministry of Human Rights has also initiated a Public Awareness Campaign on Human Rights Education and Sensitization under Action Plan for Human Rights, 2016 through seminars as well as advertisements in print and electronic media. The campaign's target audience is the general public, civil society, researchers, academia, students, government and all other segments of society.

Cultural rights and linguistic diversity

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 86 of the concluding observations

208. The Pakistan's National Education Policy 2009 recognized the importance of teaching regional languages. The draft National Education Policy 2017-2025 also stipulates that the 'medium of instructions' for all subjects at primary level shall be either local language or national language (Urdu). Accordingly, a phased introduction of regional languages as the medium of instruction at the primary level is expected to begin. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Curriculum i.e., for Grades 1 – 5, under the SNC has been revised keeping in view the local culture and environment alongside modern/innovative trends in ECCE and national & international commitments (SDG 4). Furthermore, it aims to create links between language learning and other subjects and promote diversity of culture and languages especially regional languages of Pakistan.

209. In addition to policy initiatives at the federal level, the provincial governments have adopted legislation to promote language diversity by changing the medium of instruction to either the local or national language. Balochistan enacted the Introduction of Mother Languages as Compulsory Additional Subject at Primary Level Act, 2014, which offers children primary education in their mother languages. Whereas Khyber Pakhtunkhwa promulgated the Regional Languages Promotion Authority Act, 2012. The Act established the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Promotion of Regional Languages Authority to teach and promote regional languages in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In Sindh, measures have been taken and children of primary level are taught in their native language. For that purpose, textbooks are made available in native language (Sindhi) and other essential books are translated into native language so that children could better understand and learn easily. Similarly, teachers are also trained to teach in the mother language.

Access to the Internet

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 88 of the concluding observations

210. Majority of the population of Pakistan access internet through their cellular phones. In 2003-04 Pakistan deregulated its telecommunications sector that led to increased open competition in the telecommunication sector. The expansion of telecommunication infrastructure due to low tariffs has produced high revenues, increased tax contributions and employment opportunities. The telecommunication industry experienced growth during the fiscal year 2020-21. The total number of mobile subscriptions reached 193 million as of March 2022. The mobile and fixed broadband subscriber has experienced strong surge of 39.4 % growth from Jan 2021- March 2022.

211. The Ministry of IT and Telecom, through Universal Service Fund spent PKR 60 billion during last three years (2019-21) for the infrastructure development in the unserved and underserved areas including (rural and remote areas especially Balochistan and merged FATA districts) while working on 65 projects. A total of 25 million unserved population shall be served through these projects. Under One Window Operation and Ease of doing Business, 24.6 million mobile devices have been manufactured/ assembled locally and made available on low prices which have high impact to bridge digital divide between urban and rural areas for use of internet connectivity. Furthermore, 61 projects for access to internet 2G/3G/4G (Voice and Broadband data services) for 120 Districts targeting a population of 30 million are under process (19 Projects have been completed and others are in process). Additionally, there are 13 projects of Optical Fiber Cable for Tehsils and Union Council UCs. Three projects have been completed and, on the others, work is in progress. Moreover, 8 projects are assigned to Motorways and National Highways covering 40 Districts.

Other recommendations

212. Pakistan has made considerable progress towards SDGs implementation. Three key steps are as under: i) The first step in this regard was the localization of SDGs and its integration in policies and plans at all three levels i.e., federal, provincial and local; ii) the

goals were unanimously adopted as national development agenda through a National Assembly resolution on February 16, 2016. As a result, Parliamentary task forces were formed at federal, provincial and federally administered areas. The objective of the task forces is overseeing the progress of SDGs; iii) SDGs support units were established at the Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives, and all Provincial Planning and Development departments. to mainstream SDGs into policymaking. A comprehensive and inclusive methodology has been adopted by taking onboard all stakeholders, public-private partnership and using technology for data collections on all indicators of the SDGs.

Conclusion

213. Pakistan remains committed to its obligations under the international human rights Convention. In adherence to the Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Government has consistently endeavored to promote the social, economic and cultural rights of its citizens, notwithstanding the severe economic challenges and difficulties posed due to the onset of Covid-19 pandemic. Pakistan continues to make steady progress in the field of human rights and uphold its human rights obligations.
