



ISSUE BRIEF

INSTITUTE OF STRATEGIC STUDIES ISLAMABAD

Web: www.issi.org.pk
Phone: +92-51-9204423, 24
Fax: +92-51-9204658

UNDP PAKISTAN ANNUAL REPORT 2020: AN OVERVIEW

By

Sarah Akram

Research Fellow

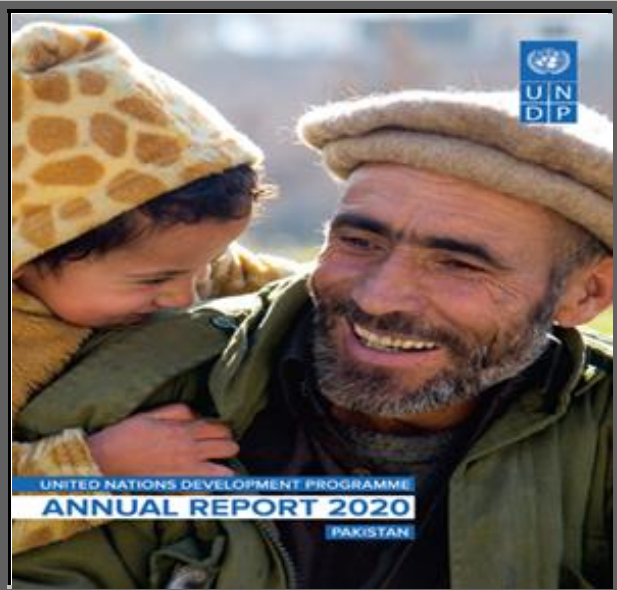
Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP), ISSI

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Malik Qasim Mustafa

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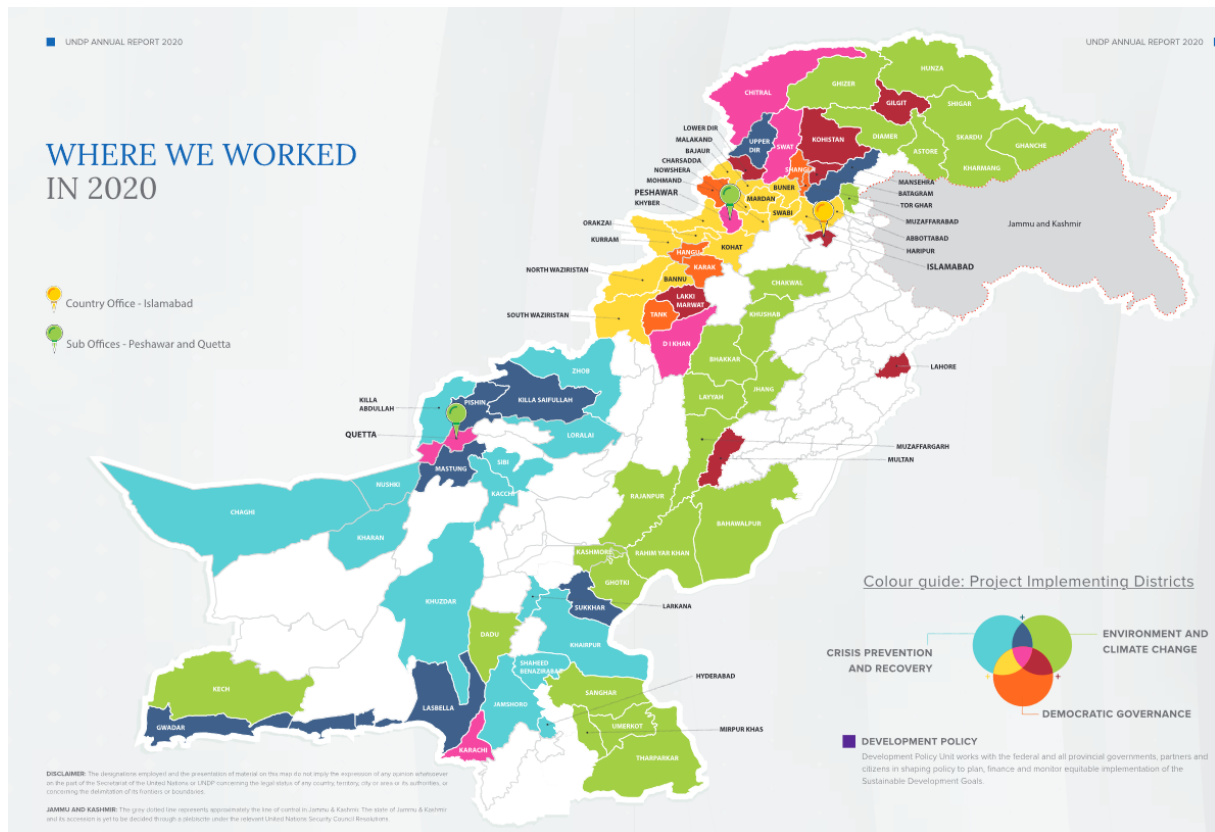
The COVID-19 has been and continues to be an enormous challenge for the world and especially a developing country like Pakistan. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Annual Report 2020 for Pakistan gives a brief overview of how the pandemic has affected the development agenda in the country and how the UNDP has partnered with the government to deal with the challenges. The UNDP is a key partner of the Government of Pakistan (GoP) and continues to provide support concerning achieving the development agenda. The UNDP continues to partner with the GoP in implementing the SDGs. With the UNDP's support, the GoP developed a Socio Economic Impact Assessment and Response Framework which is intended to provide a basis of the government's response plan to the pandemic. Similarly, a COVID-19 secretariat was also established at the Planning Commission for harmonisation as well as evidence-based socio-economic interventions. The year 2020 was fraught with several challenges and many of them were unprecedented due to the pandemic. The pandemic continues to have a severe impact on the economy, while destroying businesses, creating a health crisis and endangering and affecting the development agendas, thus wreaking havoc in every sphere.

The impact of the pandemic on Pakistan has been colossal, in terms of the economy and health sector. Just as the pandemic started, the UNDP in Pakistan, in close collaboration with the sister agencies of the UN started to conduct a rapid assessment of socio-economic impacts of the pandemic, along with recommendations for the GoP to address the repercussions of the pandemic on the vulnerable. The UNDP helped in ensuring an effective response to the pandemic, especially in the socio-economic realm. The UNDP response has been critical in crafting and implementation of programmes to support and help the countrywide national response. This mainly included support to telemedicine, infection prevention and support for other initiatives.

With regards to democratic governance, many challenges surfaced, specifically due to the merger of the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which have further enhanced the desire for reforms and also increased the call for strengthening of institutions. Similarly, cooperation with women's development organisations, which were also working with the UNDP partner organisations in related activities have also experienced a marked increase. With regards to Human Rights as well as the monitoring of its abuses, effective systems need to be built. For these, the UNDP is engaged in building federal and provincial level capacity for the protection of citizens. Moreover, in all four provinces, the UNDP has also initiated an information management system, which tracks human rights violations, with support from experts in the Ministry of Human Rights as well as the provincial departments. Among several other efforts in the realm of Human Rights and peacebuilding, the UNDP has also taken initiatives like extending support for the revitalisation of the UN Human Rights Task Force in the country, as well as the informal Human Rights Working Group.¹ The UNDP continues to undertake work in the merged areas by extending help to the provincial institutions as well as the district authorities in the merged areas, to create opportunities. Activities like the convening of religious leaders to bring girls to school as well as making the environment conducive for female education. The UNDP has also undertaken initiatives like the provision of furniture, learning materials and among others, trained teachers for schools in the merged areas. To improve the economic capability, the UNDP has partnered with the Small Medium Enterprise Development Authority to establish the Economic Cooperation and Development Forum. These initiatives have had a positive impact on the environment and initiatives like the introduction of microfinance, vocational skills training have all helped improve lives.

The illustration below shows UNDP activities throughout Pakistan:

¹ "UNDP Pakistan Annual Report 2020," UNDP, June 16, 2021, p.17, <https://www.pk.undp.org/content/pakistan/en/home/library/annual-reports/undp-pakistan-annual-report-2020.html>



Source: UNDP Annual Report Pakistan 2020:

The UNDP, in Pakistan, has also undertaken several initiatives to mitigate the effects of Climate Change. Just as the effects of Climate Change have begun to affect the entire country, some areas are more vulnerable. In Gilgit Baltistan (GB), for instance, where communities are most likely vulnerable, the UNDP has helped in the intensification of necessary health services. These facilities have also been extended to at-risk areas of Punjab like Chakwal, areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa like Dera Ismail Khan and the province of Sindh, in Tharparkar. These areas have now been given safe drinking water, fuel-efficient stoves and off-season vegetables. These benefits affect women more than men as they are more at risk. With UNDP support, provinces are undertaking policies that protect biodiversity and are considerate towards ecosystems. The provinces are identifying and designating lands for forest development and protection. Several projects have been undertaken to rejuvenate diminishing forests as well as other biodiversity measures. Concerning emissions and waste management, the UNDP Pakistan has undertaken several initiatives for eliminating plastic waste as well as solid waste management and apart from these, the promotion and implementation of the electronic vehicle policy has also been an endeavour aimed at the promotion of clean energy vehicles.

2 Ibid. p.31.

Natural disasters are a huge challenge and governments must plan for disaster risk reduction. The UNDP also assisted the National Disaster Risk Management Authority to analyse, develop and review plans and policies in this regard. The UNDP is extending support for the improvement of institutional disaster response capacities. All these efforts will be aligned to an early warning system designed by the UNDP and regional experts, in partnership with the Pakistan Metrological Department. Above all, the UNDP is a major partner of the GoP concerning its achievement of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. The COVID-19 has been a major impediment to achieving progress in this regard. The UNDP continues to accelerate support in the achievement of SDGs and for this, in 2020, the National Economic Council's Sub Committee on SDGs was established which is intended to guide the government towards achieving these goals. The UNDP has also helped in the localisation of SDGs as well.

The UNDP Annual Report for Pakistan gives a good overview of the UNDP's activities throughout the country in several areas. The UNDP strives for the implementation of its programmes and has made significant progress as is evident in the report. The UNDP Pakistan strives for the implementation of the SDGs as well as other development-related initiatives. The report also highlights the importance of data for development and such reports are an important illustration of the reality on the ground. Therefore, such reports shed light on the activities of the UNDP and are also important in giving a holistic overview of the development landscape in the country. It is important to note that the policy support for the achievement of the development agenda is important with regards to attaining progress. The GoP has been proactive in collaborating with UN-related agencies regarding policy formulation and implementation; however, it has a long way to go in addressing loopholes and shortcomings. To optimise the efficacy of the UNDP development programmes which run in collaboration with the GoP, the government must ensure inclusive governance and the strengthening of rule of law. Similarly, the UNDP must also accelerate efforts towards strengthening and increasing partnerships with local governments to reach maximum results.