29 August 2017 – WHO Pakistan has signed an agreement with UN WOMEN, UNFPA and UNODC today in Islamabad to implement a joint programme on essential services for women and girls subjected to violence and discrimination based on gender and social norms in Pakistan (2017–2019). The agreement was signed in the presence of Mr Niel Buhne, UN Resident Coordinator of Pakistan. The agreement will be functional from August 2017 to August 2019 and the total cost is US$ 250 000 that has been initially mobilized as first trench to start and implement activities by all participating agencies in first one year. WHO's share of this agremnet is US$ 50 000 for the first year.

In this important interagency programme partnership WHO would be leading the health component of the programme for strengthening the health system response to gender-based violence all over Pakistan. The interventions are through capacity-building of care providers and community health workers in prevention of different forms of violence; first-line support to survivors, including counselling and psychological care; identification of GBV case and proper history taking, clinical care and treatment of injuries, including HIV prevention; referral to different social services; further medical treatment and legal aid and testing; medico-legal care and examination of victims of sexual violence including child survivors. WHO national treatment protocols, including SOPs and adapted policy and clinical guidelines on IPV in Pakistan cover all these services to treat survivors at facility level. WHO technical support to Government of Pakistan would be fully aligned with the SDG targets under this programme.

In today’s signing ceremony Dr Muhammad Assai, WHO Representative to Pakistan, welcomed this important partnership to promote joint UN work and integrated approach to strengthen capacities and delivery of essential services to women, girls and children who are vulnerable groups regarding their social and economic status according to the recent preliminary results of census in the country. “We cannot have women, girls and children be left behind in health,

development and the well-being because they are experiencing violence, discrimination, exploitation, poverty and inequality. Dr Assai added that in Pakistan only 19.3% of women reach secondary education while female participation in the labor market is 24.6% compared to 82.9% for men. Women's proportion in public service is only 5% and 32% of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical violence since the age of 15. We cannot achieve the SDG goals, including universal health coverage if women, girls and children are denied services due to discrimination in their homes and communities. We stand ready to play our role through prevention and capacity-building interventions. The joint UN initiative on essential services is an important opportunity for us to contribute and work together for improving the health and well-being of women, girls and children in Pakistan," he added.

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