



17 February 2020 – Dr Palitha Mahipala, WHO Representative in Pakistan, at the inauguration of the open gymnasium said, “Noncommunicable diseases kill 41 million people each year, equivalent to 71% of all deaths globally. Cardiovascular (heart) diseases account for most of these deaths followed by cancers, respiratory diseases and diabetes. In Pakistan, the burden of noncommunicable diseases is rapidly increasing and more than 60% deaths are due to these diseases (Pakistan data for disease burden 2017). Physical inactivity, unhealthy diets and tobacco use increase the risk of dying from an NCD. WHO, under its healthy city programme, is promoting healthy lifestyles and physical activity.

Mr Sheikh Anser Aziz, Honourable Mayor of Islamabad, declared open the ‘Open Gymnasium’ at the Fatima Jinnah Park (Sector F-9) in the presence of Dr Palitha Mahipala, WHO Representative in Pakistan, WHO staff, staff of the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad and a large number of the public. The WHO country office in Pakistan installed the open gym and

fitness centre for the public in F-9 Park Islamabad under the healthy city programme to promote healthy lifestyles and physical activity.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Sheikh Anser Aziz, Honourable Mayor of Islamabad, appreciated WHO support for making Islamabad a healthy city in the near future. “We are committed to address health challenges and well-being of our citizens here in Islamabad. Our priorities are to set an example of this city through improving all socioeconomic, health and environmental indicators under initiatives like the healthy city programme so that it can be followed by other cities in Pakistan. The road map of the programme would be dedicatedly achieved with the valuable technical support of partners like WHO so that the city obtain its healthy city status in the next few years.”

This programme is one of the important initiatives to address the challenges of community health. The programme was initiated in 2017 with the registration of Islamabad city into the Global Healthy City Network by WHO. The programme in Islamabad is a joint initiative of WHO and the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad, in collaboration with the Directorate of Health. The programme is being implemented in Islamabad while expanding the scope to ICT areas through recent alignment with the ICT Health Model. This open gym would increase promotion of physical activity and well-being of the public in Islamabad. WHO Pakistan is committed to supporting the Government of Pakistan in its progress towards universal health coverage, health promotion and protection under its various initiatives.

Closing the ceremony, Dr Hassan Orooj, Director General of Health of the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad, thanked WHO for their support and expressed appreciation of the leadership of Dr Palitha Mahipala for advancing health and well-being in Pakistan. Dr Orooj said, “The healthy city programme in Islamabad is a first step in improving community health and well-being and addressing the risks of communicable and noncommunicable diseases here in the city. This platform will further enhance human potential through improvements to health”.



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