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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

PRESS RELEASE

UN-Habitat strengthens disaster-resilient schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with support from Japan and JICA

Islamabad, 17 February 2026 – The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), with the support of the Government of Japan and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), is strengthening disaster resilience in flood-affected schools across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan.

A grant of JPY 427 million (approximately USD 2.7 million) from the Government of Japan will support the rehabilitation and retrofitting of schools damaged by the 2025 cloudbursts and flash floods, particularly in Swat and Buner districts. The project agreement was formalized during a signing ceremony held on 11 February 2026.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is highly vulnerable to climate-related hazards due to its geographical characteristics. In 2025, severe flooding damaged 437 schools across the province, disrupting education services and affecting thousands of children. The project aims to restore safe, resilient and functional learning environments by strengthening school structures and improving ventilation and lighting. It will also reinstate gender-sensitive water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, ensuring dignity, privacy and accessibility for girls and children with disabilities.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, the Ambassador of Japan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Akamatsu Shuichi, reaffirmed Japan's continued commitment to supporting Pakistan's resilience agenda. He emphasized that investing in disaster-resilient school infrastructure is essential to protecting children and ensuring continuity of education in the face of climate-induced disasters.

Ms. Kazuko Ishigaki, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific at UN-Habitat, highlighted the organization's role in delivering safer learning environments. She noted that the rehabilitated schools will provide structurally stable classrooms, improved ventilation and essential WASH services, enabling children to learn with confidence, safety and dignity. She added that by positioning schools as hubs for disaster preparedness and response, the project will extend preparedness and first-aid benefits to surrounding communities, strengthening local resilience and emergency response capacities.

Mr. Sugawara Takayuki, Senior Representative of JICA, emphasized that the initiative reflects JICA's commitment to disaster risk reduction through its "Build Back Better" approach. He stressed the importance of rebuilding infrastructure in ways that reduce future risk and prevent repeated damage, contributing to sustainable economic and social development.

Mr. Mohamed Yahya, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan, expressed appreciation to the Government and people of Japan, JICA, and the Embassy of Japan for their continued partnership with Pakistan and the United Nations. He noted that the initiative aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and supports Pakistan's implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Through the rehabilitation of disaster-resilient schools and the provision of disaster resilience training, the project will contribute to reducing loss of life, minimizing the number of people affected and decreasing economic losses caused by natural disasters, while advancing human security in flood-affected communities.

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About UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat is the United Nations entity working for sustainable urbanization. With programmes in over 90 countries, it supports policymakers and communities to create socially and environmentally sustainable cities and towns. UN-Habitat promotes transformative change in urban areas through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action. To know more, visit unhabitat.org or follow us on X @UNHABITAT.

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