



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

[PRESS RELEASE](#)

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Seminar on Breast Cancer Resolves

To Save Lives From the Silent Killer

Islamabad: Pakistan's leading experts on health, education, population and human rights made a resounding appeal for prevention and treatment of breast cancer that claims hundreds of women's lives each year in Pakistan.

Marking the Breast Cancer Awareness Month - the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in collaboration with the UNWOMEN and UN Resident Coordinator's Office held a multi-stakeholders consultation on 'Early Detection Save Lives' – in Islamabad on Wednesday morning.

The initiative which was inspired by a meeting on the issue between the UN Secretary General Ban ki-Moon and Dr. Fahmida Mirza, former Speaker of the National Assembly in August this year, called for development of a national frame work to comprehensively scope the prevalence and impediments to early detection and quality treatment of breast cancer in Pakistan. Dr. Fahmida Mirza, herself a survivor of breast cancer, was commended for her heroic leading of the cause in Pakistan.

The experts agreed that awareness regarding the disease had a direct link with literacy, education and right to access information. While breast cancer itself could be treated if detected early, what was equally life threatening was ignorance and negligence about the disease.

The distinguished panelists at the occasion included: Dr. Fahmida Mirza, former Speaker of the National Assembly, Yasmeen Rehman, Former Special Envoy to the Prime Minister on Social Issues; Shahnaz Wazir Ali, Social Activist and former Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Education and former Member UNESCO Executive Board; Dr. Attiya Inayatullah, former Minister for Science and Technology; Dr. Sania Nishter, Founder and President-Heartfile/former Minister for Science and Technology; Dr. Nehal Masood, MD-Section Chief Hematology and Oncology at Agha Khan Hospital and Farid Ullah Khan, Secretary Education, Capital Administration and Development Division (CA &DD).

Addressing in her key note Dr. Fahmida Mirza reiterated that in Pakistan, breast cancer was intrinsically linked with women's lack of access to essential information and awareness. She

pointed out that it was an issue that concerned availability of and access to equitable and comprehensive quality health care – but largely remained off the public discourse due to cultural barriers, shame and stigma attached to the disclosure of the disease.

Sangeeta Rana Thapa, Deputy Representative of UNWOMEN in Pakistan in her remarks said that breast cancer prevalence and prevention must also be analyzed in the context of women's lack of empowerment, marginalization and gender inequalities.

Dr. Kozue Kay Nagata, UNESCO Director/Representative in Pakistan in her vote of thanks paid a rich tribute to the campaign and acknowledged expert views from the panelists along with the presence of audiences and their inputs.

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