

POPULATION WELFARE VITAL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: AJK PRESIDENT



MUZAFFARABAD, June 3: The AJK President Sardar Masood Khan while describing the population welfare as the central plank of the overall development strategy said that no country can make socio-economic progress without rationalizing its population.

"At present the population growth rate of Pakistan is 2.4 percent and that of Azad Jammu and Kashmir is 1.62 percent, and if necessary measures are not taken for population control, we would have to face numerous issues including hunger and unwanted transfer of population," he warned.

He expressed these views after receiving a report on the Roadmap of functional integration of Health and Population Welfare Departments to improve the state of family planning and reproductive health in AJK.

The report was presented by the consultant of the United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA) Pakistan, Raja Mohammad Razzaq.

The AJK president said that the liberated territory has a literacy rate higher than all parts of Pakistan, and there is a slight difference in the literacy of boys and girls. Therefore, we expect that a major portion of our population besides having the realization of population welfare, reproductive health, the mortality rate of newborns and their mothers, can easily understand the socio-economic needs of population planning.

He expressed the hope that the UN Fund for Population and the AJK population welfare department while keeping in view our family norms and social values will achieve the targets of population control, and will contribute to the alleviation of poverty and the economic prosperity of the people in the state.

He said, Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) in AJK is 47 per one thousand and MMR 104 per hundred thousand need to be significantly reduced.

"The AJK government is determined to take all necessary measures to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030, particularly goal three of the agenda" he vowed.

The state president said that we are also thankful for our national and multilateral partners, non-government and the civil society organizations that are contributing to our efforts for population welfare.

While describing the Roadmap of functional integration of Health and Population Welfare Departments as great stride, President Khan assured full support and cooperation to the efforts of UNFPA to ensure population welfare through family planning and reproductive healthcare.

Sardar Masood Khan said that being a developing region, it was the priority of the AJK government to maintain a balance between its population and resources to ensure public health, education, and economic development, and put the territory on the path of progress and prosperity.

Earlier explaining the functional integration of Health and Population Welfare Departments, UNFPA representative, Raja Razzaq said that both the departments have tremendous potential but duplication of the functions especially in service delivery, makes it difficult to achieve overall goals set for the sector.