



Report - UNESCO Chairholders' Coordination Meeting in Pakistan

**Hosted by UNESCO Chair on Low Carbon and
Sustainable Agriculture in Biosphere Reserve MNS
University of Agriculture Multan**

18-November 2025

Introduction

On 18 November 2025, the UNESCO Chair on Low Carbon and Sustainable Agriculture in Biosphere Reserves at MNS University of Agriculture, Multan organized a high-level coordination meeting of UNESCO Chairs working across Pakistan. The meeting served as a platform to enhance inter-chair collaboration, discuss national sustainability challenges, and build a shared strategic direction for future UNESCO-led academic and research activities in the country.

The session opened with a warm welcome from Prof. Dr. Asif Ali, Vice Chancellor MNS University of Agriculture Multan and Chairholder of the host UNESCO Chair. He welcomed the representatives of all participating in UNESCO Chairs, acknowledging their contributions in fields ranging from ICT development, sustainable urban regions, biosphere management, inclusion through arts, and integrated water management.

Participants

The meeting was attended by the following stakeholders.

Sr.#	Name	Designation
1.	Prof. Dr. Asif Ali	Vice Chancellor, MNSUAM
2.	Mr. Fuad Pashayev	UNESCO Representative in Pakistan
3.	Mr. Raza Shah	National Professional Officer (Natural Sciences), UNESCO
4.	Prof. Dr. Muhammad Abid, (T.I.)	UNESCO Chair on Knowledge Systems for IWRM, CUI Wah Campus
5.	Prof. Dr. Adnan Noor Mian	Vice Chancellor, UNESCO Chair on ICT for Development, ITU Arfa Software Technology Park, Lahore
6.	Dr. Faizan Ahmed Mirza	UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Urban Regions, NED University of Engineering & Technology, Karachi
7.	Ms. Rohma Moid Khan	Associate Professor, Programme Head, BA (Hons) Interdisciplinary Expanded Design & Art Beaconhouse National University
8.	Ms. Maleeha Bukhari	Manager Outreach and Communications UNESCO Chair on Inclusion through Art, BNU
9.	Prof. Dr. Ashfaq Ahmad	VC Ghazi University
10.	Prof. Dr. Irfan Ahmad Baig	Dean Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
11.	Dr. Ayesha Hakim	Assistant Prof., NUST, Islamabad
12.	Mr. Jawad Aziz	National Professional Officer (Culture), UNESCO
13.	Ms. Zahra Sohail	National Communication Officer, UNESCO
14.	Ms. Ayesha Nisar	Program Assistant, UNESCO
15.	Mr. Tanveer Ahmad	Associate Prof., and member UNESCO team at MNS-UAM
16.	Dr. M. Usman	Associate Prof., and member UNESCO team at MNS-UAM
17.	Dr. Muqarrab Ali	Associate Prof., and member UNESCO team at MNS-UAM
18.	M. Abu Bakar Saddique	Assistant Prof., and member UNESCO team at MNS-UAM
19.	Dr. Muhammad Saifullah	Assistant Prof., and member UNESCO team at MNS-UAM
20.	Dr. Zeeshan Ali	IPFP fellow at Climate Change, and member UNESCO team at MNSUAM
21.	Mr. Muhammad Jan	Security Officer, UNESCO

Executive Summary

The UNESCO Chairholders' Coordination Meeting, held on 18 November 2025 at MNS University of Agriculture, Multan, brought together representatives of UNESCO Chairs from across Pakistan to strengthen cooperation and set shared priorities for research, education, and community engagement. Hosted by the UNESCO Chair on Low Carbon and Sustainable Agriculture in Biosphere Reserves, the meeting aimed to build a unified national platform addressing climate change, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, digital literacy, and sustainable urban development. In his welcome remarks, Prof. Dr. Asif Ali emphasized the need for joint action, noting that Pakistan's environmental challenges require coordinated efforts across academic institutions. He highlighted the ecological and national importance of the Lal Suhana Biosphere Reserve and outlined ongoing work in biodiversity monitoring, climate-smart agriculture, smart farming tools, and carbon-offset plantations. Mr. Fuad Pashayev, UNESCO Representative in Pakistan, underscored the critical role of youth over 65% of the country's population and urged Chairs to promote responsible digital engagement, critical thinking, and positive learning environments. He encouraged deeper academic collaboration and stronger links with communities. UNESCO Chairs presented their ongoing initiatives, covering areas such as digital education and robotics (ITU), arts-based inclusion (BNU), integrated water resource management (COMSATS), and sustainable urban regions (NED University). The host Chair outlined its integrated sustainability model built around Lal Suhana and its collaboration with TARA Group. The meeting concluded with agreement on forming a national consortium of UNESCO Chairs, undertaking joint research projects, expanding youth engagement, enhancing UNESCO visibility, and supporting biosphere reserves through coordinated scientific and community-based initiatives.

Proceedings of the Meeting

Opening Remarks by Prof. Dr. Asif Ali

Prof. Dr. Asif Ali emphasized that Pakistan is at a critical moment in addressing climate change, agriculture, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, and urban expansion. He highlighted that individual efforts by different UNESCO Chairs are valuable, but collective action is essential. He stressed the need to:

- Build a national consortium of UNESCO Chairs
- Work "hand in hand" to address national sustainability challenges
- Identify common problems and launch joint research projects
- Strengthen UNESCO's visibility and impact in Pakistan.

Prof. Asif Ali especially emphasized Lal Suhana Biosphere Reserve, noting its exceptional ecological significance. He emphasized that protecting the biodiversity of Lal Suhana is not only a scientific responsibility but a national duty. He discussed ongoing research on sustainable agriculture, biodiversity monitoring, smart farming, carbon-offset plantations, and community outreach showing how a biosphere reserve can become a model for Pakistan's long-term ecological resilience.

Address by Mr. Fuad Pashayev, Head of UNESCO in Pakistan

Mr. Fuad Pashayev appreciated the efforts of each UNESCO Chair individually, acknowledging their contributions to education, research, capacity building, and community development. In his keynote message, he highlighted key national priorities:

1. Youth as Pakistan's Future: Over 65% of Pakistan's population is under 30, making youth the most critical force for national progress. He urged UNESCO Chairs to focus on shaping positive thinking among students, especially in a time dominated by social media and misinformation.
2. Responsible Digital Awareness: He stressed that young people must be equipped to recognize fake news, adopt critical thinking, and contribute to the stability and prosperity of Pakistan.
3. Strengthening UNESCO Networks in Pakistan: He encouraged Chairs to deepen academic collaboration, enhance innovation, and empower local communities.

Presentations by Individual UNESCO Chairs

Each UNESCO Chair presented its work, achievements, and future plans. The presentations demonstrated the broad scope of UNESCO's impact across Pakistan.

UNESCO Chair on ICT for Development Information Technology University, Lahore

The chair, Prof. Dr. Adnan Noor Mian, outlined extensive programs in cybersecurity, coding, youth skilling, robotics, and digital literacy. It highlighted national events, faculty training workshops, research output, and international collaborations aimed at improving digital capacity and promoting responsible digital citizenship. The Chair emphasized the importance of strengthening root-level schooling to spark scientific curiosity in children from an early age, ensuring that society becomes more science-oriented and better equipped for national progress and prosperity.

UNESCO Chair on Inclusion Through Arts, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore

Ms. Rohma Moid Khan, on behalf of the chair, showcased initiatives that use arts for social inclusion, cultural dialogue, disability inclusion, and community empowerment. Notable activities included the IEDA Journal, artist residencies, interdisciplinary workshops, and regional collaborations. The UNESCO Chair on Inclusion Through Arts at BNU is also planning to launch its flagship event "Nothing Fest 2025", a large-scale, transdisciplinary festival bringing together art, design, science, and community to explore inclusion and sustainability in innovative ways. It also aims to publish the second edition of the IEDA Journal, expand artist residencies and "art-meets-science" initiatives, and scale community-based projects that engage marginalized groups and vulnerable communities through creative practice. Ms. Khan also offered to host the third coordination meeting of the chairholders in 2026 at BNU.

UNESCO Chair on Knowledge Systems for Integrated Water Resources Management – COMSATS University Islamabad (Wah Campus)

The chair, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Abid, (T.I.), presented its contributions to water governance, hydrological modeling, climate adaptation, gender-sensitive water policy, capacity-building workshops, international collaborations, and research initiatives addressing Pakistan's water challenges. The UNESCO They outlined a 2025–2027 action plan that includes seminars and projects on disaster risk reduction (DRR), and intensive capacity-building workshops on tools like remote sensing, GIS, Python, R, and CFD for hydrology. They plan to expand hydraulic and hydrological modelling using SWAT and HEC-HMS, apply AI and machine learning to sedimentation and erosion problems within IWRM, and run workshops on drinking water quality, water harvesting, and wastewater management. The plan also includes regular observance of World Water Day/Water Week, a China–Pakistan Marine Information Workshop, an International Symposium on water security in a changing environment, and continuation of the Water Informatics track within the FIT Conference to link ICT and water governance.

UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Urban Regions, NED University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi

Dr. Faizan Ahmed Mirza, on behalf of the UNESCO Chair on sustainable Urban Regions, presented Dr. Noman Ahmed presented the progress. The chair highlighted the massive scale of research output, student projects, conferences, community engagement and urban policy initiatives. It emphasized SDG 11 sustainable cities and the need for integrated urban development across Pakistan. Looking ahead, the UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Urban Regions at NED University plans to deepen its focus on SDG 11 by expanding research and student projects on sustainable, climate-resilient cities and green infrastructure, building on its strong record of international conferences on urban planning, climate action, and sustainable engineering. The Chair aims to further strengthen community service programs, scholarships, and gender-inclusive policies, while scaling up initiatives such as the STEM Centre, PHWI, and school-learning visits to embed sustainability thinking from an early age. It also intends to enhance documentation and promotion of intangible cultural heritage, particularly in regions like Tharparkar, and to broaden partnerships with government, industry, and civil society to translate academic work into real urban policy and practice.

UNESCO Chair on Low Carbon and Sustainable Agriculture in Biosphere Reserves – MNSUAM

The UNESCO Chair on Low Carbon and Sustainable Agriculture in Biosphere Reserves at MNSUAM, led by Prof. Dr. Asif Ali, is advancing an integrated model of sustainability that links scientific research, innovation, and community welfare. Centered on the Lal Suhana Biosphere Reserve, the Chair aims to protect and enhance its unique biodiversity while promoting low-carbon, climate-smart agriculture and sustainable livelihoods for surrounding communities. To achieve these goals, the Chair is working in close collaboration with TARA Group, jointly planning interventions in agroforestry, carbon-offset plantations, soil and ecosystem health assessments, and community-focused conservation initiatives. Future directions include the development of GIS-based biodiversity and land-use monitoring systems, digital tools for smart farming, student and farmer training programs, and expanded partnerships with national and international research institutions. In this way, Lal Suhana is being positioned as a living laboratory, where universities,

private sector partners like TARA Group, policymakers, and local communities work together to demonstrate how biodiversity conservation and rural development can go hand in hand.

Conclusion and Future Directions

The UNESCO Chairs' Meeting concluded with a collective agreement on several key directions:

- 1. Formation of a National Consortium of UNESCO Chairs in Pakistan**
Chairs agreed to work more closely, share resources, and coordinate annual joint meetings.
- 2. Collaborative Research and Policy Projects**
The group will develop collaborative research proposals focusing on climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, sustainable cities, water security, and youth training.
- 3. Youth Engagement and Capacity Building**
All chairs recognized the need to integrate youth into planning, research, innovation, digital literacy, and conservation initiatives.
- 4. Strengthening UNESCO Visibility and Impact**
Chairs will align more closely with UNESCO's strategic objectives, global research agendas, and the SDGs.
- 5. Enhanced Work in Biosphere Reserves**
The group acknowledged the national importance of ecological treasures like Lal Suhana and agreed to support its conservation through joint projects, stakeholder consultations, and academic contributions.
- 6. Third Meeting of UNESCO Chairs**

UNESCO Chair on Inclusion Through Arts, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore, offered to host the third UNESCO Chairs Meeting in 2026 at the BNU Campus in Lahore.

At the close of the meeting, Mr. Fuad Pashayev once again took the floor and briefly reiterated his appreciation for the constructive spirit that marked the exchanges among the UNESCO Chairs. He emphasized that the dialogue held at MNSUAM was not an end in itself but the beginning of a deeper phase of collaboration, and he expressed confidence that the ideas shared would soon translate into joint projects, stronger youth engagement, and tangible contributions to Pakistan's sustainable development agenda. In his concluding remarks, Prof. Dr. Asif Ali warmly thanked all chairholders and their representatives for travelling to MNSUAM and enriching the meeting with their insights and experiences. He particularly appreciated TARA Group for stepping forward to work with the UNESCO Chair at MNSUAM, noting that such committed partnerships between academia and the private sector are essential for protecting the biodiversity of Lal Suhana and for realizing the broader vision of low-carbon, sustainable agriculture in Pakistan.

Event Gallery













MUHAMMAD NAWAZ SHAREEF UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, MULTAN
OLD SHUJABAD ROAD, MULTAN

2nd UNESCO Chair Holders' Coordination Meeting

09:30 AM Date: 18-11-2025

Sr. #	Name	Designaion	Signature
1.	Prof. Dr. Asif Ali	Vice Chancellor	
2.	Prof. Dr. M. Abid	UNESCO Chair at CNWU	
3.	Prof. Irfana Bay	Prof. MNSUAM	
4.	Dr. Muzaffar Iqbal	Assistant Professor ENO, NED University	
5.	Jawad Aziz	National Professional Officer (culture)	
6.	Aisha Nisar	Programme Asst.	
7.	Tanveer Ahmed	Associate Prof. MNSUAM	
8.	M. Abu Bakar Sadiq	A.P. MNSUAM	
9.	Dr. M. Usman	Assoc. Prof. MNSUAM UNESCO	
10.	RAZA SHAH	NAT. PROFESSIONAL OFFICER FOR NATURAL SCIENCES	
11.	Fawad Pathanay	Head UNESCO Pakistan	
12.	Rohma Khan	Associate Professor UNESCO Director programs clour at BNU	
13.	Maleeha Butchaq	MoE UNESCO Chair BNU on inclusion through Art	
14.	Zulra Solai	National Communication Officer	
15.	Jan Muhammad	Security officer, UNESCO	
16.	Dr. Ayesha Hakeem	Asst Prof. NUST Technology Co-chair	
17.	Dr. M. Hameed Saifullah	Assistant Prof. MNSUAM	
18.	Dr. Muzarrab Ali	Associate Prof. Climate Change/Member UNESCO team	
19.	Dr. Zaeshan Ali	IPPF at Climate Change/Member UNESCO team	

20.	Adnan Noor Mian	Information Technology Univ. Lahore.	Adnan Noor
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