

**Government of Pakistan**

**Prime Minister's office**

**Youth Affairs Wing**

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**Youth is our government's main focus: SAPM Shaza Fatima on the inaugural ceremony of Commonwealth year of youth**

She stated that Commonwealth is a varied collection of nations with a common history and set of values, it is crucial to support young people's growth through a collective effort. She continued saying that education is one way the Commonwealth uses to support young development. Through initiatives like the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan and the Commonwealth Youth Programme, which will mark its 50th anniversary this year, the Commonwealth ensures that young people should have access to high-quality education. These initiatives are designed to give young people the abilities and information they need to succeed in their future occupations and have a positive impact on their communities. Others include helping youth workers, Commonwealth Sports, and member nations in the youth sector.

The youth bulge hiked in Pakistan. 150 million individuals, or 68% of our population, are under the age of 30. They are now our present rather than our future. When empowered, enabled, and channeled into a responsible, strong, and productive workforce, these huge numbers are and can be our greatest advantage, even when resource distribution presents a challenge. In an efforts to promote youth inclusion Pakistan launched its youth initiative, the Prime Minister's Youth Program, directly under Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's leadership in 2013.

Shaza Fatima Khawaja has said that the stars have aligned this year for my government. Pakistan likewise completes a decade of its Prime Minister's Youth Program as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Commonwealth Youth Programme and the 50th anniversary of the Commonwealth Charter.

Prime Minister Youth Program (PMYP) is a significant and all-encompassing intervention to empower youth and enable them to fully realize their potential. It was created following extensive collaboration with young people and other stakeholders. We have started a number of projects while keeping in mind their needs and priorities, including: Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme, Skills Development Program, PM Laptop Scheme, PM National Innovation Award, Green Youth Movement and PM Sports Talent Hunt Program.

While presenting the information regarding the program she stated that A digital youth hub is being designed to connect all opportunities on the hub-and-spoke paradigm, integrating it with a single integrated national job site and an integrated scholarship portal via PMYP's URL and Mobile Application.

On a policy level, we are working on national youth employment strategy that aims to add 2 million jobs and National Youth Council made up of young Pakistanis who are very engaged and lively and who actively work to advance

Shaza Fatima Khawaja has emphasized mainstreaming and inclusion of marginalized youth from all segments, particularly gender, various ethnic or religious minorities, and those with disabilities, a high priority in all of our efforts and projects. Girls Learn Girls Earn, Dignified Blue Collar Jobs, and Future Jobs are our top three priority domains.

Delighted she added that Pakistan looks forward to participating in several events this year, especially as host of the next Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting.

It will be the first meeting in six years and will be a crucial opportunity for Ministers, Senior Officials, Youth Leaders, and other stakeholders to assess the state of the policy commitments made by Heads of Government in Kigali, Rwanda, last year and at previous gatherings of Ministers of Education, Sports, and Youth Affairs. They will also develop strategies to advance those commitments.

"Aim Higher: Delivering More for Young People in the Commonwealth" will be the focus of the gathering of youth ministers. Our heartfelt wishes for the Commonwealth's youth sector and its young population are expressed in this topic. Only 7 years remain until 2030. The time is running out. Now more than ever, we must take more action. The agenda for the 10th CYMM will include, among other things, policy commitments calling for increased youth participation and respect for young people's rights; the expansion of employment and economic opportunities; improved educational standards; addressing transportation safety; and assisting young people in their efforts to use sports as a vehicle for peace and development, as well as their efforts to address the threat of climate change. You'll see how important the latter issue is to us when we involve young people in the ongoing response to the flooding disaster that occurred last year, without a doubt.