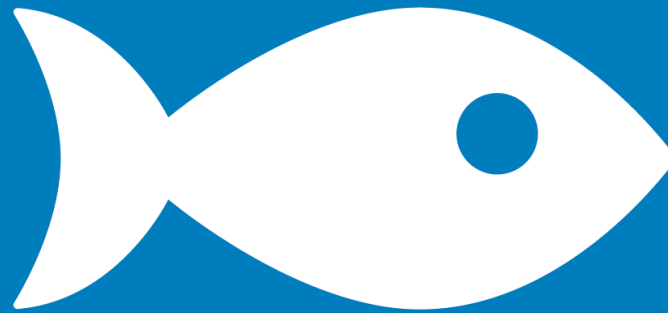


# Goal 14

## LIFE BELOW WATER

**14** LIFE  
BELOW WATER



## Country Context

Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the fifth largest population on the planet with 213.6 million people,<sup>1</sup> is a sovereign state situated in a geo-strategic location at the junction of middle East and central Asia. Bereft of Quaid's dream for a welfare state, social development has been off the mark with 22.4 million Out of School Children,<sup>2</sup> 56.3% Out of Pocket Expenditure in health,<sup>3</sup> and 29.5% population living below poverty line.<sup>4</sup> Exclusionist policy patterns marginalizing governance has led to country ranking at 147<sup>th</sup> out of 188 in Human Development Index<sup>5</sup> and 143<sup>rd</sup> out of 144<sup>th</sup> in Global Gender Gap Index.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, marginalization of key strategic sectors has led to funding diversions away from social development, barely allocating 3% of the GDP each for Education, Health and Social protection.<sup>7</sup>

With a GDP of \$279 billion (2017 est.),<sup>8</sup> Pakistan is categorized as a lower middle-income country. Economic stability has been a constant uphill battle with public debts and liabilities escalating up to 74% of GDP.<sup>9</sup> The country is ranked at 171 out of 188 countries in terms of GDP per capita (PPP) of \$5,400 (2017 est.)<sup>10</sup> while unemployment stands at 6% without factoring in statistics from informal economy which employs almost 70% of the country's workforce.<sup>11</sup> Gini index estimates 30.7% inequality with disparities as wide as the income share held by the lowest 10% at 4% against that of the top 10% at 26% (2013 est.)<sup>12</sup> in Pakistan.

In hindsight, political institutions in their formative years - mainly adapted from the colonial rump - were barely able to withstand extraconstitutional maneuvers<sup>13</sup> in the absence of a strong nation-building consciousness. This resulted in successive instability of civilian governments followed by political proxies and status-quo representatives, beguiling under democratic pretexts. Weak democratic structures led to the absentia of populace from democratic processes and crippled country prospects in socio-economic and political spheres with implications long into its future. This is evident of the country rankings at 110<sup>th</sup> in Democracy Index<sup>14</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> among Failed States rankings in 2018.<sup>15</sup> Fret over it not though, for Quaid's optimism guides our course:

*The story of Pakistan, its struggle and its achievement, is the very story of great human ideals, struggling to survive in the face of great odds and difficulties.<sup>i</sup>*

Amid international isolationism, national calamities and social fragmentation, democratization of state and social institutions is the moral and political imperative. It is essential that we promote critical education and discourse to bring forth analysis that helps adequately influence policy mandates for a just, peaceful and prosperous Pakistan.

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<sup>i</sup> M.A. Jinnah, Address to the people in Chittagong, March 23, 1948

## Life Below Water

Pakistan is blessed with a vast coastline spread over 990 kilometres, with a variety of Sealife. The coastline is also of strategic importance for Pakistan due to its positioning in the Exclusive Economic Zone of over 240,000 sq. km. The North Arabian Sea, including Pakistani oceanic limits, is considered to be among the highest biological productivity zones in the world. The protection of marine resources, however, has not been sufficient. Over the past few decades, climate change, monsoon floods and volatility due to extreme weather events has severely impacted biodiversity in the region. Oceanic acidification has also severely affected biodiversity with a consequential impact on dependent communities. Similarly, Indus Delta has been the lifeline, sheltering coastal ecosystem but faces severe sediment starvation and compaction due to natural and anthropogenic factors. This requires a massive shift in our marine environment and coastal ecosystems management to ensure protection of our oceans.

Pakistan has developed its maritime industries including fisheries, coastal tourism, maritime transport etc. but there is a long way to go with development of new areas like deep sea-bed mining, marine biotechnology and oceanic renewable energy. The currently emphasized conservation policies need to be considerate of the fact that neither coastal communities nor their livelihoods are jeopardized in the process.

1. **The treatment of marine pollution is a global issue and requires a multi-pronged approach with coordinated strategies to galvanize political, technical, technological and financial support.**
2. Nationally, holistic integrated plans are required to ensure that agricultural or industrial waste does not end up in the ocean
3. **Stronger regulatory capacities are required ensure food security, disaster risk reduction, as well as protection of human rights of dependent communities.**
4. Stronger monitoring, data collection and analysis is pivotal for efficient management of marine ecosystems.
5. The country needs to adopt international best practices as well as pursue technical capacity building and exchange of expertise
6. Holistic approaches for protection, restoration and prevention of rapidly eroding biodiversity need to be operationalized
7. Introduction of new fishing techniques, development of high value-added products, and upliftment of coastal communities would serve long term benefits for Pakistan

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