Society for Human Rights & Prisoners' Aid

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World Refugee Day 2026





A Message from

Syed Liaqat Banori

- Chairman-SHARP -

On **World Refugee Day**, under the theme **"Until Everyone Is Safe,"** we are reminded that safety and dignity must not be privileges for a few, but a guaranteed right for all.

Today, we remember not just statistics, but human lives—families who have been forced to flee their homes, children growing up away from their roots, and individuals carrying extraordinary stories of resilience, courage, and survival.

At SHARP, we stand firmly with refugees in their journey toward safety, dignity, and hope. We believe that every person deserves protection, a fair chance to rebuild their life, and a future free from fear and uncertainty.

Let this day renew our collective commitment to humanity, compassion, and action—because our shared responsibility is clear: no one is safe until everyone is safe.

Protection & Reintegration Require Global Partnership & Long-Term Investment

The ongoing mass return and deportation of Afghans from neighboring countries has created a complex humanitarian and protection situation that requires urgent and coordinated international attention. Large numbers of returnees are arriving with limited resources and facing significant challenges in accessing basic services, livelihoods, education, healthcare, documentation, and protection support. Women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups are particularly at risk of exploitation, neglect, protection violations, and social exclusion.

While humanitarian actors and local authorities continue to respond, the scale of needs is rapidly outpacing available resources. There is an urgent requirement to strengthen protection mechanisms, establish accessible information and referral centers, and ensure effective case management systems that can connect returnees with available services and assistance. Reliable information, legal guidance, psychosocial support, and referral pathways are critical to helping families navigate an increasingly challenging environment.

SHARP, with its long-standing presence, community trust, and extensive experience in protection, legal aid, refugee response, and community engagement, is well positioned to support comprehensive reintegration and protection efforts. Through community-based information hubs and referral mechanisms, SHARP can facilitate access to services, identify vulnerable cases, strengthen community resilience, and support youth and women through skills development, livelihoods, and social inclusion initiatives.

The current situation is not solely a challenge for Afghanistan or refugee-hosting countries; it is a shared international responsibility. The global community, particularly the European Union, developed nations, and international development partners, must demonstrate greater solidarity by increasing investments in protection, reintegration, education, livelihoods, and community stabilization programs. Sustainable solutions require burden-sharing, long-term development support, and meaningful opportunities for displaced and returning populations to rebuild their lives with dignity, safety, and hope for the future.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR SHARP LEADERSHIP

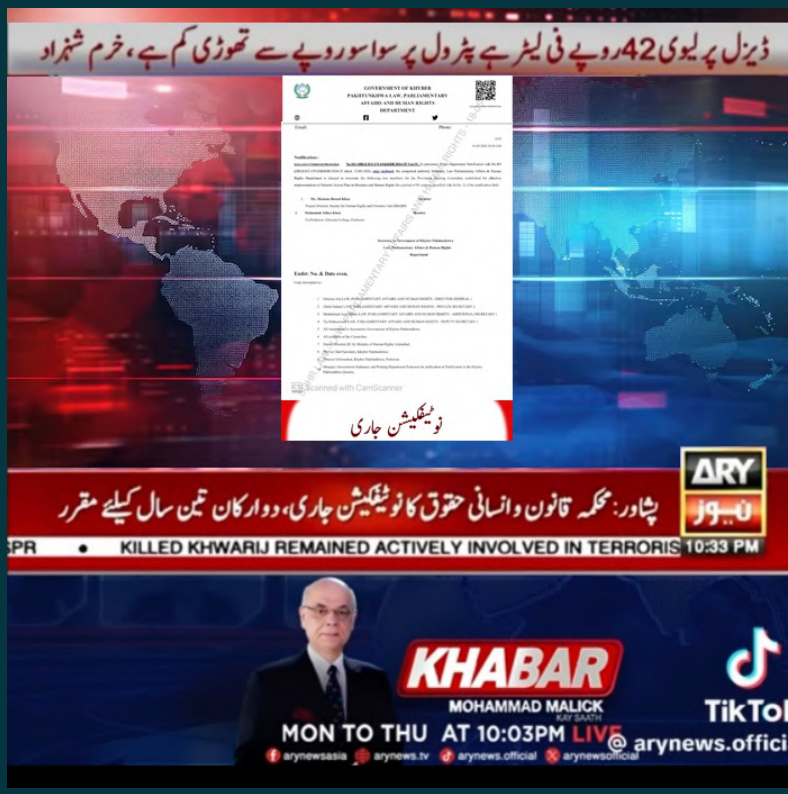
A proud milestone for SHARP-Pakistan as **Ms. Memoona Batool Khan, Project Director – Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**, has been nominated by the Law, Parliamentary Affairs & Human Rights Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as a **Member of the Provincial Steering Committee for the implementation of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP & BHR)** for a three-year term.

Her nomination reflects strong confidence in her professional expertise, leadership, and longstanding contribution to human rights, protection programming, and policy engagement. It also highlights SHARP-Pakistan's growing role in supporting institutional reforms and advancing human rights governance frameworks in the country.

This significant achievement also received national media attention, with ARY News, one of Pakistan's leading television news channels, highlighted the official notification issued by the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, recognizing her inclusion in this important provincial mechanism.

SHARP-Pakistan congratulates Ms. Memoona Batool Khan on this well-deserved recognition and acknowledges her continued dedication to strengthening human rights and protection systems. Her appointment stands as a testament to the organization's commitment to advancing impactful leadership in public policy and governance.







Marking the successful completion of her tenure with UNHCR Pakistan, Ms. Kiran Kaur, Assistant Representative (Protection), was given a warm farewell by SHARP during a gathering hosted at the SHARP office, led by Chairman Mr. Liaqat Banori. The occasion reflected appreciation for Ms. Kaur's close coordination, consistent support, and valuable contributions toward strengthening partnership and effective implementation of joint humanitarian initiatives. She was accompanied by Ms. Ghazala Mirza, Assistant Protection Officer, UNHCR, during her visit.

Chairman Mr. Liaqat Banori acknowledged her commitment to advancing collaborative protection work and extended his best wishes for her future professional journey.

Ms. Kaur expressed her gratitude to SHARP management and team, appreciating their dedicated efforts to serve communities and deliver protection services in challenging contexts. SHARP warmly wishes her continued success in her future endeavors.



Reinforcing its commitment to rights-based prison reform under the EU-funded project “Enhancing Access to Justice and Protection for Vulnerable Detainees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan,” SHARP organized a one-day capacity-building training at Peshawar Barracks for prison staff from across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The training focused on international human rights law, safeguards against torture, fair trial standards, humane treatment of detainees, and prisoners' rights, strengthening institutional knowledge and practice in line with international standards.

The session was addressed by Chairman SHARP Mr. Syed Liaqat Banori, who emphasized the importance of institutional reforms and safeguarding the dignity and rights of detainees through coordinated efforts. IG Prisons KP Mr. Rehan Gul Khattak appreciated the initiative, highlighting the importance of continued professional capacity-building for prison staff, while DIG Prisons KP Mr. Amin Shuaib underscored its role in improving prison management and promoting humane treatment within detention facilities.





Reinforcing its commitment to a safe, dignified, and accountable workplace culture, SHARP successfully concluded a two-day training on Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) at Oslo Rezidor, Islamabad, bringing together newly appointed PSEAH Field Focal Persons from across Pakistan. With the support of UNHCR, the training's first day covered foundational PSEAH concepts led by Ms. Wajiha Afzal (UNHCR PSEAH Focal), Ms. Esther Lalai (UNHCR GBV Expert), and Ms. Hina Nawaz (UNHCR), while the second day focused on SHARP's internal PSEAH framework, facilitated by Ms. Anila Kanwal (PSEAH Focal, SHARP) and Mr. Jahanzeb Aftab (Alternate PSEAH Focal, SHARP).

The training was attended by SHARP leadership led by Mr. Liaqat Banori, Chairman SHARP, who reaffirmed SHARP's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment, emphasizing safeguarding and accountability as core organizational priorities, reiterated SHARP's institutional commitment to embedding PSEAH principles across all programmes, appreciated the participants, and stressed effective field-level implementation. Participants from Karachi, Lahore, Mianwali, Peshawar, Haripur, Mardan, Timergara, and Kohat contributed to building a strengthened nationwide network of protection focal persons committed to safe and accountable service delivery.





SHARP successfully launched the SHARP-Women Project, supported by the German Embassy in Pakistan, through its inaugural activity titled “Legal Literacy Session with Students for Creating Awareness on Prevention of GBV and Workplace Harassment” at The Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB). The session engaged around 70 female students and faculty members, raising awareness on gender equality, prevention of gender-based violence (GBV), workplace harassment, access to justice, human rights frameworks, and available protection and referral mechanisms. The interactive session was facilitated by SHARP lawyers Ms. Arooj Awan and Ms. Amina Rehman, encouraging active participation and meaningful dialogue among students. The event was graced by Mr. Arno Kirchhof, Deputy Head of Mission, German Embassy Islamabad, who engaged with students and shared valuable insights on migration pathways, as well as educational and professional opportunities in Europe, particularly Germany. SHARP CEO Mr. Muhammad Mudassar Javed delivered a keynote address, highlighting emerging opportunities for youth and emphasizing the importance of leveraging digital platforms for advocacy, peacebuilding, and the promotion of social harmony.

On the sidelines of the session, SHARP and IUB's Department of Anthropology signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the presence of Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kamran, Vice Chancellor, IUB; Prof. Dr. Rubina Bhatti, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences; and Dr. Jam Farooq Ahmed, Chairperson, Department of Anthropology. Signed on behalf of SHARP by CEO Mr. Muhammad Mudassar Javed, the MoU aims to strengthen collaboration in research, capacity building, and joint initiatives on social justice and human rights. The partnership reflects a shared commitment to bridging academia and practice, promoting evidence-based advocacy, and expanding inclusive access to justice through meaningful youth engagement.





SHARP CEO Mr. Muhammad Mudassar Javed continued to strengthen the organization's strategic engagement with diplomatic missions, civil society networks, academia, and justice and technology stakeholders through a series of high-level national and international interactions focused on human rights, migration governance, inclusive justice, and sustainable development.

In Multan, Mr. Mudassar Javed, accompanied by Mr. Arno Kirchhof, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, participated in a high-level dinner gathering hosted by Malik Abdul Ghaffar Dogar, former MNA and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister. The engagement brought together local leadership, business community members, and stakeholders to discuss regional cooperation and economic opportunities, including potential exports of Pakistani mangoes, blue pottery, and textiles to Germany, as well as broader themes of cultural diplomacy and partnership-building.

Mr. Mudassar also participated as a speaker at the closing ceremony of the Deliver Justice Project, engaging with key representatives from justice institutions, Parliament, media, and civil society. He contributed to discussions on strengthening inclusive, accountable, and people-centered justice systems, with a shared focus on human rights and rule of law reforms in Pakistan.











He further represented SHARP at the Australia Day in Spring celebration hosted by the Australian High Commission in Islamabad, engaging with H.E. Mr. Timothy Kane, High Commissioner of Australia to Pakistan; Ms. Harriet Roos, Counsellor (Development) and Head of Cooperation, High Commission of Canada; Mr. Arno Kirchhof, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Germany; as well as diplomats from Switzerland and Australia. The event served as a platform for strengthening diplomatic dialogue and international cooperation.



As Co-Chair of the Civil Society Alliance on Migration (C-SAM), Mr. Javed convened partner organizations to advance preparations for the formal launch of the platform and development of its concept note. The meeting reflected strong collective engagement toward building a coordinated, rights-based, and evidence-driven framework for migration governance.





In Islamabad, Mr. Mudassar, alongside Mr. Aatif Afzal, Project Director, and Ms. Hina Saleem, Media and Communication Coordinator, held strategic engagements with Mr. Usman Zahid, Chief AI Officer and COO, to explore the role of artificial intelligence in strengthening protection mechanisms and improving access to justice.

In a separate meeting, he engaged with Mr. Muhammad Bashar Naveed, Additional Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, focusing on strengthening legal frameworks and enhancing protection for vulnerable communities.







In academia, Mr. Mudassar participated in an international conference at Bahria University Islamabad, titled “Social Change, Technological Advancement and Sustainable Development,” where he contributed to discussions on emerging gender challenges in the digital era.

The conference brought together academics, practitioners, and international experts, with Mr. Javed emphasizing the need for inclusive and rights-based approaches to ensure equitable access and protection in digital spaces.





In another cultural engagement, Mr. Javed attended the screening of INTERTANGO, a documentary by German filmmaker Hanne Weyh, organized by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Islamabad, further reinforcing his engagement with cultural diplomacy and intercultural understanding as a pathway to peace and social cohesion. These engagements collectively reflect SHARP's continued commitment to strengthening partnerships, advancing policy dialogue, and promoting human rights, social inclusion, and sustainable development through multi-sector collaboration.






SHARP continued its stakeholder engagement under the SHARP-Women Project, supported by the German Embassy in Pakistan, with a focused series of high-level meetings in Lahore aimed at strengthening coordinated and gender-responsive access to justice.

Led by SHARP Project Director (ICT) Mr. Aatif Afzal, alongside Field Manager Lahore Adv. Arooj-un-Nissa, with support from Adv. Amina Rehman, the engagements brought together key representatives from academia, legal institutions, the judiciary, and law enforcement to advance collaboration on empowering young female lawyers and expanding legal awareness among youth.

During the visit, SHARP engaged with Justice (R) Sardar Ahmed Naeem, Director General, Punjab Judicial Academy; Mr. Munir Ahmed, DIG (Training), Punjab Police; Ms. Summera Hussain, Chairperson, Legal Education Committee, Punjab Bar Council; Senior Advocate Abid Saqi, Sr. Patron Legal Fraternity; and Ms. Beenish Zia from the Centre for Human Rights, Universal College Lahore.

The discussions focused on strengthening institutional partnerships to support the identification, mentorship, and capacity building of young female lawyers in underserved and vulnerable contexts. Key areas of collaboration included joint training initiatives (July 2026), legal awareness sessions (September 2026), mentorship opportunities, and enhanced mechanisms to promote gender-responsive legal practice.





A productive coordination meeting was held at SHARP Head Office, Islamabad, with the SEHER Protection Case Management (PCM) team to strengthen collaboration and enhance protection service delivery for vulnerable communities.

The delegation, led by Project Manager Abdul Sattar Mushwani and comprising project coordinators, case management officers, and community mobilizers, was warmly received by SHARP senior management, including Project Director Mr. Aatif Afzal and Project Manager Ms. Huma Aziz. Facilitated by M&E Officer Zahid Usman and Team Leader Taufiq Ahmed, the session provided a platform for constructive dialogue on field experiences, coordination mechanisms, and best practices in protection case management and community-based services.

Both teams emphasized the importance of continued collaboration and knowledge sharing to improve humanitarian response and strengthen service delivery for at-risk populations.





Promoting coordinated, child-centered protection responses, SHARP Child Protection team convened a Referral Working Group Meeting in Peshawar District to strengthen case management and improve support services for children at risk.

The meeting brought together key stakeholders and service providers to review child protection cases, strengthen referral pathways, and enhance coordinated interventions for children in need of care and protection. Participants also shared updates on available services and identified collective actions to ensure timely response and effective follow-up of cases.

Through this initiative, SHARP continues to strengthen child protection systems and advance rights-based approaches that safeguard the well-being, dignity, and future of vulnerable children.




In a continued effort to strengthen strategic partnerships for protection and inclusion of marginalized and at-risk communities, SHARP CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed, along with Ms. Hina Saleem, Media and Communication Coordinator and Ms. Simab Nayer, Lawyer, held a constructive meeting with the Community World Service Asia team to explore collaboration in protection, education, migration governance, and psychosocial support for refugees and displaced populations.

Mr. Javed highlighted SHARP's humanitarian response, including psychosocial support services, free legal aid, and safe, dignified migration pathways through the Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB) program. He also outlined SHARP's broader work on women's empowerment, access to justice, protection of detainees, youth engagement for peace and interfaith harmony, and evidence-based migration responses. The Community World Service Asia team shared their community-centered approach focusing on psychosocial support, education, dignity-based programming, emergency response, health, livelihoods, protection, and social inclusion.

Both organizations reaffirmed their shared commitment to strengthening collaboration and agreed to further formalize the partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the near future.









To review the successful implementation of the project “Provision of Free Legal Aid Services to Displaced Afghan Nationals,” SHARP, in collaboration with IOM Pakistan, organized a Lessons Learned Workshop in Murree with teams from Lahore, Sialkot, Attock, Chakwal, Islamabad, and Rawalpindi. The workshop included a project overview, followed by a detailed session on monitoring and evaluation, presenting key achievements, targets versus accomplishments, and implementation challenges. Interactive discussions were held to capture field experiences, best practices, gaps, and recommendations for future programming.

In the closing session, Mr. Aatif Afzal, Project Director SHARP, appreciated IOM's support and the commitment of SHARP teams in achieving project objectives. Mr. Aamir, National Protection Officer (IOM), also commended SHARP's contribution to strengthening legal aid and protection services for displaced Afghan nationals. The workshop concluded with appreciation for all teams and reaffirmed commitment to continued access to justice initiatives.

Separately, a farewell gathering was organized at the SHARP office to mark the successful completion of the project. Team members from all relevant units came together to reflect on their experiences, share field insights, and appreciate the collective effort behind the project's success. The gathering concluded with expressions of gratitude and a shared commitment to continued engagement in future protection and legal aid initiatives.









Led by Project Director (ICT) Mr. Aatif Afzal, SHARP held internal coordination and review meetings to strengthen programme performance, data accuracy, and operational efficiency across all regions.

A monthly coordination meeting reviewed the progress of RDC Islamabad and Karachi, ALAC ICT Lahore and Mianwali, and TBB teams, highlighting the successful departure of a five-member family to Australia under TBB, completion of police trainings in Mianwali and Lahore, and progress on a mobile application to improve legal access. The meeting also emphasized scaling up strategic litigation, strengthening outreach activities, and improving monitoring and reporting systems nationwide.

In a separate session with the Protection team, periodic data and interim reports were reviewed, focusing on identifying and correcting discrepancies, ensuring timely and accurate reporting, and strengthening inter-departmental coordination, accountability, and teamwork to enhance service delivery. SHARP also held a farewell for Mr. Tausif, a valued member of the support staff, in recognition of his dedication and service to the organization.These engagements reflect SHARP's continued focus on strengthening internal systems, improving data quality, embracing digital innovation, and valuing its human resources.







Opening doors to safe and legal migration pathways, SHARP Pakistan's TBB team conducted an outreach session in Mardan with 40 Afghan refugees to promote access to international employment opportunities. Facilitated by Livelihood Assistant Shanila Zafar, the session focused on the Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB) program, guiding participants on Talent Catalog registration, CV development, and interview preparation to enhance their readiness for global job markets.

The interactive session encouraged active participation and dialogue, strengthening participants' understanding of legal mobility pathways and the role of TBB in creating safe, structured opportunities for Afghan refugees in Pakistan.









Strengthening the capacity of law enforcement on human rights and refugee protection, SHARP in partnership with UNHCR conducted a one-day police training workshop on “Human Rights & Refugee Laws” under SHARP–ALAC–III in Chakwal. The session was inaugurated by Ms. Amina Taj, who welcomed participants, outlined SHARP's mandate, and introduced the objectives of the training. In line with UNHCR methodology, pre- and post-training assessments were conducted to measure knowledge enhancement and training impact.

Mr. Aatif Afzal, Project Director (ICT), delivered a presentation on human rights, focusing on their core principles and significance in ensuring dignity, equality, and legal protection. Ms. Ghazala Mirza (UNHCR) highlighted the importance of rights-based approaches in refugee protection and the role of law enforcement in upholding international standards. The training concluded with strong engagement from police officials, reflecting improved understanding of human rights and refugee protection frameworks.



As part of efforts to strengthen access to justice for vulnerable and marginalized communities, SHARP organized Free Legal Aid Clinics in District Swabi for men and women under the EU-funded project “Enhancing Access to Justice and Protection for Vulnerable Detainees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.”SHARP's Legal Officer provided legal counselling, awareness on rights during arrest and detention, guidance on bail processes and access to courts, and information on legal protections under national law and international frameworks such as CEDAW, UNCAT, and ICCPR.

The initiative strengthened legal awareness and improved access to justice at the community level, reflecting SHARP's continued commitment to rights-based protection and legal empowerment for refugees and other at-risk populations.



Muhammad Mudassar Javed is an Anthropologist, CEO of SHARP–Pakistan, and Co-Chair of the Civil Society Alliance on Migration. NGOs Representative to the IASC Humanitarian Working Group (HWG). A humanitarian leader shaping migration governance, refugee protection, and human rights policy in South Asia and beyond, he advocates for human-centered behavioral approaches to transform communities.
Mudassar.sanghaira@gmail.com
Mudassar@sharp-pakistan.org

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THE AGE OF POWER, THE CRISIS OF HUMANITY

During the recent Eid holidays, I traveled across different communities and spent time with people whose lives rarely make headlines. What stayed with me were not the celebrations, but the concerns quietly expressed behind them.

Farmers worried about rising costs, water scarcity, and unpredictable weather that threaten both their incomes and their way of life. Mothers carefully calculated whether they could afford school fees, transportation, groceries, electricity, and medicines in the same month, often forced to choose between basic necessities. Small business owners wondered how long they could survive amid rising expenses and declining purchasing power, fearing years of effort could be erased by mounting pressures. An elderly man, reflecting on a lifetime of experience, quietly said, “I have seen hardship all my life, but never this weight on ordinary people's shoulders.”

These conversations reflect a deeper reality. We are living in an age increasingly defined by the pursuit of power. Nations compete for influence, corporations pursue profit and growth, and powerful actors seek advantage. Technology advances at remarkable speed. Yet amid this race for power, ordinary people feel increasingly left behind.

Citizens hear constant talk of growth, security, markets, and strategy, but see little improvement in their daily lives. Their concerns remain simple: Can I educate my children? Will I have access to healthcare? Will my work provide dignity and stability? Is there a place for me in the future being shaped around us?

What unites these questions is a growing sense that many institutions no longer place people at their center. Systems appear more responsive to economic indicators than to human needs. As a result, societies face not only financial pressure but also a deep crisis of trust.

History offers an important lesson. Human societies did not endure because the strongest always dominated. They survived because communities built shared values and systems of mutual protection. Long before modern states, people understood that cooperation was essential for survival. Communities protected common resources, cared for vulnerable members, and created norms that sustained trust.

At the heart of these arrangements was a simple principle: power may be temporary, but human dignity must be protected.

Yet despite living in the most technologically advanced era, much of the world appears to be returning to an older mindset, the belief that might makes right. Artificial intelligence and scientific innovation have expanded human capability, but not always human values. Too often, wealth and influence determine whose voices are heard and whose suffering is ignored.

The consequences are increasingly visible. Economic growth is celebrated even as millions struggle with rising living costs. Markets expand while families find it harder to afford food, housing, healthcare, and education. In many places, people are valued more for productivity than for their humanity.

The burden falls hardest on the most vulnerable. Low-income households face impossible choices between basic necessities. Farmers confront climate shocks and shrinking resources. Young people struggle with uncertainty and limited opportunities. Women carry disproportionate social and economic pressures. Refugees and displaced populations endure prolonged instability driven by conflict, poverty, and environmental disasters.

Climate change is deepening these vulnerabilities through floods, droughts, heatwaves, and environmental degradation. Those who contributed least to the crisis often suffer the most.

The greatest danger is not economic hardship alone. It is the erosion of trust. When people stop believing institutions are fair, they disengage. When communities feel unheard, frustration grows. History shows that societies weaken when trust between people and institutions breaks.

The challenge before us is therefore not only economic or political. It is fundamentally moral. The future cannot be built on power, profit, and competition alone. It must also rest on justice, responsibility, solidarity, and human dignity.

If previous centuries were defined by the pursuit of power, this century may be judged by how power is used. The strongest societies will not be those that accumulate the most wealth or influence, but those that place people at the center of their decisions.

When humanity is sidelined, trust declines and divisions grow. But when people are prioritized, hope returns, communities strengthen, and progress gains meaning. In an age of power, our responsibility is clear: humanity must remain at the center of all we build.