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Bridge-US December 2014

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Connecting People - Building Bridges – Spreading Tolerance

In dedication of Daniel Pearl

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Editor’s Note

Another year has passed leaving behind the nightmares of civilians and minorities brutal murders in Pakistan.

The security is not the lone problem minorities are faced with in Pakistan; there is an alarming spike in forced conversion of minority girls. According to a report by the Movement for Solidarity and Peace in Pakistan, An estimated one thousand Christian and Hindu women are forced to convert and marry Muslim men in Pakistan every year. It is also alleged that compelled by the situation, around 5,000 Hindus migrating to India. Major political parties PML-N, PPP, MQM and PTI are silent to support a victim of infamous blasphemy law Asia Bibi, who is manipulated by her biased friends and appealing to the president of Pakistan for clemency.

The European parliament's recent demand on Pakistan to overhaul its blasphemy laws with a view to repealing them is the great step to safeguard minorities and should also include Shiaat and Hazara community in this call. Now a draft is being prepared by Bridge Communications as to what incumbent should face in Pakistan if they unable to get rid of this infamous blasphemy law and protect the minorities. Again, as we have been repeatedly saying, Blasphemy is a licence to kill and facilitate the radicals to punish the alleged victims of blasphemy in mob lynching.

The incumbent's inability to address the grave situation of this country has risen to the criminal negligence in dealing with the issues of children. 18 new born deaths in Sargodha – Punjab and 300 deaths of starved children in Thar is devastating failure of the Sindh government in power for decades. The pathetic condition of Thar is still waiting for the Sindh's Chief Minister of ministers to visit the valley of dead. The grisly images of dying children in Sindh has entirely blindfolded the ruling People's Party when a young heir Bilawal spent an estimated 44-50 million to showcase his official political birth. This money was more than enough to water the dying children in Thar and put an extensive policy in place for sustainable strategy. The money spent on Bilwal's political gathering has undisclosed mystery about where did this money come from and how much tax has been paid? Investment in politics has emerged as a very lucrative business and mainly thrives by those who hide behind the curtain of democracy.

Funding from the United States, EU and the donor agencies continuously pouring in but Is there anybody anywhere to have incumbents value the lives of citizens? Are Church goers protected against mob and blasphemy law on X-Mas?

Sincerely

Syed Naeem Uddin

Editor/ Publisher

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U.S. Exchange Program Alumni Promote Entrepreneurship in Pakistan:

Islamabad, November 21, 2014

More than 300 alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs gathered at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad for the kick-off of the first-ever Entrepreneurship Reunion hosted by the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN). The three day event attracted participants and speakers from all walks of life and every province of the country to share perspectives and explore possibilities for advancing entrepreneurship in Pakistan through workshops, plenary panels, and networking events.

“Greater Pakistani-American cooperation in entrepreneurship will contribute to Pakistan's economic

growth and prosperity, enhance business opportunities for Americans and Pakistanis, and build relationships across borders that will endure over time” said U.S. Ambassador Richard Olson in his keynote address to the alumni.

The Entrepreneurship Reunion is one of several events sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad in support of Global Entrepreneurship Week, a world-wide event that celebrates innovators and job creators who bring new ideas to life, drive economic growth, and advance human welfare. The Ambassador added, “We are working hard to expand the pool of entrepreneurs to include more Pakistani women. In collaboration with the U.S. Pakistan Women’s Council, we are sponsoring a partnership between American University in Washington, D.C., and the Lahore University of Management Sciences to develop educational and mentoring sessions directed at the specific needs of up-and-coming women entrepreneurs.”

The U.S. government invests an estimated \$40 million annually on exchange programs for Pakistani citizens and more than 1,300 Pakistanis participate in the various high school, undergraduate, graduate, and professional U.S.-sponsored exchange programs each year. PUAN is one of the largest U.S. alumni networks in the world. Its mission is to encourage people-to-people relationships between Pakistanis and Americans.

Consisting of more than 14,000 students and professionals who have participated in U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs, PUAN organizes a number of events in Pakistan, including community service projects, leadership training, roundtable discussions, and community engagement activities. The organization has 12 regional chapters across the country in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Bahawalpur, Baluchistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Gwadar, Islamabad, Jamshoro, Karachi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Lahore, Multan, and Sukkur. Find out more about PUAN and the Entrepreneurship Reunion at <http://www.facebook.com/pakalumni>.

U.S. Government Helping Energy Engineers Enhance Power Plant Management Skills

Islamabad, November 20, 2014

Twenty-four engineers successfully completed a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) two-week hydro-power operations and maintenance training course and received completion certificates during a ceremony today at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad.

The participants included engineers from the Tarbela, Ghazi Barotha, Mangla, Warsak, Chashma, and Renala Khurd power plants, and the Water and Power Development Agency (WAPDA) as well as female engineers from engineering universities in Islamabad. Mr. Badar ul Munir Murtaza from

WAPDA, USAID Energy Office Director Dr. Michael Curtis, and the Energy Policy Program Chief of Party Jim Hicks presided over the ceremony.

“The training you have gone through complements the financial and technical support extended by the U.S. government to support Pakistan’s efforts to increase power generation, improve energy efficiency and transmission, and policy reform efforts,” said Dr. Curtis during his address to the participants. Complementing USAID’s recent efforts to upgrade obsolete equipment and introduce state-of-the-art technology at Gomal Zam, Satpara, Tarbela, and Mangla dams, this training program will assist power generation companies with implementing best practices according to international standards. The training will result in improved power plant operations and maintenance practices by providing the engineers with an improved skillset and as a result, improve energy services in Pakistan.

As part of its energy sector assistance program, the U.S. government through USAID has funded renovations at Tarbela, Jamshoro, Mangla, Guddu, and Muzzafargharh power plants; aided in the completion of Gomal Zam and Satpara dams and helped improve power distribution throughout Pakistan. These projects have already added more than 1,000 megawatts of power to Pakistan’s national grid, with a cumulative target of 1,400 megawatts by the end of 2014 – enough to benefit approximately 16 million people throughout Pakistan.

USAID signs Education Agreement and Launches Mobile Bus Library Program

November 19, 2014 | Islamabad

The Assistant to the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Donald “Larry” Sampler and the President of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), David Miliband officially inaugurated the USAID-funded Pakistan Reading Project’s mobile bus library program at a government secondary school in Islamabad. The Mobile Bus Library Program will bring age-appropriate reading materials to communities which do not have established libraries in order to help reintroduce and re-establish a national culture of reading in Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion Larry Sampler said, “The Mobile Library Program is just one element of the USAID-funded Pakistan Reading Project which will help Pakistani children to start their own journeys in the world of books. Through this partnership between USAID, our implementing partner - the International Rescue Committee, and the Government of Pakistan, we are taking a multi-pronged approach to help increase literacy.”

The Pakistan Reading Project, implemented by the International Rescue Committee, will run a mobile bus library program in Sindh and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) over the next two years and will

bring reading materials directly to communities and help re-establish reading habits. Trained librarians onboard each bus will conduct story-telling sessions in each community they visit. They will also issue books for schoolchildren to take home to read. David Miliband, President IRC said, “The USAID funded Pakistan Reading Project being implemented by IRC is helping to improve reading skills of children across Pakistan. The mobile bus library is another step towards promoting a reading culture in Pakistan.”

Later in the day, USAID Mission Director Gregory Gottlieb and Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Development, Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to continue working towards improvement in the quality of education by helping to build the skills of teachers throughout Pakistan. At the signing, Mr Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman, thanked the U.S. Government for their continued support to raising standards in Pakistani education.

The USAID-funded Pakistan Reading Project is a \$165 million project, which is supporting Pakistan’s provincial and regional departments of education to improve the reading skills of children. It is one part of a comprehensive education program that the United States implements in Pakistan in partnership with the government of Pakistan.

U.S. and Pakistani Academics Promote Higher Education Linkages at Texas Workshop

November 18, 2014 | Contact: U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136)

Islamabad, November 18, 2014 – Senior Pakistani academics from 23 universities met with 17 U.S. partner institutions in Denton, Texas, for a four-day workshop at the University of North Texas from November 12 to 15. The workshop allowed participants to promote community engagement, interactive teaching methods, collaborative research, and academic regional integration in both the United States and Pakistan.

The event, organized under the University Partnerships Program, was sponsored by the Embassy of the United States in Pakistan and is part of International Education Week, a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education that focuses on the importance of international education and exchange worldwide.

Senior-level representatives from the U.S. Department of State, the Embassy of Pakistan in Washington, the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC), and the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan joined the delegation to highlight the importance of higher-education linkages between both countries. The U.S. Department of State’s Director for Public Diplomacy for the Bureau of South and

Central Asian Affairs, Kathryn Schalow, opened the workshop by saying, “I am delighted to see the success of these partnerships. They have not only built capacity and skills but also relationships that will last long after the formal partnerships end.”

HEC Chairman Mukhtar Ahmed addressed the 52 participants in a videotaped message saying, “Initiatives in the Social Sciences need to work together and to learn from one another. U.S. and Pakistani education institutions are strategic partners.” The chairman underscored the importance of international linkages in achieving academic excellence and reinforced the HEC’s support to promote mutual collaboration between Pakistani and U.S. universities.

The University Partnerships Program is one of the flagship higher-education programs sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan and provides over \$18 million dollars in funding to 40 universities in Pakistan and the United States to create three-year partnerships. These partnerships focus on the social sciences and humanities to assist universities with professional development for faculty, curriculum reform, joint research, and to increase mutual understanding between Pakistan and the United States. Since 2012, approximately 250 faculty members, administrators, and students from both countries have participated in exchanges under this program.

The first University Partnerships Best Practices Workshop was held in 2013 at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

For more information, please visit the U.S. Embassy’s Facebook VLOG under #USPakEd and #ISBtoTX.

U.S. Training and Equipment Helps Power Companies Keep the Electricity On

Islamabad | November 13, 2014

United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID) Mission Director to Pakistan, Greg Gottlieb, presented the power distribution companies PESCO and IESCO with tools and maintenance vehicles at a ceremony at Rawal Grid Station in Islamabad. The event also marked the start of the second stage of Live Line Maintenance training for crews from power distribution companies throughout Pakistan. USAID’s Energy Policy Program (EPP) is providing the training, tools, and vehicles to enhance the capacity of PESCO and IESCO to work on live power lines.

This initiative is part of the U.S. Government’s commitment to support the Government of Pakistan in making improvements in the energy sector. With the training and equipment provided, all of Pakistan’s power distribution companies will have the training and resources necessary for crews to perform tests and maintenance on live power lines without shutting them down. This will result in

increased energy availability and reliability.

Jim Hicks, Chief of Party of EPP, representatives of the Ministry of Water and Power, the National Transmission and Dispatch Company (NTDC), and CEOs of several power distribution companies joined Mission Director Gottlieb at the event. During his remarks, Gottlieb stated, “Through efforts like this, undertaken in partnership with the Government of Pakistan, USAID is helping to increase the reliability of power transmission. These efforts are part of a broad U.S. government energy sector assistance program for Pakistan which is increasing access to reliable electricity for approximately 16 million people over a five year period.”

As part of the U.S. government energy sector assistance program, USAID has funded renovations at Tarbela, Jamshoro, Mangla, Guddu, and Muzzafargarh power plants, aided the completion of Gomal Zam and Satpara dams, and helped improve power distribution throughout Pakistan. These efforts have already added more than 1000 megawatts of power to Pakistan’s power system. By the end of 2014, these efforts are expected to add a cumulative total of 1400 megawatts to Pakistan's power system.

The United States Partners with Pakistan Customs Service to Protect the Public and Facilitate the Flow of Goods

Islamabad | November 13, 2014

U.S. Ambassador Richard Olson joined Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman Tariq Bajwa to mark the launch of the Pakistan Customs Service’s End Use Verification (EUV) project, which will help Customs monitor chemicals that are used both legally and illegally. This launch also provided an opportunity to commemorate the partnership between Pakistan Customs Services and the United States Homeland Security Investigations Office (HSI).

Speaking at the launch of the Pakistan Customs’ EUV project, Ambassador Olson stated, “The partnership between the Pakistan Customs Service and HSI is based on genuine respect and the sense of a shared mission to keep citizens of Pakistan, the United States, and countries around the world safer by preventing the illicit movement of dangerous chemicals.”

The EUV project will allow Pakistan Customs, a wing of the FBR, to safely facilitate the entry of dual-use chemicals being imported for legitimate purposes, while also investigating and preventing the entry of chemicals intended for use in improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The EUV project consists of 80 Pakistani teams that will conduct verification checks countrywide. To bolster the effectiveness of the EUV program and help ensure it’s a long lasting effort, the United States has donated 80 Toyota Hilux trucks, 160 body armor suits, over 10,000 chemical test kits, five electronic hand-held chemical

analysis units, cameras, binoculars and gloves to Pakistan Customs.

The EUV project has already garnered attention outside Pakistan, with Pakistan Customs recognized as a trendsetter in preventing the illicit movement of dual-use chemicals used to build IEDs. The World Customs Organization has adopted this EUV project as the model to be replicated by customs administrations around the world.

The EUV project demonstrates how much can be achieved as a result of partnerships based on respect and the sense of a shared mission—in this case, between Pakistan Customs and United States HSI to keep citizens from Pakistan and other countries safer by preventing the illicit movement of dangerous chemicals.

U.S. Ambassador Olson Encourages Students at National University of Sciences and Technology to “Seize the Opportunity” with Afghanistan

November 12, Contact: U.S. Embassy, Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 97/2014

Islamabad, November 12, 2014 - National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) hosted U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson for a discussion with students and faculty on November 12. Ambassador Olson opened his remarks thanking Lt. General Muhammad Asghar, Rector of NUST, for hosting the event and supporting academic exchanges and linkages with U.S. institutions. Ambassador Olson's remarks emphasized the importance of cooperation between the United States, Afghanistan, and Pakistan in order to support regional stability and prosperity.

Ambassador Olson began his remarks by saying, “...a strong relationship between our two countries [U.S. and Pakistan] is of great importance to regional stability and to achieving a more prosperous future for our citizens...One of the most critical ingredients for achieving regional stability and prosperity is creating a peaceful and stable future for Afghanistan.”

The Ambassador spoke about the results of the Declaration of Enduring Partnership signed between the Government of Afghanistan and NATO in 2010 to provide long-term security, economic, and political support to Afghanistan and the importance of regional efforts to its continued success. He said, “An increasingly stable Afghanistan that is at peace and enjoys productive relations with its neighbors will be an effective counter-weight against extremism. A stable Afghanistan is also conducive to economic development in South and Central Asia.” Ambassador Olson also highlighted the moment that the United States and Pakistan have to “... set future events on a positive course and seize the opportunity for a brighter future in Afghanistan.” He encouraged Pakistan to continue its efforts to strengthen relations with Afghanistan, adding, “There is much work to be done together on important issues, such as security, trade and economic ties, reconstruction and rehabilitation, and

regional cooperation.”

The Ambassador reaffirmed the enduring U.S. commitment to Pakistan and the region, saying “The United States will remain engaged; we see our role in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the region as one of a sustained commitment that is in our own national security interest as well as that of the countries of the region.”

Ambassador Olson concluded by calling on the students at NUST to play a role in leading Pakistan to a more stable and secure future. “You have an opportunity now to choose a better future, and put aside the differences of the past. Pakistan is a young society, and so is Afghanistan. Young people in both countries can make the choice now to set the course for a positive and constructive direction. I hope you will seize that opportunity. And rest assured that the United States is committed to supporting you in your critical role to help Afghanistan through this period of transition.”

Ambassador Olson Extends Condolences to Families of Wagah Border Terror Attack Victims

November 3, 2014 Contact: US Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 95/2014

Islamabad, November 3, 2014 – The United States condemns the senseless terrorist act at the Wagah Border post on November 2, 2014. On behalf of the American people, I extend my heartfelt sympathies and condolences to the families of the victims as well as to the Government and people of Pakistan.

This act demonstrates terrorists’ blatant disregard for life. The United States remains steadfast in its commitment to the people of Pakistan in their efforts to counter terrorism, uphold the rule of law, and build a peaceful future for themselves and their children.

We support Pakistan’s efforts to bring all those involved in planning and executing this attack to justice and stand ready to provide any appropriate assistance to authorities investigating this tragic attack.

Empowering Women in the Workplace: U.S.-Pakistan Women’s Council Celebrates Second Anniversary

October 30, 2014 Contact: US Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 95/2014

Islamabad, October 30, 2014 – U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard Olson joined a commemoration of the U.S. Pakistan Women’s Council’s (USPWC) second anniversary with prominent business and civil

society leaders today in Islamabad. The event was linked via Skype to concurrent USPWC events in Karachi and in Washington, DC, where U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Catherine Russell, American University President Neil Kerwin, and Pakistani Ambassador to the United States Jalil Jilani discussed women's empowerment efforts in both Pakistan and the United States.

"The Council provides outstanding opportunities for companies in both countries to improve how they engage women in the workplace. Many companies are participating in Council activities, including internship, outreach, and mentoring programs. These programs are making a difference in how companies recruit, train, and retain women in the workplace," said Ambassador Olson.

The USPWC was launched by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2012. The Council is a public-private partnership between the U.S. State Department and American University, supported by the Organization for Pakistani Entrepreneurs. The Council works with Pakistani and U.S. leaders in industry, academia, and civil society to increase economic opportunities for women, and focuses on promoting entrepreneurship, employment, and education.

U.S. Government Commits \$7.28 Million to Baluchistan Police

Islamabad, October 29, 2014

Contact: US Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 94/2014

On October 13, 2014 the government of the United States, through the Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement in Pakistan (INL-P), committed \$7.28 million to purchase equipment and provide training to Baluchistan police. The Director of INL-P, Alberto Rodriguez, signed a Project Implementation Letter (PIL) with the Inspector General of Police-Baluchistan, Muhammad Amlish, to formalize assistance to the police in the province.

INL-P support will enhance the capability, safety, and effectiveness of the Baluchistan Police. The PIL provides six armored vehicles; 4,500 bulletproof jackets and helmets; one vehicle mounted jammer; eight explosives ordinance disposal (EOD) suits; eight EOD support vehicles; eight handheld explosive detectors; eight hand-held mine detectors; and 100 blast bins and blankets. The equipment will improve the capability of Baluchistan police in maintaining an effective law and order regime, while the ballistic protection equipment will provide an added level of personal protection against projectiles, shrapnel, and explosives. INL-P will also provide training to the Baluchistan police as needed.

This PIL is part of INL-P's overall assistance program, which provides training, equipment and infrastructure support to law enforcement entities throughout Pakistan.

United States Trains Pakistani Farmers in Better Irrigation Practices

Islamabad, October 29, 2014

Contact: US Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 93/2014

On October 28, 32 Pakistani professionals from the water management and agriculture sectors who participated in a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) training program in 2012 and 2014 met at the Serena Hotel to discuss follow-up actions from their visits to the United States and Australia. Representatives from both the public and private sectors were able to discuss how they would apply the techniques they learned from the training to improve irrigation practices in Pakistan.

During the training program, participants observed modern water management systems and technologies such as furrow irrigation, drip irrigation, sprinkle irrigation, and the use of pivots in Colorado and Australia. The three-week training was an opportunity for Pakistani farmers from various areas of the country to learn how efficient crop irrigation techniques could increase overall profits.

Today's event allowed participants to network and share plans to best adopt these improved irrigation practices in Pakistan, as well as create training programs in their respective regions for other farmers and agriculture practitioners. USAID Mission Director Gregory Gottlieb told participants today, "I urge you to continue to make improvements to your irrigation practices and contribute to increased competitiveness of Pakistan's agriculture sector. Your newfound skills and knowledge will lead to economic growth for all."

Pakistan Water Management Officer Akhtar Hussain Malik said, "I will transfer my knowledge to my colleagues through workshops and other trainings and we will adopt the best techniques to cover the water losses that we are facing in our area."

For more details regarding U.S. assistance for economic growth and agriculture sector:

1.usa.gov/1dKTncZ.

U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Visits Islamabad

Islamabad, October 29, 2014

Contact: US Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136)

Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAP) Daniel Feldman concluded his first visit to Pakistan since being appointed to the position of Special Representative in August 2014. SRAP Feldman met with senior Pakistani government officials, political leaders, and members of civil society to discuss a wide range of bilateral topics, including ongoing U.S. development programs and regional cooperation and security.

During his meetings with Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Policy and National Security Sartaj Aziz, Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, and Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif, SRAP Feldman reaffirmed the United States' commitment to enhancing its relations with Pakistan, discussed opportunities for bilateral coordination to promote economic growth and regional stability, and explored ways to forge a stronger U.S.-Pakistan partnership by working together to achieve common objective

National Conference on Continuing Legal Education Advocates for Ongoing Legal Professional Development in Pakistan

October 21, 2014 Contact: US Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 91/2014

Islamabad, October 21, 2014 – On October 21, the U.S. Department of Commerce's Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP) and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) co-sponsored the *National Conference on Continuing Legal Education* at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad. Hosted in conjunction with the Continuing Legal Education Institute of Pakistan (CLEIP) and the Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan, the conference was the inaugural event organized by CLEIP, a non-profit organization recently established to advance the development of continuing legal education for Pakistani legal professionals.

Several hundred Pakistani attorneys, judges, and representatives of civil society organizations attended the conference, which featured panel discussions by local and international experts on both substantive Pakistani legal issues and the development of the field of continuing legal education in Pakistan. Honorable Mr. Justice Tassaduq Jilani, former Chief Justice of Pakistan, and the Honorable John R. Tunheim, U.S. District Judge for the District of Minnesota, both served as plenary speakers.

The U.S. Department of Commerce began its support to CLEIP earlier in 2014 by sponsoring the visit of a delegation of Pakistani bar leaders and CLEIP members to the United States for a series of consultations with U.S. bar associations and providers of continuing legal education services. It will continue to provide technical and capacity-building support to CLEIP in 2015 as the organizations

implement an ambitious schedule of events and development activities to promote continuing legal education.

Dr. Fred P. Rooney, a Senior Fulbright Visiting Scholar and director of Touro Law Center's International Justice Center for Post-Graduate Development in New York, also participated in the conference, and provided insights into post-graduate residency programs for legal professionals in the United States. In collaboration with CLEIP and local partners Insaaf Network Pakistan and School of International Law Islamabad, Dr. Rooney plans to create the first legal incubator in Islamabad to meet the continuing education needs of young Pakistani attorneys and increase access to justice. Dr. Rooney is credited with creating the first incubator model for lawyers and for being a catalyst in the transformation of legal education in the United States.

Information and Communications Technology Trade Mission to promote trade, investment linkages between the United States and Pakistan

October 14, 2014 Contact: U.S. Embassy, Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 90/2014

Islamabad, October 14, 2014 - U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson and Pakistani Board of Investment Chairman Dr. Miftah Ismail are leading an information and communications technology (ICT) trade mission to Washington, D.C., and California's Silicon Valley October 13-17. During the five-day mission, a delegation of 20 Pakistani government and business leaders will promote trade and investment linkages between the United States and Pakistan.

The ICT trade mission began in Washington, D.C., on October 13 with a reception at the home of Ambassador Jalil Abbas Jilani, Pakistani Ambassador to the United States, followed by a day of meetings with the Department of State, Department of Commerce, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the United States Agency for International Development, the Office of the United States Trade Representative, and the United States Patent and Trademark Office on October 14. The mission will continue to California for a three-day visit October 15-17 to explore opportunities with leading businesses in Silicon Valley. The schedule will feature networking events, meetings with executives from leading U.S. companies, briefings, site visits, and one-on-one meetings with potential business partners.

This is the second trade mission in less than twelve months led by Ambassador Olson. In November 2013, Pakistan's Petroleum Minister Shahid Abbasi and Ambassador Olson co-led a trade mission comprising 17 Pakistani oil and gas firms to Houston. American and Pakistani companies considered that trade mission a great success, with business deals worth tens of millions of dollars resulting from the trip.

Speaking about the trip, Ambassador Olson said, "Pakistan's flourishing ICT industry has tremendous potential and this trade mission will serve to realize that potential." The mission is designed to boost commercial ties and increase trade and investment between the United States and Pakistan in the ICT sector, as both countries pledged to do following a U.S.-Trade and Investment Framework Agreement council meeting in May, 2014.

For further information, please contact Eric Eide, Outreach Coordinator, Bureau of South Central Asian Affairs, Department of State: eidee@state.gov or (202) 647- 8901.

U.S. Congressional Delegation Meets with Senior Government Leaders about Regional Security

Islamabad, October 14, 2014

A U.S. Congressional delegation led by Senator Tim Kaine, visited Pakistan October 12 - 14. Senator Kaine, along with Senator Angus King and staff members, met with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif, Advisor to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz, and a number of Parliamentarians to discuss a range of topics including regional cooperation and security. During the visit, the Congressional delegation discussed regional relations, encouraging deeper cooperation and resolution of tensions through dialogue. The delegation also acknowledged Pakistan's role in supporting a secure Afghanistan, reaffirming the U.S. Government's desire to work closely with the Government of Pakistan to improve security in the region.

Senator Tim Kaine represents the Commonwealth of Virginia, chairs the subcommittee on Near East and South and Central Asian Affairs, and sits on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC). Senator Angus King represents the State of Maine and sits on the SASC and U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

U.S. Embassy and Folklore Society of Pakistan Celebrate Daniel Pearl World Music Day Concert "A Tradition of Peace Through Music"

Islamabad | October 11, 2014

The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad and the Folklore Society of Pakistan celebrated Daniel Pearl World Music Days by holding a "Tradition of Peace Through Music" concert at the Lok Virsa Museum in Islamabad. The concert featured four musical groups, representing a variety of Pakistani musical traditions. The lineup highlighted the diversity in Pakistan's rich musical heritage while demonstrating

the power of music to bring people together to promote peace and mutual understanding.

The concert was part of the thirteenth annual Daniel Pearl World Music Days, held worldwide in October since 2002 to commemorate slain U.S. *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl. Daniel Pearl World Music Days is an international network of concerts that uses the power of music to reaffirm a global commitment to tolerance and humanity. Since its inception, Daniel Pearl World Music Days has grown to more than 11,000 performances in 129 countries.

“Tonight’s performance is about celebrating music, promoting tolerance, and inspiring respect for others,” said James Cerven, Assistant Cultural Attaché from the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad. Cerven thanked ATV “Morning with Farah” host Farah Saadia, who emceed the event, which featured Muhammad Azam, the Maatra percussion ensemble, Qurban Niazi, and Uzair Jaswal.

The musicians displayed a variety of folk and Sufi-inspired musical styles. During an interactive session, Maatra presented the history of Pakistan’s most distinctive percussive instruments, including the tabla, naqqara, and pakhawaj. Key figures of Pakistan’s arts and music scene were among an audience of over 500 people.

The U.S. Embassy provides over \$1 million annually in support of musical arts programming in Pakistan. Each year, dozens of Pakistani artists participate in musical exchange programs to the United States, collaborations with U.S. musicians, and performances both in Pakistan and abroad with U.S. government support.

Learn more about the event at: <http://www.facebook.com/pakistan.usembassy>.

The United States hosts the Economic and Finance Working Group of the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue

Islamabad, October 10, 2014

Yesterday, Pakistan Federal Minister of Finance Ishaq Dar met with Deputy Secretary William J. Burns and Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment Catherine Novelli met to discuss a range of strategic and economic issues in Washington D,C. Minister Dar and Under Secretary Novelli convened the Economic and Finance Working Group of the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue to discuss Pakistan's economic reform efforts, look at ways to increase bilateral trade and investment, and identify specific steps where innovation and technology could improve cooperation and Pakistan’s competitiveness in the global economy. The U.S. delegation included senior representatives from the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the

Department of Treasury, and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

The two delegations discussed Pakistan's ongoing efforts to bolster macroeconomic stability and growth. Pakistan highlighted its intention to continue working closely with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to maintain progress on the reform agenda. Minister Dar discussed Pakistan's energy reforms, which would encourage increased U.S. investment in renewable energy. Under Secretary Novelli highlighted U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) support for the expansion of clean and renewable energy in Pakistan, and recent progress on several wind farms that will be financed by OPIC. Both sides agreed to convene the next Energy Working Group in Pakistan in early 2015 in order to align our policy, assistance, and private sector engagement to support Pakistan's energy reform efforts and power generation capacity. On Wednesday, in an event organized by USAID and the US-Pakistan Business Council, Minister Dar and Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Asif highlighted potential business opportunities with the Diamer Basha hydroelectric dam to U.S. companies and investors. The meeting complements other U.S.-Pakistan energy cooperation efforts that will have added 1400 megawatts to Pakistan's grid by the end of this year, benefiting nearly 16 million Pakistanis.

Both sides noted progress on implementing Prime Minister Sharif and President Obama's pledge to expand bilateral trade and investment over the next five years. Pakistan will host the next U.S.-Pakistan Business Opportunities Conference in Islamabad in early 2015, and both countries will look at ways to increase opportunities for women entrepreneurs. Both sides recognized recent cooperation which allowed Pakistani mangos to enter the U.S. market, as well as progress on Pakistan accepting live cattle imports. An information and communications technology trade delegation of Pakistani businesses, led by U.S. Ambassador Richard Olson and Pakistan's Board of Investment Chairman Miftah Ismail, will travel to California next week.

Pakistani Delegation to Begin U.S. Department of Commerce Study Tour of Technology Transfer Offices and Incubators

Islamabad | October 10, 2014

A 12-member Pakistani university delegation arrived in the United States to begin a 10-day U.S. study tour organized by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP). The delegation is composed of representatives from Pakistani universities interested in creating technology transfer offices (TTOs) and technology incubators (TIs) on their local campuses. The CLDP is a program run by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Office of the General Counsel, which provides technical assistance to governments and private sector leaders in countries around the world in support of economic development goals. Officials from Pakistan's Higher Education Commission (HEC)

will accompany the delegation, since the HEC has plans to facilitate the development of TTOs and TIs in select Pakistani universities.

The program will begin with meetings in Washington, D.C., at the CLDP and the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). Delegates will visit a technology incubator, a prominent medical research institute, and an open-fabrication and prototyping studio. The delegation will then travel to Denver, Colorado, to participate in an Association of University Technology Managers course on Technology Operations and Organization Licensing Skills. For their final stop, participants will visit Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma, to observe the practices, policies, and procedures of the university's successful technology transfer office. As a result of the program, delegates will return to Pakistan equipped with knowledge of best practices for establishing and operating TTOs and TIs.

Together with U.S. Embassy Islamabad and the USPTO, CLDP has worked over the years to help strengthen Pakistan's intellectual property protection regime. Since 2010, CLDP has worked with HEC and select Pakistani universities to help establish technology transfer offices and incubators that will help commercialize university-based research in order to create information technology jobs in Pakistan. CLDP and USPTO have worked with the Supreme Court of Pakistan to place Pakistani jurists in a better position to decide IP cases in a fair and consistent manner. CLDP has also worked with the Intellectual Property Organization of Pakistan (IPO) to update Pakistan's IP laws. Together with the U.S. Embassy Islamabad, CLDP and IPO have conducted a series of IP roundtables bringing together government, academic, and private sector officials who can play a role in strengthening Pakistan's IP regime.

United States and Government of Pakistan Highlight Opportunities in Multibillion Dollar Hydro Dam

Washington D.C. | October 9, 2014

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce hosted senior Government of Pakistan officials, including Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Mohammad Asif, who highlighted the business opportunities presented by Pakistan's multibillion dollar, 4,500 megawatt Diamer Basha Dam Project to an audience of U.S. companies and investors.

"More than 30 years in the making, the Diamer Basha Dam has the potential to accelerate broad-based economic growth across Pakistan," said USAID Administrator Dr. Rajiv Shah. "By convening this meeting, we hope to unlock opportunities for U.S. businesses and investors, which will help make the Dam a reality."

"Pakistan is committed to making the economic and structural reforms necessary to attract and keep private investment. The Diamer Basha Dam Project offers tremendous opportunities for U.S. companies and investors, and helps Pakistan fulfill its economic potential by narrowing the energy deficit," said Finance Minister Dar. "Both the government and the people of Pakistan greatly value U.S. assistance in Pakistan's energy sector. Today's meeting further strengthens our bilateral cooperation."

Highlighting the Dam's benefits, Minister for Power and Water Asif noted, "As envisioned, the Diamer Basha Dam will be transformational. It will provide enough renewable electricity for 41 million Pakistanis, will produce enough water to irrigate more than 4 million acres, and will help protect the 130 million people in the Indus Basin from deadly floods."

The meeting generated substantial private sector interest with strong participation from both U.S. and Pakistani companies. The success of the U.S.-Pakistan Diamer Basha Business Opportunities Meeting marks the continuation of a wide-ranging partnership between the U.S. and Pakistan in its energy sector. USAID has already added or saved nearly 1,400 megawatts to Pakistan's energy system through the completion of new hydropower dams, and the rehabilitation of existing power plants and transmission and distribution infrastructure, meeting the electricity needs of nearly 16 million Pakistanis. USAID has also worked to improve the performance of Pakistan's nine power distribution companies, resulting in revenue increases of over \$133 million to date.

To view a short video on the Diamer Basha Dam Project please visit: <https://vimeo.com/108122042>

**For more information on the Diamer Basha Dam Project please visit:
<http://www.wapda.gov.pk/pdf/DiamerBashaDam.pdf>**

U.S. Ambassador Olson Discusses U.S.-Pakistan Relations at Lahore University of Management Sciences

***Lahore, October 3, 2014* – Lahore University for Management Sciences (LUMS) hosted U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson for a discussion with 200 students and faculty on October 2. During his talk, Ambassador Olson highlighted important areas of mutual cooperation between Pakistan and the United States and welcomed remarks by Vice Chancellor Naqvi, who thanked the U.S. for its support to LUMS's founding.**

Ambassador Olson began his remarks by saying, "the U.S.-Pakistan relationship is broad-based, it is resilient, and it is durable." The Ambassador commented that "both sides believe a strong relationship between our two countries is of great importance to regional stability and to achieving a more prosperous future for our citizens."

The Ambassador spoke about the importance of “economic growth and energy sector reform” to the people of Pakistan and said that “U.S. assistance has added new power generation capacity” in Pakistan. Ambassador Olson also mentioned his upcoming ICT trade mission to the United States with Pakistani technology executives and government officials as a way “to explore opportunities for increased trade, investment and jobs for our two countries.” He went on to reaffirm U.S. support for the Heart of Asia initiative, “which seeks to promote regional peace, stability, and prosperity.” The Ambassador also acknowledged “Pakistan is a vital partner in supporting a secure Afghanistan, and we know how closely Pakistan’s security is linked to Afghanistan’s success.”

Ambassador Olson concluded by underscoring the importance of exchange programs between the United States and Pakistan by saying “these people-to-people exchange opportunities ultimately enrich the lives of both Pakistanis and Americans. They foster the exchange of innovative ideas, are vital for the creation of new jobs, and the dissemination of best practices and lessons learned. And, they bring our people together in ways that breathe life into the partnership that our political leaders have called for,” Ambassador Olson said.

Ambassador Olson closed his conversation with the audience by highlighting the need to expand and reinforce the enduring partnership between the United States and Pakistan: “we share the same fundamental goals and desires for our people. As partners, we can deliver peace, stability, and prosperity for the people of Pakistan and the United States.”

U.S. Ambassador and Power Information Technology Company CEO Commemorate Opening of Network Operations Center in Lahore

October 2, 2014

Ambassador Richard Olson and Power Information Technology Company CEO, Hasan Bokhari, led an inauguration ceremony at the Network Operations Center at the Lahore Water and Power Development Authority Office on Thursday. The facility was established through a partnership between Pakistan's electricity distribution companies and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It will serve to alleviate Pakistan's continuing energy crisis by allowing more effective management of available electricity and reducing unscheduled load shedding throughout Pakistan. The Center manages new state-of-the-art monitoring and control systems that have been installed in all ten government-owned power distribution companies (DISCOs), which will more efficiently allocate Pakistan's electricity.

"The United States government is proud to work in partnership with the Government of Pakistan to take the necessary steps to resolve the energy crisis, which impacts so many Pakistanis," stated

Ambassador Olson. He added, "Consumers need to be aware of the planned load shedding schedules to effectively plan for their business and personal needs, and the National Power Control Center plays a vital role in helping Pakistanis navigate their day-to-day lives by helping the distribution companies better manage the electrical supply, and accurately communicate load shedding schedules."

Currently, unscheduled and unpredictable load shedding is one of the most visible manifestations in Pakistan's power crisis. It is a consequence of power shortages and the inefficient distribution of electricity. Such shortages impact both residential and business consumers. With this new system, consumers will know in advance about load shedding times, which will enable them to better plan their work and personal use of electricity.

The inauguration of the Network Operations Center marks one more accomplishment resulting from the wide-ranging partnership between the U.S. and Pakistan in the energy sector. As part of the U.S. government energy sector assistance program, USAID has funded renovations at Tarbela, Jamshoro, Mangla, Guddu, and Muzaffargarh power plants, aided the completion of Gomal Zam and Satpara dams, and helped improve power distribution throughout Pakistan. By the end of 2014, these efforts are expected to add a cumulative total of 1,400 megawatts to Pakistan's national power grid, benefitting approximately 16 million people nationwide.

United States Provides Over \$41 Million to Support Pakistan's Police, Counternarcotics, and Rule of Law Programs

Contact: U.S. Embassy, Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 82/2014 - September 26, 2014

Ambassador Richard Olson and Pakistan Economic Affairs Division Secretary Muhammad Saleem Sethi signed a bilateral assistance agreement for \$41.8 million in U.S. funding.

Islamabad, September 26, 2014 – U.S. Ambassador Richard Olson and Pakistan Economic Affairs Division Secretary Muhammad Saleem Sethi signed a bilateral assistance agreement under which the U.S. Department of State's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Bureau will provide \$41.8 million to support the Government of Pakistan in building its law enforcement capability, fighting illicit narcotics, and reforming its criminal justice system.

"Today is another milestone in the longstanding partnership between the United States and Pakistan," Ambassador Olson said. "We commend Pakistan for 32 years of work to eradicate poppy production and for the progress it has made in stemming the transit of narcotics." Ambassador Olson noted the United States signed the first such bilateral assistance agreement in 1982, and today's signing demonstrates the ongoing U.S. commitment to support Pakistan's efforts to halt the production and

flow of illicit narcotics.

The agreement will allow for the continuation of programs throughout Pakistan that improve the operational capability and reach of provincial police and other law enforcement institutions through training, equipment, and infrastructure support. It will also help Pakistan interdict illegal narcotics, arrest and prosecute drug traffickers, fund crop substitution and agricultural training programs for poppy farmers, and provide small-scale irrigation and hydro-electric systems to farms in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Finally, it will promote the rule of law by providing training to provincial and federal prosecutors in effective trial advocacy and to corrections officials in modern prison administration.

U.S. Exchange Program Alumni from Sindh and Gilgit-Baltistan Garner Innovation Awards

Islamabad, September 22, 2014

More than 700 alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs gathered in Islamabad to recognize innovation in community service by members of the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN). This fourth annual reunion of the PUAN Islamabad Chapter brought together politicians, parliamentarians, scholars, journalists, professionals, and students - all of whom are alumni of U.S. exchange programs - to share experiences and commit to building trust and understanding between the United States and Pakistan.

"Today's reunion shows how much talent, creativity, and passion is to be found here in Pakistan. It also demonstrates how much we can accomplish when we work together as partners," said keynote speaker, Thomas Williams, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy in Islamabad. He also acknowledged alumni projects in Sukkur and Hunza as well as distinguished alumni who made significant contributions to PUAN.

PUAN Country President, Haseeb Kiyani, encouraged participants to volunteer for the network's activities to spread the knowledge they gained in the United States throughout Pakistan. The network also recognized several prominent alumni and volunteer mentors who have given back to their communities with Distinguished Alumni and Emerging Leader awards. PUAN alumni have organized numerous community activities in the Islamabad area, including environmental conservation programs, leadership training exercises, and a 3,000-person live music event.

The U.S. government invests an estimated \$40 million annually on exchange programs for Pakistani citizens. More than 1,200 Pakistanis participate each year in various high school, undergraduate,

graduate, and professional U.S.-sponsored exchange programs.

PUAN is one of the largest U.S. alumni networks in the world, with 12 regional chapters nationwide. Its mission is to encourage people-to-people relationships between Pakistanis and Americans. Consisting of more than 14,000 students and professionals who have participated in U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs, PUAN organizes a number of events in Pakistan, including community service projects, leadership training, roundtable discussions, and community engagement activities.

Learn more about PUAN at <http://www.facebook.com/pakalumni>.

USAID Photo Exhibition Showcases Pakistani Youth

September 18, 2014 - Contact: U.S. Embassy, Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 80/2014

One of the photos on display at the Youth Photo Exhibit being held by USAID at Kuch Khaas gallery. The exhibit is open to the public from September 19- 21.

Islamabad, September 18, 2014 - The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) opened a photo exhibition today at Kuch Khaas Gallery featuring its work throughout Pakistan. The photographs were submitted in a USAID photo competition opened to Pakistanis between the ages of 14 to 20 and runs through September 21.

The competition held earlier this year required that photographs highlight a USAID project anywhere in Pakistan. More than 400 contestants from throughout Pakistan submitted photographs.

In addition to the pictures taken by the young photographers, several photographs included in the exhibition were produced by acid survivors through the Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF). As a result of USAID funding, ASF provided training, cameras and other equipment to many of the survivors. The project, a component of USAID's Gender Equity Program, worked with acid attack survivors from around Pakistan to develop the participants' photography skills as part of a recovery program. The photographs by the acid survivors are being sold to help them earn a livelihood and to become established as professional photographers.

"The photographs on display provide us with a look at the true Pakistan; a beautiful land, and people with strong hearts and limitless creativity," said Greg Gottlieb, USAID Mission Director at the exhibit's opening.

U.S. Launches Second Phase of its Higher Education Scholarship

Program to benefit an additional 3,000 Pakistani Students

September 17, 2014 - Contact: U.S. Embassy, Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 79/2014

Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning presents a plaque to USAID Pakistan Mission Director, Greg Gottlieb to acknowledge the U.S. assistance at the launch of Phase II of USAID's Merit and Needs Based Scholarship Program.

Islamabad, September 17, 2014 - The United States government launched the second phase of its Merit and Needs Based Scholarship Program (MNBSB) which will benefit 3,000 talented students who are in need of financial assistance to pursue higher education in a ceremony held today at the Higher Education Commission. The new phase of this U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) funded scholarship program was announced by Gregory Gottlieb, Mission Director, USAID) Pakistan at an event also attended by Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms. Professor Mukhtar Ahmad, Executive Director, Higher Education Commission and Vice Chancellors of USAID's partner universities were also present.

A total of 1,807 scholarships were awarded in Phase 1 of the program and more than 1,350 of these students have already obtained undergraduate and graduate degrees. The scholarship program also served as a catalyst for other donors to award scholarships at participating institutions, resulting in more than doubling the number of students enrolled since 2004. Based on the successes of the program, needs based scholarships have increased from two to about 70 public and private universities since 2004.

"The U.S. government through USAID has decided to expand the Merit and Needs Based Scholarship Program through HEC by providing an additional \$23.1 million to benefit 3,000 more talented Pakistanis. Eighteen additional universities have been included and new fields of study will allow Pakistanis to pursue degrees in the most sought after fields of studies to meet the needs of the job market", said Gregory Gottlieb, Mission Director, USAID. He added that "half of these scholarships have been set aside for women, and to help ensure that we achieve this goal four women-only universities have been added to the expanded program".

Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms, thanked the United States for its continued support to Pakistan's education sector and noted that students are selected for the scholarships based on financial need, after gaining university admission.

The Merit and Needs Based Scholarship Program is part of the comprehensive U.S. education

assistance program in Pakistan, which includes building or rehabilitating more than 850 schools; establishing centers for advanced studies at three Pakistani universities to focus on applied research in energy, agriculture and water; expanding English skills for more than 5,000 low-income students; and creating accredited degree programs in education at 90 teachers' colleges and universities across Pakistan.

U.S.-Funded Project Devises Plan for Rabi Season to Enhance Pakistan's Wheat Production

Islamabad, September 12, 2014

During the two-day annual Wheat Productivity Enhancement Project (WPEP) wheat planning meeting held in Islamabad, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), wheat researchers from across Pakistan, the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), and the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) focused on reviewing the progress of the past wheat growing season and developing a plan for breeding, disease surveillance, seed production, and agronomy research for the upcoming rabi season.

“The WPEP project has produced exceptional results. Wheat is an important crop in both Pakistan and the United States, and our two countries are continuing a 50-year tradition of collaboration in agriculture,” said David Williams, the U.S. Embassy's Agricultural Counselor. Williams noted that farmers in every province grow wheat, and this important crop accounts for 60 percent of the daily caloric intake of the average Pakistani. He further explained that the U.S. – Pakistan collaboration is vital to the global effort to combat UG 99 and other wheat diseases.

The U.S. Government-funded Wheat Productivity Enhancement Project (WPEP) supports Pakistani and international scientists in the evaluation, development, and release new high-yielding, disease-resistant wheat varieties. Other objectives include improving agronomic practices and upgrading Pakistan's research capacity.

The meeting participants agreed that making UG 99 wheat fungal disease resistant varieties available to farmers is a critical step in maintaining high yields for Pakistan's most important crop. U.S. and Pakistani scientists expressed satisfaction over the progress of WPEP thus far.

The combined efforts of U.S. and Pakistani scientists have resulted in the successful testing and release of two highly productive wheat varieties that are capable of surviving the destructive UG 99 wheat fungal disease. WPEP and Pakistani partners introduced and tested two new wheat varieties, NARC 2011 and PAK-13. These new varieties not only provide disease protection but also produce higher yields than existing varieties. UG 99 is already in neighboring countries and threatens to devastate

Pakistan's wheat crop if resistant varieties are not developed and deployed.

WPEP is a U.S. Department of Agriculture program that develops, introduces, and tests disease-resistant wheat varieties. The project also focuses on improving agronomic practices, developing disease surveillance systems, updating infrastructure, and building research capacity in Pakistan. The five-year collaborative research project brings together wheat research scientists from Pakistan's Agricultural Research Council, CIMMYT, USDA, provincial wheat research institutions, and ICARDA.

United States Increases Incomes for 75,000 Families through USAID Entrepreneurs Project

USAID Entrepreneurs project successfully increased the incomes of 75,000 small entrepreneurs, predominantly women.

Islamabad, September 3, 2014 - The United States, through the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Entrepreneurs Project, has helped increase the incomes of 75,000 beneficiaries over the past three years.

From June 2011 to August 2014, USAID's Entrepreneurs Project led strategic economic development initiatives in 26 districts across Pakistan's four provinces to foster the development of Pakistan's honey, medicinal and aromatic plants, hand-embellished fabrics, and dairy sectors. The project successfully increased the incomes of 75,000 beneficiaries, the majority of whom were women. The project team worked with nine partner organizations to achieve this success:

- HUIRA;**
- the National Rural Support Program;**
- the Human Development Organization Doaba;**
- the Society for Human and Natural Resource Development;**
- the Trust for History, Art and Architecture of Pakistan;**
- the Entrepreneurship and Community Development Institute;**
- the Water, Environment and Sanitation Society; and**
- the ENGRO and HASHOO Foundations**

Nancy Estes, Deputy Mission Director of USAID, said, "The Entrepreneurs Project exceeded all expectations by raising average monthly incomes of 75,000 beneficiaries by an incredible 147%. Congratulations to the project team, the nine key facilitating partners, and private sector partners who formed business partnerships that will ensure the continuity and sustainability of the micro-businesses established."

In addition to its work in promoting growth for small businesses, the Entrepreneurs Project also helped restore the livelihoods of 45,000 people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa following the devastating floods of 2010. MEDA Pakistan, a non-governmental organization, implemented the Entrepreneurs Project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Swat, Dir Upper, Dir Lower, Shangla and Malakand (Batkhela, Dargai and Thana) districts with USAID's support.

This initiative is just one part of a comprehensive U.S. economic growth assistance program in Pakistan which includes expanding irrigation by 200,000 acres to spur farming near Gomal Zam and Satpara dams and increasing the incomes of 250,000 farmers and female agricultural workers through training and increased access to market networks.

Bridge-US is nonpartisan and an effort to share and publish news of diversity, harmony and mutual understanding to bridge between nations and inform people directly about how humanitarian aid is positively changing lives in Pakistan.

Dedicated to



Daniel Pearl

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