

BridgeUS – April 2016

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About USAID to Pakistan – Since 2012



In dedication to Daniel Pearl

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We strongly condemn the coward attack in Lahore on Easter equally targeting minorities and other innocent citizens. The horrifying barbarity was evident as the blasts were aimed close to the children. We are all faced with the unfortunate truth that it's challenging for the world to stop such bloodbaths without ideological measures and exterminating the deep rooted conceptual inspiration of Jihad that is one of the most responsible foundation of terrorism. Global cooperation is needed more than ever to stop jihadi vision and warrior's inspirations in the text books. Text books in the Muslim countries must carry the material encouraging diversity, coexistence and the message that humans are dignified by their actions not by their religious affiliations. The government of Pakistan needs a fast track strategy to replace seminaries and Madressahs with schools align to the future needs to share the global economy, citizenry and challenges. Main stream media in Pakistan can play significant role by shutting off clerics and spotlighting eminence of minority's role in Pakistan. We also urge the

government of Pakistan to immediately expunge the material from the books glorifying warriors and jihad and begin unbiased crackdown on hate preachers before they execute another massacre.
Sincerely/ BridgeUS

American Ambassador David Hale Condemns Lahore Attack

Islamabad | March 27, 2016

American Ambassador David Hale strongly condemns the attack on the Gulshan-e-Iqbal Park in Lahore tonight. He extends deep condolences to the victims and their families during this time of grief. The United States stands with the Pakistani people in their fight to end terrorism, and supports the government's en

USAID Celebrates World Water Day as its Gomal Zam Irrigation Project Comes to a Close Islamabad | March 20, 2016

The U.S. Embassy Islamabad celebrates this year's World Water Day, March 22, as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Gomal Zam Irrigation Project comes to a close. This \$72 million project, which began in 2011, is now providing year-round irrigation for 191,000 acres in Tank and Dera Ismail Khan Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province. Through its network of 265 kilometers of irrigation canals, which were built in collaboration with the Water and Power Development Authority, the project will increase business, trade, and employment opportunities for 30,000 households.

USAID is working in partnership with the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Department of Agriculture to support local farmers in producing market-ready, high-value crops. The project has also helped form 400 water user associations and women's interest groups that help the local population sustainably manage the irrigation system.

"The Gomal Zam Irrigation Project will create jobs and increase incomes for the residents of KP," USAID Mission Director John Groarke said. "Access to clean drinking water and irrigation water for crops is essential for the development and stability of any community." A farmer from the Gomal Zam command area, Mairaj Din, expressed his gratitude, commenting, "We knew that our lives would never be the same when we saw this running water. We are thankful to USAID for turning around our fortunes and the future of our children."

British engineers first conceived the Gomal Zam Dam and irrigation scheme in the second half of the 19th century, and preliminary planning to build the dam began in the 1960s. In 2009, then-U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced U.S. government support to complete the dam to support power generation, irrigation, and flood control.

The first phase of this project, the construction of the Gomal Zam dam in South Waziristan, was completed in 2013 with funding from the United States and the Government of Pakistan. The dam

now generates 17.4 megawatts of clean energy and can store up to 1.14 million acre feet of water.

U.S. Embassy Sponsors TEDx Event on Women's Empowerment

Islamabad | March 19, 2016

Approximately 300 people from across Pakistan attended TEDxIslamabad 2016: Breaking Barriers, an event featuring speeches about women's empowerment. The event was funded by the American Embassy and Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network and was part of the TEDx program, which is designed to help communities, organizations, and individuals spark conversation and connection.

American Embassy Chargé d'Affaires Jonathan Pratt welcomed participants in a video message, stating, "Today's event should remind us all that communities and countries need the full participation of women in all aspects of society to develop completely. When a woman or a girl is held back from achieving her full potential, her family, community, and country are also held back. And while there is no doubt that women worldwide have made great strides toward equality over the past few decades, there is still plenty of room for growth."

An audience including entrepreneurs, scientists, students, writers, musicians, and politicians listened to speeches by individuals such as Ayesha Shayed, who gave a presentation on "connecting and believing," and Noor Aftab, who spoke about breaking barriers to achieve career success.

The event was organized by Ahsan Mukhtar, an alumnus of the American government's International Visitor Leadership Program, and by Senior TEDx Ambassador and Acumen Fellow Saad Hamid. "We received over 3,000 applications and choosing just 300 attendees out of those wasn't an easy task," Mukhtar said. "But we have tried to make sure that we get to have the most diverse audience, which is why we have attendees touching all major cities of Pakistan, including Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta, Swat, and even beyond."

TEDxIslamabad was established in 2010 and has produced more than 15 events featuring 50 thought-provoking TEDTalks by thought leaders from all over Pakistan and beyond.

Pakistani Scientists Review Wheat Research through U.S.-Funded Seminar

March 18, 2016



Dozens of Pakistani scientists and agricultural experts participated in the first phase of the 2016 Traveling Wheat Seminar, funded by the U.S. government. The annual seminar brings together wheat scientists from all over Pakistan to observe and discuss wheat research at the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council's wheat research centers.

"Wheat scientists are able to share and discuss their work more effectively as they examine wheat fields, rather than when they are sitting in a formal meeting," said Dr. David Marshall, U.S. coordinator for the Wheat Production Enhancement Program. "As a result of this seminar, scientists have obtained a better common understanding of the problems and successes of each research program."

From March 8 to 18, scientists visited farmers' fields, private seed companies, and research centers near Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkar, Multan, and Faisalabad. Participants examined challenges faced by Pakistani wheat growers such as diseases, climate change, weeds, and crop management issues. The Pakistan Agricultural Research Council and International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) organized the seminar.

CIMMYT Country Representative, Dr. Imtiaz Muhammad commented that wheat is important to Pakistan's overall food security and noted that CIMMYT and the U.S. Department of Agriculture are committed, through the Wheat Production Enhancement Program, to advance wheat research in order to benefit Pakistani farmers.

Scientists will gather for the second phase of the Traveling Wheat Seminar in early April.

American Embassy Promotes Regional Connectivity at The Leaders Summit

Islamabad | March 17, 2016



American Embassy Chargé d'Affaires Jonathan Pratt discusses regional economic connectivity and American assistance to Pakistan at The Leaders Summit.

American Embassy Chargé d'Affaires Jonathan Pratt discussed the benefits of regional economic connectivity and American assistance to Pakistan at The Leaders Summit, a day-long conference sponsored by organizations such as Nutshell Forum and the Jang Media Group. Focusing on the theme of “The BIG Rethink,” the event featured discussions on innovation, leadership, energy, culture, diversity, business strategy, and crisis management.

“On regional connectivity, what we have tried to do is build a strategy that would increase trade and improve relations in the region between neighbors,” Pratt said. “If the region is better connected with better business relationships, we hope that will support ongoing improvements in political relationships.”

Pratt added that the United States and Pakistan have collaborated on a variety of measures to enhance regional connectivity and integration, such as rebuilding road infrastructure and expanding customs checkpoints. The United States and Pakistan also collaborate closely in areas such as education, exchanges, and energy, Pratt noted, through an ongoing Strategic Dialogue.

Approximately 500 people -- including business leaders, government officials, and academics -- attended the third-annual Leaders Summit, which was organized by Muhammad Azfar Ahsan, an alumnus of the American Embassy’s International Visitor Leadership Program. U.S. Agency for International Development Acting Mission Director James Peters also gave a presentation at the summit focused on leadership, ethics and society.

U.S. Embassy Sponsors Pakistani English Teachers' Participation in International Education Conference

Islamabad | March 14, 2016



U.S. Embassy Regional English Language Officer Jen MacArthur meets with Pakistani English language teachers to prepare workshops for their communities about teaching critical thinking skills and computer-assisted language learning.

U.S. Embassy Islamabad sponsored five teachers' travel to an education conference in Nepal, where they represented Pakistan and shared their teaching expertise with other teachers from all over the world. The educators gave presentations about teaching critical thinking skills and computer-assisted language learning at the 21st International Conference of the Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA) in Kathmandu.

Upon returning to Pakistan, the teachers met with U.S. Embassy Regional English Language Officer Jen MacArthur to discuss preparing similar workshops for their own institutions and communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh.

"The NELTA conference gave me the chance to share my unique teaching experience with other professionals," said Qurratulain Najeeb, a lecturer at the National College of Business Administration and Economics in Bahawalpur. "I got to know how they teach English and how I can learn from it and use this in my context here in Pakistan."

The five conference participants, representing secondary schools and universities across Pakistan, were selected from a group of 15 Pakistani English language teachers who, together with 15 English language educators from India, successfully completed a semester-long online e-Teacher course on

teaching critical thinking skills. Since 2009, 150 Pakistani English language teachers have participated in master's level e-Teacher courses sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Office of English Language Programs.

"This e-course on critical thinking has been a gateway to empower me in rethinking and redesigning my teaching pedagogy and the way I give instructions," said Saima Abedi, an English teacher for the U.S.-funded English Access Microscholarship Program, implemented by the Evolution educational organization in Karachi. "I can be an ambassador of change."

More information about the U.S. Department of State's Office of English Language Programs, including information about online courses and webinars for teachers of English, can be found at AmericanEnglish.state.gov.

USAID Celebrates Successful Completion of Grants Supporting Children's Reading Habits Islamabad | March 10, 2016



USAID Education Office Director Natasha de Marcken and Capital Administration and Development Division Additional Secretary Qaiser Majeed Malik met with 18 USAID grantees who successfully implemented community-level reading activities for children.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) held a ceremony marking the successful completion of 18 small grants encouraging children to develop the skill and habit of reading from an early age.

"We received a record number of outstanding applications for grants to carry out reading activities at the community level," said Natasha de Marcken, Director of the USAID Pakistan Education Office. "The grants helped to engage parents in activities that will strengthen children's reading ability and reinforce a habit of reading for pleasure and life-long learning."

The grants, provided through USAID's Pakistan Reading Project, supported small activities lasting three months. The Government Girls Primary School in University Town, Karachi implemented

parent-teacher meetings, engaged parents as volunteer story-tellers, and established a young-reader prize through its grant.

“The enrollment in our school has increased remarkably after this intervention,” said Government Girls Primary School head teacher Mussarat Khan. “Parents are telling us that their children get up early in the morning and are excited to go to school.”

The USAID-funded Pakistan Reading Project supports provincial and regional education departments across Pakistan to improve the reading skills of children in early primary grades. For more information on the United States’ assistance for education in Pakistan, visit:<https://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/education>.

“US Committed to the Enablement of Women” by Ambassador David Hale March 7, 2016

Pakistan’s greatest resource is surely its people. Since I arrived nearly four months ago, I have had the opportunity to speak with people from various backgrounds, and from different regions of the country, economic sectors, and with varied political and social perspectives. I am constantly impressed by the level of talent and ambition I see here, especially among women. Still, women remain underrepresented in many aspects of society and we are all worse off for it. For all of the dynamic women already using their talents to better their country and communities, many more are waiting for their opportunity. As a result, books go unwritten, scientific breakthroughs go undiscovered, and perhaps most disturbing, future leaders’ voices go unheard.

For communities and countries to develop fully, the full participation of women in all aspects of society is key. That’s true in the US, in Pakistan, and everywhere else in the world. When a woman or a girl is held back, her family, community, and country are held back as well from achieving their potential. And while there is no doubt that women worldwide have made great strides toward equality over the past few decades, there is still plenty of room for growth. This year’s theme for International Women’s Day, “Pledge for Parity”, is therefore, fitting.

Education is one of the surest paths to success and social mobility. Yet thousands of girls are still kept out of school in Pakistan. Each empty classroom seat represents untold and untapped potential. Through scholarships, teacher trainings and other education programs, the US is dedicated to helping Pakistan increase girls’ enrolment in schools and improve the quality of education they receive. Through the “Let Girls Learn” initiative, we have committed \$70 million to working with the Government of Pakistan to educate and enable more than 200,000 girls across Pakistan.

Education matters beyond the classroom as well. Women are often marginalised from political processes. We support the Gender Equity Program, which provides grants to help women register for Computerised National Identity Cards, which in turn allows them to vote. The program also addresses

gender-based violence by educating women about their rights, providing support for women in shelters, and offering opportunities for access to justice. When women are allowed an education, they can reach their full potential and numerous opportunities open up for them, including economic and political opportunities.

To quote President Barak Obama, “Lifting women up, lifts up our economy and lifts up our country.” Increasing women’s access to economic opportunities is a way to empower not only individuals, but communities. One such example is the US-Balochistan Agriculture Project, which helps female entrepreneurs increase their income from wool production through technical training and connecting them to broader markets. Our energy sector internship program addresses both women’s participation in male-dominated fields as well as the challenge of meeting Pakistan’s growing energy needs.

The initiatives I’ve highlighted, specifically address gender inequality. However, “Pledge for Parity” resonates with me because it also suggests small but concrete steps anyone can take their lives to chip away at a problem that often seems daunting. Today, right now, we can all challenge conscious and unconscious bias. It requires no funding or special skill to value women’s and men’s contributions equally. It requires that we see these contributions as deserving of respect regardless of whether or not they are done in the home or are money-making. Certainly, this is easier said than done, but nothing worthwhile is ever easy.

Any movement that demands a close look at the status quo takes patience and perseverance. Pakistani activist Khalida Brohi started her journey toward enablement at a young age, when she became the first girl in her Balochistan village to attend school. When a close friend was murdered in a so-called honour killing, the teenaged Brohi rushed to tackle the issue with passion and conviction. Yet she has spoken frankly about why her initial tactics fell on deaf ears and even alienated the community she sought to help. Rather than feel defeated, she asked for input and collaboration and said, “What can we do together?”. Ending the gender gap is a work-in-progress everywhere and a task we must take up together. And we must persevere.

The US is committed to the greater inclusion and enablement of women at home and abroad. I am proud of the work we have done and continue to do with the Government of Pakistan and with civil society organisations, to advance the role of women. My personal ‘Pledge for Parity’ is a commitment to helping women and girls achieve their ambitions and engaging with male leaders to help support these efforts. Let’s work together to ensure we are achieving our full potential by allowing women to achieve theirs.

Note: The following op-ed was published in English in The Express Tribune on March 7, 2016.

U.S. and Pakistani Officials Inaugurate National Biocontrol Laboratory

Islamabad | March 3, 2016



U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service Deputy Administrator Jocelyn Brown inaugurates the National Biocontrol Laboratory at the National Agricultural Research Center. U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service Deputy Administrator Jocelyn Brown inaugurated the National Biocontrol Laboratory at the National Agricultural Research Center today. The U.S. government provided technical assistance and equipment for the laboratory, which will conduct research to help farmers prevent pests from destroying their crops.

“This new laboratory is an excellent example of governments and institutions working together to introduce new technologies and research capacity,” Deputy Administrator Brown said. “The laboratory’s work will help farmers control harmful insects, reduce the use of chemicals for pest control, and create a safer food supply for Pakistanis.”

Country Director of the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI) Dr. Babar Bajwa and Acting Chairman of the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council Dr. Nadeem Amjad participated in the ribbon-cutting with Deputy Administrator Brown.

USDA collaborates with international and Pakistani organizations to strengthen Pakistan's agricultural sector. During her visit to Pakistan, Deputy Administrator Brown met with representatives from CABI, the United Nations World Food Programme, and the National Agricultural Research Center to discuss key achievements in Pakistani agriculture and ongoing collaborations. Deputy Administrator Brown, who served as a Peace Corps volunteer at the Northwest Frontier Province Agriculture University in Peshawar from 1988 to 1990, commented, "It is exciting to return to Pakistan and to see how our countries are working together to resolve challenging agricultural issues that affect our countries and the world."

U.S.-Pakistan Education, Science and Technology Working Group

Washington, D.C. | March 1, 2016



Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Richard Stengel and Pakistani Minister of Planning, Development, and Reform Ahsan Iqbal sign a Memorandum of Understanding to support the Fulbright Program in Pakistan.

Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Richard Stengel and Pakistani Minister of Planning, Development, and Reform Ahsan Iqbal chaired the second U.S.-Pakistan Education, Science, and Technology Working Group in Washington, D.C. today prior to the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue Ministerial.

The U.S.-Pakistan Education, Science, and Technology Working Group provides a platform to strengthen cooperation under the "U.S.-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor," focused on advancing academic networks, partnerships, and exchanges in higher education, science, and technology.

At the meeting, Under Secretary Stengel and Minister Iqbal signed a statement recognizing the commitment by Pakistan's Higher Education Commission to fund scholarships for an additional 125 Pakistani PhD students in the United States through the Fulbright Program over the next five years, complementing the U.S. investment in the Fulbright Program in Pakistan, which is the largest worldwide.

Both sides discussed how our countries' cooperation in education, science, and technology through the "U.S.-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor" provides a lasting foundation for U.S.-Pakistan ties and serves as an engine for long-term economic growth. They reviewed the substantial achievements since the last Working Group held in Islamabad in June 2015: doubling joint funding for collaborative science and technology research grants; launching U.S.-Pakistan Centers for Advanced Studies in energy, water, and agriculture/food security, part of the 23 total U.S.-Pakistan university partnerships; and the announcement of the joint Let Girls Learn initiative to expand educational opportunity for adolescent girls. At the Working Group, Under Secretary Stengel announced the establishment of a new university partnership between the University of Massachusetts and a consortium of universities in Balochistan.

Minister Iqbal noted Pakistan's aspiration for 10,000 Pakistanis to obtain PhDs at U.S. universities by 2025; the two sides agreed to explore initiatives to expand educational opportunities for Pakistani students in the United States at the tertiary level. They also recognized that ongoing investments in basic and higher education, including through the Let Girls Learn Initiative, will create a well-educated workforce that will drive innovation, gender equality, and a knowledge-based economy. The United States commends Pakistan for doubling its higher education budget since 2013, for its efforts to expand women and girls' access to education, and for pledging to increase spending on education from two to four percent of GDP by 2018.

For additional information on the U.S.-Pakistan Education, Science, and Technology Working Group, please visit <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/03/253859.htm>. For press inquiries, please contact SCA-Press@state.gov.

United States Partners with Sindh Government to Improve School Management in Sindh

Karachi | February 27, 2016



Amb. Hale attends a ceremony at which the Sindh Education and Literacy Department signed agreements with two private sector entities to manage the first group of schools constructed with USAID support under the \$165 million Sindh Basic Education Program.

The Sindh Education and Literacy Department signed agreements with two organizations to manage the first group of schools constructed under the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Sindh Basic Education Program. The management agreements — with the Institute of Business Administration Sukkur and Charter for Compassion Pakistan — apply to four schools in Khairpur and Sukkur districts.

American Ambassador David Hale, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah, Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, U.S. Consul General in Karachi Brian Heath, and USAID Provincial Director Craig Buck attended the signing ceremony.

“Our hope is that working with teachers, staff, and local communities, these new partnerships will introduce innovations, help modernize the education system, and strengthen human resources,” Ambassador Hale said. He added that true and lasting development starts with education. “Support for education is one of America’s top priorities in Pakistan. USAID is cooperating with Pakistan to carry out Pakistan’s comprehensive education programs to help millions of children and young adults rise as far in life as their hard work and initiative will take them.”

The Sindh government is forming partnerships with private sector organizations to manage and improve public schools under the Sindh Public Private Partnership Act 2010. As part of its \$155 million contribution to the Sindh Basic Education Program, USAID is funding the construction and management of a total of 106 schools in Khairpur, Sukkur, Dadu, Qamber-Shahdadkot, Kashmore-Kandhkot, Jacobabad, and Larkana as well as in five towns of Karachi. For more information about USAID and its programs in Pakistan, please go to www.usaid.gov/pakistan

American Ambassador, IBA Director Inaugurate Center for Excellence

in Journalism

Karachi | February 27, 2016



American Ambassador David Hale and IBA Director Ishrat Hussain launched the Center for Excellence in Journalism (CEJ) at Karachi's Institute of Business Administration (IBA)

American Ambassador David Hale and IBA Director Ishrat Hussain launched the Center for Excellence in Journalism (CEJ) at Karachi's Institute of Business Administration (IBA) on February 27, 2016. The U.S. State Department provided \$4 million in funding to construct the center and establish a curriculum and training programs.

"A free and professional press is a cornerstone of democracy and played a crucial role in America's history," said Ambassador Hale. "This center Center for Excellence in Journalism aims to help journalists gain and improve their skills so they can play their indispensable role in the public discourse of their country." The CEJ will become the nexus of U.S. government and partner organization efforts to provide training and exchanges for Pakistani journalists to advance a free, dynamic press.

Consul General Brian Heath, CEJ Board Chairperson Kamal Siddiqui, CEJ Acting Director Christie-Marie Lauder, International Center for Journalists Vice President Patrick Butler, Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism Professor Craig Duff and State Department consultant Larry Pintak also attended.

"The Institute of Business Administration has long been at the forefront of innovation in education and I am very pleased to add yet another component to that prestigious portfolio with the launch of the Center for Excellence in Journalism," said Dr. Ishrat. "Today, we bring that excellence to journalism and multimedia studies. We expect the Center for Excellence in Journalism to attract the

best and brightest journalism and multimedia professionals,” he said.

Joint Press Release: The Fourth Meeting of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States and China Kabul | February 23, 2016

The fourth meeting of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States and China on the Afghan Peace and Reconciliation process was held in Kabul on February 23, 2016. The delegations were led by Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai, Pakistan’s Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing and U.S. Charge d’Affaires, David Lindwall.

The QCG members welcomed the strong statement by H.E. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, on 15 February in which he once again underlined the strong commitment of the Government of Afghanistan for peace and reconciliation with Taliban groups and Hezbi Islami Hekmatyar, the support of the Afghan nation for this national priority and his call on the Taliban and other groups to join early direct talks with the Government of Afghanistan.

Taking note of the joint statement of February 06, 2016 and building on the outcome of the previous meetings of the QCG, the group reviewed progress in the implementation of the Roadmap for the Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process. Towards this end and also in line with the desire and support of the QCG member countries for lasting peace in Afghanistan, the QCG endorsed and expressed strong support for the upcoming direct talks between the Government of Afghanistan and authorized representatives of the Taliban and other groups.

The QCG member states invite all Taliban and other groups to participate through their authorized representatives in the first round of direct peace talks with the Afghan government expected to take place by the first week of March 2016. Pakistan has graciously offered to host this round of talks in Islamabad.

The QCG also welcomed the decision by Afghanistan and Pakistan to constitute a bilateral joint working group to work with the honorable Ulema of Afghanistan and Pakistan for their support to the Afghan led and Afghan owned peace and reconciliation process, including through Fatwas against the ongoing senseless violence.

The QCG agreed to continue joint endeavors as part of their shared commitments to advance the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan. The next QCG meeting will take place in Islamabad immediately after the first direct peace talks.

American and Pakistani Musicians Blend Musical Traditions Islamabad | February 22, 2016



The Ari Roland Jazz Quartet and Pakistani classical musicians perform together.

The Ari Roland Jazz Quartet from the United States joined local musicians for a performance blending American jazz and Pakistani classical music at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts. Approximately 450 people attended the event, which was organized by the U.S. Embassy in partnership with the Foundation for Arts Culture and Education.

"We were extraordinarily inspired by the Pakistani classical musicians. Their technique is simply astounding, and yet everything they play is filled with emotion and storytelling," quartet leader Ari Roland said. "It was an experience we'll never forget, and I hope we can welcome them in New York someday in the same way."

The concert was part of the Ari Roland Jazz Quartet's 12-day visit to Pakistan highlighting American music and culture during the U.S. Black History Month. During their tour, the quartet will perform concerts, present workshops, and play alongside Pakistani musicians in Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad.

“Jazz is broad in its appeal, but one of the most purely American art forms. It developed in the southern United States in the early 20th century when African American musicians merged European and African musical influences. The result: a new, uniquely American sound,” said American Ambassador David Hale. **“It has a long history of integrating different musical styles, and so is the ideal art form to connect individuals and communities across cultures.”**

The American Embassy provides over 100 million rupees annually in support of arts programming in Pakistan. Each year, dozens of Pakistani musicians participate in programs like the Pakistani Showcase at South-by-Southwest Music Festival, the Dosti Music Project, Daniel Pearl World Music Days, and Music Mela with American government support.

U.S. Special Representative to Muslim Communities Engages Government and Civil Society

Islamabad | February 19, 2016



U.S. Department of State Special Representative to Muslim Communities Shaarik Zafar visits Faisal Mosque.

During a February 17-18 visit to Islamabad, U.S. Department of State Special Representative to Muslim Communities Shaarik Zafar met with government officials, students, private sector representatives, and members of civil society to discuss mutual interests and goals.

“The United States and Pakistan share a strong interest in building a better understanding of each other’s cultures,” Special Representative Zafar said. **“This visit offered me a valuable opportunity to learn more about the steps being taken by Pakistani religious leaders, government officials, and youth to promote tolerance, education, and economic opportunities here in Pakistan.”**

Special Representative Zafar engaged in discussions about entrepreneurship and religious tolerance with students at the International Islamic University, Islamabad and the National University of Sciences and Technology. He also went to the Faisal Mosque, which he previously had visited as a child decades ago.

As part of Secretary of State John Kerry's Office of Religion and Global Affairs, Special Representative

Zafar drives the U.S. Department of State's engagement with Muslim communities around the world. In addition to advancing bilateral relations, Special Representative Zafar focuses on promoting entrepreneurship and economic development; creating educational and training opportunities for young people; and supporting community efforts to build social cohesion, counter violent extremism, and share their own stories. Through his conversations in Islamabad, Special Representative Zafar witnessed firsthand how Pakistanis are tackling these same issues and challenges, and pursuing opportunities to create a more prosperous future for their nation.

United States Provides Training for 185 Midwives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA

Islamabad | February 18, 2016



USAID Mission Director John Groarke congratulates women from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas who successfully completed an 18-month midwife training program.

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission Director John Groarke congratulated 185 women from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas who successfully completed an 18-month midwife training program sponsored by the U.S. government.

“A healthy family is the foundation of a healthy nation, so I am proud that the United States and Pakistan are working together, through this program and others, to strengthen Pakistan’s health sector,” Groarke said.

During the event, midwives shared their aspirations to decrease mother and child mortality rates and to address other healthcare issues in their communities. During the training, which was provided through USAID’s Training for Pakistan Project, participants learned to assist at births, conduct normal deliveries in a community setting, and recognize danger signs in time to refer patients to a health facility.

The USAID Training for Pakistan Project is a \$33.9 million initiative providing training in various

sectors, including energy, economic growth, agriculture, education, and health. Through this project, USAID plans to train more than 6,000 Pakistanis by May 2017. To learn more about USAID's work in Pakistan's health sector, go to: www.usaid.gov/pakistan/health.

United States Jumpstarts Hybrid Maize Seed Production in Pakistan

Islamabad | February 17, 2016



USAID Mission Director John Groarke meets farmers at the National Agricultural Research Center in Islamabad

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission Director John Groarke gave new varieties of maize seed to Pakistani research organizations and private-sector seed companies today at the National Agricultural Research Center in Islamabad. The new varieties of maize were identified and provided by USAID's Agriculture Innovation Program, in coordination with the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council, in an effort to jumpstart the production of quality hybrid maize seed in Pakistan.

"America and Pakistan share the goals of improving the livelihoods of farmers across Pakistan and increasing access to nutritious food for millions of Pakistanis," Mr. Groarke said. "When America and Pakistan work together, we achieve growth and prosperity, in Pakistan's agricultural sector and beyond."

Muhammad Sadiq Tahir, a farmer from Rawalakot, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, commented, "These seeds will improve the quality of my harvest for years to come. I am grateful to the American people for their support of Pakistan's agricultural development."

USAID's Agricultural Innovation Program is a four-year, \$30 million initiative designed to increase productivity and incomes in the agricultural sector through the promotion and dissemination of

modern production practices for wheat, maize, rice, livestock, fruits, and vegetables. The varieties of maize distributed today are bred to resist drought and heat stresses and have enhanced nutritional quality. They also have increased tolerance to insect attacks and low soil nitrogen.

For more information about the Agricultural Innovation Program, please visit <http://aip.cimmyt.org/>.

U.S. Embassy Welcomes 200 Rawalpindi Students to English Language Program

Islamabad | February 16, 2016

U.S. Embassy Minister Counselor for Public Affairs Jeffrey Sexton welcomed a new cohort of 200 students from Sir Syed Public School in Rawalpindi to the English Access Microscholarship Program at a ceremony today. The students, ages 13 to 16, will participate in a two-year program to develop English language skills that may lead to better educational prospects and future job opportunities. “English is the language of opportunity in the twenty-first century,” Sexton told students. “English is a skill that will help you in your future work life, no matter what job you choose.”

Nearly 3,000 students across Pakistan currently participate in the U.S. Embassy’s English Access Microscholarship Program. Since the program’s launch in Pakistan in 2004, more than 11,000 talented 13- to 20-year-olds from all over Pakistan have received after-school English language classes and other intensive training through the program. Participants gain the ability to compete for and participate in future exchanges and study in the United States. Sir Syed Public School has also hosted two previous Access cohorts from 2007 to 2009 and 2012 to 2014.

Access alumna Syeda Urooj Haider (2007-2009) also addressed the new students, praising the commitment of her teachers in the program. “Access teachers do a marvelous job,” she said. “They support you and motivate you. I thank my teachers for their continuous support.”

More information about the U.S. Department of State’s Office of English Language Programs, including free resources for teachers and students, can be found at AmericanEnglish.state.gov.

American Ambassador Opens Water-Energy-Food Security Nexus Conference

Islamabad | February 16, 2016



American Ambassador David Hale, Federal Minister of Planning, Development, and Reform Professor Ahsan Iqbal, and Rector NUST Engineer Muhammad Asghar opened the Water, Energy, Food Security Nexus Conference on February 16 at the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) in Islamabad. The conference was designed to bring together experts to discuss the impact of climate change, population growth, economic development, and increased consumption on water, energy, and food security throughout the world, and to develop possible solutions to some of these issues. “Water, energy, and food: three basic components of life...complex processes are at work to bring us

those essential elements, and demographics and climate change are straining those processes,” Ambassador Hale said. “Together we need to generate new ideas, new partnerships, and innovative solutions to this challenge.”

The two-day conference brought together policy experts, scientists, and members of private sector businesses to discuss the links between water, energy, and agriculture. Participants considered solutions on how to develop clear government policies and effective use of resources to ensure food, water, and energy security. The conference highlighted continued cooperation between both nations in key areas of water, energy and food security discussed during the meeting of President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in October 2015.

“The importance of cooperation across borders to address global issues such as water and food security cannot be understated,” Engineer Asghar said. “These are issues that cross borders, and the solutions can benefit all people, regardless of where they live.”

The United States and Pakistan have a long history of energy cooperation and continue to work together to help attract private sector investments in natural gas and clean energy sources such as solar, wind, geothermal, and hydro. Both nations pressed for an ambitious agreement on climate change at the Conference of Parties 21 in Paris in December, and continue to work together on such issues through the Clean Energy Partnership and the Strategic Dialogue.

For more information on the Water, Energy, Food Security Nexus Conference, please visit <http://www.nust.edu.pk/INSTITUTIONS/Schools/SCEE/Institutes/NICE/Events/Pages/WEF-Conf.aspx>

U.S. Embassy Supports Pakistan Law Students at Jessup International Law Moot Court

Islamabad | February 14, 2016

Top students from seven law schools across Pakistan participated in the country’s first-ever National Qualifying Competition for the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition on February 14. U.S. Embassy Islamabad’s International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) and Department of Justice office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training (OPDAT) sections sponsored the event.

The competition’s law students hailed from: School of International Law, Islamabad; Indus College of Law, Hyderabad; International Islamic University, Islamabad; Lahore University of Management Sciences; Pakistan College of Law, Lahore; Institute of Law and Criminology, Islamabad; and Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST), Karachi.

At the closing ceremony, INL Deputy Director Chris Palmer congratulated the participants in the moot court competition and underscored INL’s and OPDAT’s longstanding support for rule of law programs. “Moot court competitions are an excellent preparation for trying real cases,” said Palmer, recalling

his own career as an attorney before becoming a diplomat. “U.S. Embassy support has focused on training prosecutors, judges, police, and investigators as well as the construction and renovation of prosecutors’ offices across Pakistan,” Palmer added.

The Jessup Moot Court is the largest moot court program in the world, with participants from over 550 law schools in more than 80 countries. The competition requires law students to argue the merits of a fictional case between two countries before the International Court of Justice. The moot court case this year included issues surrounding cyber-crime.

The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs works in more than 90 countries to help countries combat crime and corruption, counter drug-related crime, improve police institutions, and promote laws and court systems that are fair and accountable. Find out more about INL at: <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/>.

American Ambassador David Hale Celebrates Achievements of Pakistani Women

Islamabad | February 12, 2016



American Ambassador David Hale presents a plaque to a participant in USAID’s Gender Equity Program.

American Ambassador David Hale praised the bravery and determination of Pakistani women at an event in Islamabad sponsored by the United States Agency for Development (USAID) to commemorate Pakistan’s National Women’s Day.

“Investing in women and girls not only promotes gender equality, it has a ripple effect on every aspect of society,” Ambassador Hale said. “And no country can get ahead if it leaves half of its population behind.”

During the event, Ambassador Hale recognized five “Women of Strength” for their contributions to gender equality in Pakistan. Each of these women participated in USAID’s Gender Equity Program, which is the largest USAID program in Pakistan specifically supporting women’s empowerment. This \$40-million, five-year program, implemented by the Aurat Foundation, aims to improve women’s

access to justice; expand economic opportunities for women; advocate for women's social and political empowerment; support survivors of gender-based violence; and build the capacity of government and civil society to prevent, respond to, and eliminate gender-based violence.

Razia, an entrepreneur from Sindh, learned how to start her own local handicrafts business, which now employs other women from her village, through the Gender Equity Program. "I am now able to support my own family as well as other families in our community," she said. "My experience has made me more confident and courageous."

To learn more about USAID's work on gender equality, please visit:

<https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/fact-sheets/gender-equity-program>.

U.S. Department of Energy Joins Pakistan's Energy Ministries to Launch \$3 Million Program to support Pakistan's Energy Development

Islamabad, February 10, 2016

Department of Energy Assistant Secretary for International Affairs Jonathan Elkind joined Pakistan's Ministry of Planning, Development, and Reform, the Ministry Water and Power, and the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources to announce the launch of a \$3 million multi-agency technical assistance program designed to support Pakistan's energy development efforts. The three-year Program, conducted in partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development, will bring experts from the Department of Energy national laboratories together with Pakistani experts to develop strategies and resources for integrated energy planning, energy efficiency, and promoting private investment in renewable energy and integration.

"The United States is committed to our partnership with Pakistan. We are addressing energy challenges and working together on our shared global energy priorities, including the opportunities presented by a growing renewable energy market," said Assistant Secretary Elkind. "We look forward to having American and Pakistani experts collaborate in this critical arena."

The Program is a milestone in the U.S.-Pakistan Clean Energy Partnership, announced by President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif in October 2015. The Partnership aims to develop 3,000 megawatts of new private sector investments in Pakistan in clean energy generation, directly benefitting more than 30 million Pakistanis. The new Partnership continues ongoing joint efforts by the United States and Pakistan to address Pakistan's energy needs, and is part of broader energy assistance that includes support from USAID, the Department of State, and the Department of Energy.

The United States and Pakistan have cooperated on energy issues since 2009 under the Energy Working Group established through the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue. Recognizing the critical importance of increasing energy security and access in a clean, sustainable manner, the United States has committed more than \$1 billion to date to support energy sector investments and reforms in

cooperation with the government of Pakistan. Our cooperative efforts have made almost 1,700 additional megawatts available to the national grid, powering the homes and businesses of nearly 19 million Pakistanis and increasing the annual revenue of Pakistani distribution companies by over \$300 million.

To learn more about the Clean Energy Partnership, visit <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/10/22/fact-sheet-us-pakistan-clean-energy-partnership>.

Joint Press Release: The Third Meeting of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States and China Islamabad | February 6, 2016

The third meeting of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States and China on the Afghan Peace and Reconciliation process was held in Islamabad on 6 February 2016. Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry hosted the meeting. Other delegations were led by Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai, US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Ambassador Richard G. Olson and China's Special Envoy for Afghanistan Ambassador Deng Xijun.

Building on the progress made in the last two meetings, the Group explored ways for holding early direct peace talks between the authorized representatives of the Afghan Government and Taliban groups. In this regard, the Group also adopted a roadmap stipulating the stages and steps in the process.

The Group stressed that the outcome of the reconciliation process should be a political settlement that results in the cessation of violence, and durable peace in Afghanistan.

Towards this end, the QCG countries agreed to continue joint efforts for setting a date for direct peace talks between the representatives of the Afghan government and Taliban groups expected to take place by the end of February 2016. The QCG members called on all Taliban groups to join the peace talks.

The QCG agreed to continue regular meetings to ensure a smooth way forward in the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan. The group agreed to hold its next meeting in Kabul on 23 February 2016.

U.S. and Pakistan Commit to Double Funds for Joint Science and Technology Research Islamabad | February 4, 2016



American Ambassador David Hale joined Chairman of the Higher Education Commission Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed in signing an historic agreement to double the funding to the Pakistan-U.S. Science and Technology Cooperation Program, which will result in more than \$8 m

American Ambassador David Hale and Chairman of the Higher Education Commission Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding at the Higher Education Commission Auditorium in Islamabad, doubling funding for the Pakistan-U.S. Science and Technology Cooperation Program. The MOU will provide more than \$8 million in joint funding for high level collaborative research in science and technology, with a new focus on health and other fields such as water, energy, and information technology.

“The benefits to us all in developing our education, knowledge, skills, and human capacity are immeasurable,” Ambassador Hale said. “The increase in funding from both the United States and Pakistan demonstrates the level of importance we both place on investing in science and technology.”

“Pakistan and the United States have had a long history of partnership in education and research, and this agreement shows our commitment to continue that partnership for many years to come,” said HEC Chairman Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed. “Pakistani researchers are making significant contributions to the scientific community both nationally and internationally.”

Since the program’s inception in 2005, the United States and Pakistan have jointly funded nearly \$34 million in collaborative research, supporting 96 projects conducted by scientists and researchers from both nations working in collaboration. Each year, researchers, scholars, and scientists from the

United States and Pakistan propose subjects for research, and are selected for funding through a competitive process. Previous grantees have focused on diverse topics, including food security, public health, disaster management, engineering, water, energy, and information technology.

The Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the U.S. Department of State are the joint contributors for this phase of the program. The MOU was highlighted as a key area of cooperation laid in the meeting of President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in October, 2015. The Program's increased emphasis on health research fortifies the bilateral commitment to implementing the Global Health Security Agenda, an international initiative to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats.

For more information on the Pakistan-U.S. Science and Technology Cooperation Program, please visit <http://www.hec.gov.pk/ot>
<http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/dsc/pakistan/index.htm>

USAID's Citizens' Voice Project Strengthens Civic Engagement

February 2, 2016 | Islamabad



USAID Mission Director Groarke joins K. Pakhtunkhwa Chief Information Commissioner Major Sahibzada Muhammad Khalid & Shahid Fiaz, CEO of Trust for Democratic Education & Accountability, in congratulating beneficiaries of USAID's Citizens' Voice project.

CEO of Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability Shahid Fiaz and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission Director John Groarke joined civil society representatives in recognizing the achievements of the Citizens' Voice Project. This five-year, \$45 million project is funded by the United States government and has been working since 2011 to bridge the gap between the citizens and government of Pakistan.

To date, the project has issued 270 grants worth \$13 million to 197 local organizations. Through these

grants, organizations have empowered citizens, while also strengthening state-level mechanisms to respond to citizens' concerns. Project activities have focused on interventions in three key areas: policy advocacy and government oversight; organizational development and targeted training; and public-private linkages between and among state and non-state actors.

"The Citizens' Voice Project has enabled citizens to become part of the solution. It is now possible to translate citizens' voices into constructive engagement with public officials," Mr. Groarke said. "The United States continues to value Pakistan's vibrant civil society, which plays an important role in supporting Pakistan's economic growth and stability."

Fayyaz-ul-Islam, a social worker from Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said, "I used the confidence and knowledge imparted by the USAID training sessions to seek information on the availability of public funds in Mardan. I succeeded in securing resources for the reconstruction of a damaged girls' school." Both veteran and newly established civil society organizations participated in today's event, which facilitated a rich exchange of ideas on how to increase citizens' ownership of, participation in, and oversight of the public sector.

WECREATE Center Connects Former USAID Administrator with Female Entrepreneurs to Promote Women's Empowerment January 29, 2016 | Islamabad

WECREATE | Pakistan Center (Women's Entrepreneurial Center of Resources, Education, Access, and Training for Economic Empowerment) hosted a digital video conference connecting female Pakistani entrepreneurs with former USAID Administrator Henrietta Fore. The event established a digital forum for sharing best business practices and lessons learned between Ms. Fore, distinguished public servants and entrepreneurs, and emerging female business leaders.

From 2007 to 2009, Ms. Fore served as the USAID Administrator and Director of United States Foreign Assistance. Ms. Fore, now serving as the Chairman and CEO of the consulting firm, Holsman International, spoke via video connection about the importance of female entrepreneurship in economic development and the challenges women face in the business world.

"For all of you that are entrepreneurs, you know that you have a creative spark inside of you, and the opportunity and the challenge for you is how you bring that spark out and create products and services that the world around you needs and wants," Fore said.

U.S. Embassy Islamabad worked with the U.S. Department of State's Office of International Information Programs and WECREATE to connect Ms. Fore with the audience in Islamabad. This program is part of a global U.S. government effort to support people-to-people conversations about policy and other issues of mutual concern between Americans and international audiences. U.S. Embassy Islamabad dedicates more than \$40 million annually to strengthen ties between the United States and Pakistan in areas such as women's empowerment, entrepreneurship, the arts, and sports.

The WECREATE | PAKISTAN Center, the first incubator in Pakistan designed specifically for female entrepreneurs, is playing an important role in advancing gender equality in entrepreneurship. Launched in February 2015 by former U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson, its resources, training, and mentorship provided through the center enable Pakistani women to move from the informal sector to the formal sector while generating momentum for measurable economic and societal change. To learn more about WECREATE, visit: <http://pakistan.wecreatecenter.com/>

U.S. Embassy Congratulates Competitors in Pakistan's 2nd Annual StartUp Cup Islamabad | January 27, 2016

The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad and the Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) Islamabad Chapter celebrated the conclusion of the 2015 Pakistan StartUp Cup, a nationwide business model competition. At the closing ceremony, American Ambassador David Hale and State Minister of the Capital Administration and Development Division Tariq Fazal Chaudhry presented awards to the winning startup, Patari, and the two runners-up, Wifigen and Maro Tandoor, who competed in the national pitch session on January 26.

Ambassador Hale delivered the event's closing remarks to an audience of more than 100 entrepreneurs. "Take the skills and the connections that you have gained through StartUp Cup and use them to tackle the challenges faced by communities across Pakistan. From promoting clean energy to combatting violent extremism, you have tremendous potential to help solve the biggest problems in your communities," Ambassador Hale said.

Through the 2015 StartUp Cup, over 450 startups from around Pakistan received coaching through multi-day "Build-a-Business" workshops and regular mentoring to help turn their ideas into fully operational businesses. Participants learned to design business models, develop customer bases, and launch their startup concepts in the local marketplace.

The 2015 StartUp Cup in Pakistan introduced new partnerships with entrepreneurship centers across Pakistan, including with the Women's Entrepreneurial Center of Resources, Education, Access, and Training for Economic Empowerment (WECREATE) in Islamabad, the Lahore University for Management Science (LUMS) Center for Entrepreneurship, Lahore-based government-supported incubator Plan 9, and Karachi-based technology incubator "The Nest I/O."

The partnerships between StartUp Cup and these centers will ensure that newly established businesses receive sustained support, mentoring and essential tools for long-term success. Several U.S. Embassy programs assist Pakistani entrepreneurs by increasing their access to financial resources, supporting opportunities for entrepreneurship education, and nurturing an entrepreneurial culture.

For more information on StartUp Cup Pakistan, please visit <http://pakistan.startupcup.com/>.

United States Provides \$20 Million for Food Rations to Support Temporarily Displaced Persons and the Malnourished

January 27, 2016 | Islamabad

The U.S. Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, recently contributed \$20 million to support the provision of food to approximately 1.2 million temporary displaced persons of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, 75,000 earthquake-affected individuals, and 153,500 malnourished women and children in Pakistan.

This new contribution by the United States will be managed by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), which will transform approximately 40,000 metric tons of wheat provided by the Government of Pakistan into fortified wheat flour. In addition, the WFP will purchase and distribute more than 9,000 tons of specialized food commodities to these groups.

“The U.S. Government is helping Pakistan to improve access to safe and nutritious food for women, men, and children who are vulnerable to malnutrition,” USAID Mission Director John Groarke said. “The United States has a longstanding commitment to working with Pakistan to provide humanitarian assistance and support human development.”

USAID’s \$20 million donation is a contribution to the Twinning Program, a partnership among the Government of Pakistan, the WFP, and the international donor community. Through the Twinning Program, wheat donated by the Government of Pakistan is transformed into fortified wheat flour and distributed to vulnerable displaced populations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Donor funds are used to cover the costs of milling, fortification, storage, transportation, and distribution of the wheat flour. USAID is the largest international donor to the Twinning Program and with this latest contribution has now reached \$75 million in total support to the program since 2013.

Recent Graduates Gain Energy Sector Experience through USAID Internship Program

USAID Mission Director John Groarke celebrates the closing of a six-month USAID-sponsored Energy Sector Internship Program with 135 participants from across Pakistan.

Islamabad - January 26, 2016 – The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) held a ceremony today marking the successful completion of a six-month Energy Sector Internship Program that provided recent energy-degree graduates with on-the-job experience and skills training. The program also sought to promote the inclusion of women in energy sector workplaces. Female interns comprised more than 30 percent of the total participants in the program.

“Our Energy Sector Internship Program, which paired 135 interns with 17 energy entities, is an

example of the long-term, creative collaboration between the United States and Pakistan in the energy sector,” USAID Mission Director John Groarke said. “I look forward to seeing our graduates apply their new skills in the energy sector workforce, and I hope to see a significant increase in the number of women hired in technical and managerial positions.”

Internship graduates shared their experiences and spoke about their future plans. “This program seems to be my gateway to a future career applying specialized knowledge,” program graduate Fiza Mazhar said. “What I learned is far more sophisticated than what I imagined.”

The Energy Sector Internship Program was implemented by the USAID Training for Pakistan Project. The U.S. government, through USAID, has committed US\$33.9 million to provide capacity development programs that benefit Pakistanis in various sectors, including energy, economic growth and agriculture, resilience, education, and health. USAID aims to train over 6,000 Pakistanis in these sectors by May 2017.

For more details regarding USAID’s work in energy sector, visit: <https://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/energy>

American Ambassador to Pakistan David Hale Condemns Charsadda Attack

Islamabad | January 20, 2016

“I strongly condemn today’s appalling attack on Bacha Khan University in Charsadda. The blatant disregard for human life displayed by these attackers is intolerable. It is especially reprehensible that the attackers targeted an educational institution where students and educators are seeking to better themselves and the nation of Pakistan. This attack stands in stark opposition to the desires of the Pakistani people to create a secure, stable, and prosperous country, based on respect for all. We offer our deepest condolences to the victims and their families during this time of grief.

The United States stands with the government and people of Pakistan and is committed to supporting their efforts to fight terrorism. We support Pakistan’s efforts to bring to justice those behind the attack.”

USAID Distributes Computer Tablets to Support Pakistani Teachers’ Professional Development

Islamabad | January 19, 2016

USAID Mission Director John Groarke and Minister of State for Capital Administration and Development Division Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary distribute tablet computers to teachers to support reading instruction.

The United States Agency for International Development is distributing 23,800 computer tablets through its Pakistan Reading Project to public school teachers of grades 1 and 2 to support teacher training and improved reading instruction in classrooms across Pakistan.

“Today’s distribution of computer tablets is an investment in and appreciation of the teaching force that prepares the future of Pakistan,” USAID Mission Director John Groarke said. “We see information and communications technology as a vital resource in the effort to extend educational access and improve the quality of instruction across economic, cultural, geographic, and other barriers.”

Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary, Minister of State for Capital Administration and Development Division, and other officials and educators joined Mr. Groarke at a tablet distribution ceremony in Islamabad. Each computer tablet is configured with applications and tools such as teacher training modules, daily lesson plans, virtual mentoring videos, and audio lessons to help teachers improve their instruction and the literacy levels of children in their classrooms.

The USAID-funded Pakistan Reading Project is a \$165 million project designed to support provincial and regional departments of education to improve the reading skills of primary school children across the country. This program is designed to utilize three interrelated components to affect the quality of education in early primary grades: an improved classroom learning environment for reading, improved policies and systems for reading, and community-based support for reading in Pakistan. For more information on USAID’s assistance to support education in Pakistan, visit: <https://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/education>

Joint Press Release: The Second Meeting of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States and China

Kabul | January 18, 2016

The second meeting of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States and China on the Afghan Peace and Reconciliation process was held in Kabul on January 18, 2016.

The second meeting of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States and China on the Afghan Peace and Reconciliation process was held in Kabul on January 18, 2016. The delegations were led by Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai, Pakistan’s Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, the US Ambassador to Afghanistan Michael McKinley and China’s Special Envoy for Afghanistan Ambassador Deng Xijun.

Taking note of the joint statement of January 11, 2016 and building on the outcome of the first meeting of the QCG, the group discussed and made progress on a roadmap towards initiating peace talks with Taliban groups that reflects the shared commitments of the QCG member countries. The roadmap aims to set specific measures that are necessary for creating a conducive environment for the commencement of Afghan led, Afghan owned peace talks between representatives of the

Government of Afghanistan and representatives of Taliban groups aimed at reduction of violence and establishing lasting peace in Afghanistan and the region. To this end, the QCG called on all Taliban groups to enter into early talks with the Afghan government to resolve all differences politically in accordance with the will and aspirations of the entire Afghan nation and the desire and support of the QCG member countries for lasting peace in Afghanistan.

The participants of the QCG once again emphasized the need for an end to the senseless violence against the Afghan people. The QCG countries agree that all forms of terrorism presents a grave threat to countries, the region and the world. The members indicated their commitment to a robust effort to eliminate all forms of terrorist groups, regardless of their national origin, operating in their respective territories.

The QCG member countries agreed that friendly, mutually respectful and cooperative relations between the member states of QCG are necessary to create an enabling environment for the peace process in Afghanistan, which will help ensure the security, stability, prosperity, and interests of the region.

The QCG agreed to continue regular meetings to advance the Peace and Reconciliation process in Afghanistan. The group will hold its next meeting on February 6, 2016 in Islamabad.

Ambassador Hale Inaugurates State-of-the-Art Hospital in Jacobabad

Jacobabad | January 15, 2015

American Ambassador David Hale and Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah inaugurated the Jacobabad Institute of Medical Sciences (JIMS). The United States through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided \$18 million to build the 133-bed hospital complex and supply it with medical equipment and a solar energy system. Sindh Health Minister Jam Mehtab Dahar, U.S. Consul General Brian Heath and USAID Pakistan Mission Director John Groarke attended. “The Sindh government and Department of Health have been excellent partners on this project from the very beginning,” said Ambassador Hale. “This state-of-the-art facility will provide high quality medical services to more than one million people each year. It will also serve as a nexus for research and training in the region.”

The medical center offers inpatient and outpatient treatment, emergency services, and maternal and child care. An autonomous board of governors comprised of civil society, legislators, and health professionals oversees the hospital’s management and operations.

USAID has funded the renovation, expansion, and new construction of several health facilities in Pakistan, including Jinnah Post-Graduate Medical Center and the central warehouse for health commodities in Karachi.

While in Jacobabad, Ambassador Hale also visited the construction site of USAID’s \$36 million Sindh

Municipal Services Program water treatment plant. When completed, the facility will provide potable water to more than 250,000 area residents. Jacobabad Deputy Commissioner Raja Shah Zaman Khuhro briefed the Ambassador on the \$1 million USAID project to support sustainable development of new water resources and integrate water hygiene into school curricula.

For more information on USAID projects, please visit <http://www.usaid.gov/pakistan>

Senior U.S. Trade Delegation Visits Pakistan Islamabad, January 15, 2016

A U.S.-Pakistan Business Council (USPBC) delegation comprised of 26 senior executives from leading American companies in the IT, energy, and consumer goods sectors visited Islamabad January 13 to 15 for a series of meetings aimed at increasing bilateral trade and American investment in Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan welcomed USPBC Chairman Miles Young, CEO of advertising firm Ogilvy & Mather, and Dr. Mehmood Khan, Vice Chairman of Pepsi, as state guests. The delegation attended a luncheon hosted by Prime Minister Sharif at his official residence, and the delegation also met with other high level officials, including Finance Minister Ishaq Dar Commerce Minister Khurram Dastgir Khan, and Board of Investment Chairman Miftah Ismail.

Ambassador David Hale hosted the delegation at the Embassy, where the group discussed opportunities and challenges facing American companies in Pakistan. In his remarks, Ambassador Hale underscored the United States' commitment to strengthening economic ties between the two countries. "Economic engagement is a key part of the U.S. relationship with Pakistan and the U.S. government is committed to deepening that engagement. We realize, however, that government alone cannot increase this engagement. In order to do that, the private sector is essential," Ambassador Hale said.

The United States is the largest destination for Pakistani exports and is one of the country's primary sources of foreign direct investment (FDI). USPBC is a Washington-based affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce dedicated to advancing American commercial engagement with Pakistan. Its members include small, medium, and multinational companies that export to or invest in Pakistan. The Chamber has maintained an ongoing and active role in promoting private sector engagement in Pakistan and works closely with the American Business Forum in Lahore and the American Business Council in Karachi.

U. S. Embassy Celebrates WECREATE Handover Islamabad | January 12, 2016



Startup Cup Founder & CEO Sean Griffin, TiE Islamabad Executive Director Murtaza Zaidi, WECREATE Manager Marva Bari, American Ambassador David Hale, & U.S. Department of State Senior Advisor for Women's Entrepreneurship & Development Tanya Hiple.

U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan David Hale joined more than 50 entrepreneurs, members of the business community, and government officials from across Pakistan to celebrate the handover of authority of the Women's Entrepreneurial Center of Resources, Education, Access, and Training for Economic Empowerment Center (WECREATE). Islamabad is home to the world's first WECREATE Center. The Center opened in February 2015 and is a business incubator specifically designed for female entrepreneurs. Initially funded by a grant by the U.S. Department of State, the Center has reached a critical milestone in its operations by becoming self-sustaining through fee-for-service models and private sector support. The WECREATE Center will now be managed by the Islamabad chapter of The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE), a Silicon Valley-based entrepreneurial organization.

"There is no question why Pakistan was chosen to host the inaugural WECREATE Center: The talent, creativity, and human capital that exist here are an inspiration worldwide," Ambassador Hale said during his keynote address. "The WECREATE Center will continue to facilitate economic growth. What WECREATE's entrepreneurs have accomplished in just one year by attaining self-sufficiency is remarkable. This milestone is only the beginning and I cannot wait to see what the women of WECREATE have in store for all of us," Hale added.

Representatives from WECREATE's partner organizations, including StartUp Cup, the Hashoo Foundation, and the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council were also in attendance. Ambassador Hale concluded the event by handing over a ceremonial key to TiE Islamabad's Murtaza Zaidi.

WECREATE's co-working space provides a flexible option for female business owners or workforce looking for a community of liked minded entrepreneurs. Available on membership or usage basis, the space provides entrepreneurs with a creative and well-designed space where they can collaborate

freely or work individually. Since opening in Islamabad, additional WECREATE Centers have opened in Cambodia, , Kenya, and Zambia. For more information on the WECREATE Pakistan Center, please visit www.facebook.com/pakistanwecreate and <https://twitter.com/WECREATEPak>

Joint Press Statement of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States and China on Afghan peace and reconciliation

Islamabad, January 11, 2016 – The first meeting of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States and China on the Afghan peace and reconciliation process was held in Islamabad on 11 January 2016. The delegations were led by Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai, Pakistan’s Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Ambassador Richard G. Olson and China’s Special Envoy for Afghanistan Ambassador Deng Xijun.

The Group reiterated the commitment of their countries to the realization of objectives expressed in their statement from the quadrilateral meeting held on the sidelines of the Heart of Asia Conference in Islamabad on 9 December 2015. Building on the outcome of December 9 trilateral and quadrilateral meetings, they considered mutual efforts to facilitate an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process with a view to achieving lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region.

All four countries underscored the importance of bringing an end to the conflict in Afghanistan that continues to inflict senseless violence on the Afghan people and also breeds insecurity throughout the region. The participants emphasized the immediate need for direct talks between representatives of the Government of Afghanistan and representatives from Taliban groups in a peace process that aims to preserve Afghanistan’s unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The discussions focused on undertaking a clear and realistic assessment of the opportunities for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan, anticipated obstacles and measures that would help create a conducive environment for peace talks with the shared goal of reducing violence and establishing lasting peace in Afghanistan.

The meeting adopted the terms for the work of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group and agreed to continue regular meetings to advance the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan. The group would hold discussions on a roadmap at its next meeting to be held on 18th January 2016 in Kabul.

United States Supports Livestock Sector Emergency Preparedness

January 11, 2016 | Islamabad

Two top veterinary emergency response experts affiliated with the international Livestock Emergency

Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) Project arrived in Islamabad today to lead a weeklong train-the-trainer workshop for Pakistan’s emergency response officials. The LEGS Project is partnering with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to enhance emergency preparedness within Pakistan’s livestock sector. The training will provide skills and materials to enable participants to become LEGS Trainers, who will then be able to train additional people in their organizations and regions.

Speaking at the first day of training, USDA Animal Health Advisor Dr. Jack Mortenson said, “This training is one of the first steps for animal emergency plans at the local level across Pakistan. This advanced planning will contribute to minimizing animal deaths and decreased production during natural disasters.”

The Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) is a set of international procedures for the design, implementation, and assessment of livestock interventions to assist people affected by humanitarian crises. They are based on livelihood objectives that aim to provide rapid assistance to protect and rebuild the livestock assets of crisis-affected communities. LEGS works to develop closer linkages between relief and development work, to save not just lives, but also livelihoods.

Pakistan’s livestock sector contributes 11.5% to national GDP and 55.1% to the agriculture sector’s overall value. The livestock sector is dependent on sufficient natural resources and market access to survive and prosper. Emergencies therefore can have devastating effects on the industry and local livelihoods.

American Embassy Donates Toys to SOS Children’s Village Islamabad



American Ambassador to Pakistan David Hale with children from SOS Children’s Village Islamabad. Islamabad, January 9, 2016 – American Ambassador to Pakistan David Hale and members of the United States Marines Corps donated nearly 500 items to children from the SOS Children’s Village in

Islamabad at a ceremony at the American Embassy in Islamabad on Saturday, January 9. More than 50 children from the shelter joined Ambassador Hale and the Marines for the event. American and Pakistani employees of the embassy donated to the program over the past two months, giving gifts ranging from toys to shoes and clothing. The Marines collected donations under the international campaign, Toys For Tots.

SOS Children's Village Islamabad is a home and school for nearly 100 orphaned children from the Islamabad area. The village is part of a network of facilities spanning across 12 districts in Pakistan.

USAID and HEC Kick Off Student and Faculty Exchange under U.S.-Pakistan Centers for Advanced Studies Program

Islamabad, January 8, 2016 – Senior officials from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan held a send-off reception today at the National University of Sciences and Technology for approximately two dozen students and faculty who are departing for a semester abroad at Arizona State University.

Over the next four years, approximately 200 energy-engineering graduate students and faculty from the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) and the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Peshawar will each spend a semester in the United States to carry out energy research at Arizona State University's state-of-the-art laboratories. The exchange visits, coordinated through the USAID-funded U.S.-Pakistan Centers for Advanced Studies in Energy (USPCAS-E), will provide faculty the opportunity to upgrade their teaching and corporate-partnership skills and will offer students an opportunity to enhance their research skills and industry awareness.

"The United States is committed to education and economic development in Pakistan, and the U.S.-Pakistan Centers for Advanced Studies in Energy will help meet Pakistan's needs for applied research and skilled graduates in the energy field," USAID Deputy Mission Director Cathy Moore said. USPCAS-E is a joint initiative among NUST, UET Peshawar, and Arizona State University focusing on applied research projects relevant to Pakistan's energy needs. The partnership has multiple goals including curriculum development, research, establishment of new laboratories, and exchange programs. Under the umbrella of the Higher Education Commission, the centers at NUST and UET are expected to eventually become Pakistan's premier sustainable energy research centers. USPCAS-E also aims to set new standards for supporting the success of women and disadvantaged youth in the engineering profession.

USPCAS-E is part of USAID's larger \$127 million U.S.-Pakistan Centers for Advanced Studies investment that aims to harness applied research to find innovative and practical solutions for Pakistan's energy, water, agriculture, and food security challenges.

BridgeUS 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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