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Connecting People - Building Bridges – Spreading Harmony



“United States Humanitarian Assistance since 2009 Reaches \$1bn with a New Hospital in Bagh” the United States has helped Pakistan in anything this country needs to fix, build or rebuild, but unfortunately Pakistan’s situation is fast deteriorating. Whole country is at the mercy of Taliban. Poverty is endless; power outages make cities like ghost towns, strikes – Business shut

down calls have brought economy and education to a halt. Minorities are lynched. Courts are being used for political victimization and extortion has spiked many folds. The following news make people wonder where did the money go? Either this money has enriched politicians or the lack of the evaluation, assessment or accountability by the US mission in Pakistan is seen as a soft target by the Pakistani politicians and their cronies:

- Health indicators project bleak future for Pakistani children
- Pakistan has the highest rate of first day deaths
- Hospital of last resort in Pakistan faces closure (Ref Daily Dawn, Feb 24, 14)
- Crippled: Don’t just blame the bullet, about inability of the government of Pakistan to fight against Polio return to Pakistan.
- Pakistan most terror-hit nation

This mammoth amount of money is also responsible of mushroom growth of NGO’s in Pakistan, mostly run by the friends and family members of the incumbents.

This is the time for the US government to intensify the efforts that the US tax payer’s money directly going to the people of Pakistan. As the U.S. has already strengthening the investigation and prosecution methods with Specialized Training to Build Skills of Female Prosecutors and

Investigators, a whole lot still needs to be done. This is also important as Pakistan has a large number of high profile ghost murders, where suspects either hiding in the parliament or using political influence or spending time away from Pakistan.

This is the time for the world to let pay the politicians in Pakistan for the situation Pakistan is faced with.

It is suggested that all the departments and institutions which are the recipients of the USAID should appoint the people advised by the US-Pak joint advisory board with a condition of performance assessment.

Bridge Communications and Research – BCR had developed a tough questionnaire for the 2013 general elections in Pakistan. This questionnaire would have made almost 90% of Pakistani parliamentarians disqualified to contest elections.

- 1-Tax returns for past five years.**
- 2. Ownership of assets. Self and immediate family members.**
- 3. International travel record and capital.**
- 4. Public service until now.**
- 5. Involvement in charity work and NGO links.**
- 6. Academic qualification.**
- 7. Profession – industry.**
- 8. What do you do for living?**
- 9. How many immediate and distant family members are parliamentarians/ politicians/ bureaucrats/ serving armed forces and related to the media?**
- 10- How many times you, your immediate and distant family members have gone abroad for health care and education?**
- 11. Have you or your immediate family members have loans written off or allotted any property?**
- 12. What steps have you taken to pull this country out of the current situation?**
- 13. Have you ever been to jail?**
- 14. How many immediate and distant family members been to jail or convicted?**
- 15. How many times you have defied law?**
- 16. Elections within the party.**
- 17. Name and evidence of the constituency where you have provided any service to people.**
- 18. Your party follows the democratic practical values or heredity and personality.**
- 19. Are your leadership and family currently in Pakistan?**
- 20. What steps you or your party has taken to pull this country out of the current situation?**

21. Why did you not resign after mass killings, collapse of the institutions and failure of governance?
22. How many strikes have been observed yet on your party's call? How many people are killed and how much economic losses have occurred?
23. Do you publish a monthly newsletter about what you have delivered to your constituents?
24. What is the plan in place to stop killings, strikes, support economy, lower poverty and maintain rule of law?
25. What is the percentage of your presence in assembly sessions? How many questions, how many bills you have produced and the number of point of order you have raised?

Now something about the government of Pakistan's negotiation venture with Taliban. The United States has to play a very responsible and robust role to safeguard moderators, US interests and sympathisers in Pakistan. The radical's infiltration in Pakistan's security institutions is the recipe of another clear and present danger to this world. Since 2001, 40,000 Pakistani civilians have lost their lives in vain, leaving behind a destitute and hopeless generation. This generation is terrifically vulnerable to become suicidal and the growing number of suicidal attacks is a clear indication to that.

Syed Naeem Uddin
Editor-in-Chief

United States Humanitarian Assistance since 2009 Reaches \$1bn with a New Hospital in Bagh, October 24, 2013, The United States handed over a newly completed hospital to the AJK Government today. The Tehsil Headquarters (THQ) Hospital in Dhirkot was inaugurated today by USAID Pakistan Mission Director Gregory Gottlieb, Sardar Qamar Zaman, Minister of Health, Government of AJK, and Representatives from the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA)/ State Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (SERRA).

The handover of the hospital marked the completion of the United States 2005 earthquake reconstruction assistance under which 77 buildings with a funding of USD 137 million were reconstructed in Bagh, AJK and Mansehra district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. The hospital will serve 200 patients daily and is the largest health facility serving over 80,000 people from surrounding areas. The hospital is built to be earthquake-resistant. Local resources were utilized in its construction, resulting in economic revitalization and capacity and skill development. Community participation from design to construction and furnishing was also a unique feature of the project.

"Consistent with American values, the United States has provided life-saving humanitarian assistance to millions of Pakistanis affected by disasters, and since 2009 U.S. humanitarian

assistance in Pakistan has accounted for USD 1 billion,” stated USAID Mission Director Gregory Gottlieb.

Through this assistance, 77 buildings comprising 61 schools and 16 health facilities destroyed in the 2005 earthquake were reconstructed and furnished. Schools constructed under this program serve 18,000 students from 556 villages and health facilities serve over half a million people.

Under its larger infrastructure support efforts, the United States through USAID is also building a gynecology and fistula ward at Karachi’s Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, constructing a 133-bed hospital in Jacobabad, reconstructing or renovating 7 faculties of education buildings at several universities, and rehabilitating flood-affected schools in Sindh and Balochistan

Specialized U.S. Training Builds Skills of Female Prosecutors and

Investigators, Islamabad | February 28, 2014, Officials from the U.S. State and Justice Departments concluded a five-day training course on investigative and analytical techniques for female prosecutors and police investigators on February 28. The Women Police and Prosecutor Conference, held in Islamabad February 24-28, brought together female prosecutors and police investigators from Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and The Islamabad Capital Territory to receive specialized training from both Pakistani and American experts in crime scene analysis, forensic evidence collection, and interview techniques.

Speaking at the conclusion of the seminar, U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Tom Williams told the participants, “Pakistan’s justice system will serve the whole population most fairly and effectively when more women fill the ranks of police investigators and prosecutors.” Mr. Williams added, “When people feel safe and protected, when those guilty of crimes are consistently brought to justice and punished for their acts, businesses will prosper and Pakistanis will have better opportunities to achieve their potential.”

The women participating in the conference received instruction from Pakistani and American experts on police-prosecutor cooperation and case presentation in addition to practical skills for investigating crimes and analyzing and presenting evidence. The participants agreed that increased coordination between police and prosecutors from the beginning of an investigation is essential to bringing criminals to justice.

This training program and conference is part of a comprehensive United States effort to support the activities of a range of Pakistani institutions to mitigate crime and eradicate terrorism. The United States partners with the government of Pakistan to strengthen its justice system and provide professional development and training for law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and judges.

Community College Initiative Alumni Reunion Strengthens U.S.-

Pakistan Ties, Islamabad | February 28, 2014, The U.S. Embassy and the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN) welcomed more than 150 alumni of the Community College Initiative (CCI) exchange program to its inaugural reunion in Islamabad. Principal Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAP) Ambassador Beth Jones from the U.S. Department of State, and Rita Akhtar, Executive Director of the U.S. Educational Foundation in Pakistan, greeted the students, who represented all regions of Pakistan.

During the three-day reunion, participants will share their experiences in the United States, participate in workshops and speaker sessions on entrepreneurship, strategic leadership, and civil society development, enjoy cultural and music performances, and brainstorm ideas for community service projects that benefit Pakistan's social and economic development. The reunion will culminate in a team-building exercise, where the participants will learn new techniques and skills to improve their own organizations.

"When I look into this audience, I see talented representatives of this nation's bright future," Principal Deputy SRAP Ambassador Beth Jones said at the reunion. "You have an extraordinary collective capacity to make a lasting and positive impact in your communities and your nation." Participants in the CCI exchange program, which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, spend one academic year studying at a community college in the United States in one of the following fields: agriculture, applied engineering, business management, early childhood education, information technology, media, and tourism and hospitality management. CCI participants are recruited from Pakistan's rural and historically underserved populations and most are mid-career professionals.

The U.S. government invests nearly \$40 million annually on exchange programs for Pakistani citizens. More than 1,200 Pakistanis participate in the various high school, undergraduate, graduate, and professional U.S.-sponsored exchange programs each year. The Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN) is one of the largest U.S. alumni networks in the world. It consists of more than 13,000 students and professionals who have participated in U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs and organizes a number of events in Pakistan, including community service projects, leadership trainings, roundtable discussions, and community engagement activities. Learn more about PUAN at www.pakusalumninetwork.com.

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U.S. Commerce Department to Host Gems and Jewelry Delegation for Visit to the United States, February 25, 2014, The U.S. Department of Commerce will host a select delegation of 18 Pakistani gems and jewelry business leaders for a visit to the United States from May 27 to June 10. The delegation will visit Washington, D.C., and Las Vegas to receive training in industry best practices and to participate in a leading gems and jewelry trade show. During the visit, program participants will also develop individual business plans to help enhance their company operations upon return to Pakistan.

The training is part of the Special American Business Internship Training (SABIT) program, which

supports U.S.-Pakistan trade and Pakistan's ongoing efforts toward increased economic and export diversification. The U.S. Department of Commerce sponsored similar SABIT training for the Pakistani gems and jewelry and surgical instruments industry in 2010 and 2012.

Delegates for this year's program will be selected from a competitive application and interview process, which will remain open until Friday, February 28. The application is free of charge, and will be available for download at www.trade.gov/sabit and <http://www.commerce.gov.pk/>.

USAID, OPIC, and GE: Wind Turbines to Add Electricity to National Grid

February 18, 2014 | Islamabad

Thomas E. Williams, Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, reaffirmed the United States government's commitment to help Pakistan address its energy shortage through wind power projects in a meeting with General Electric (GE), Pakistani government officials, and businessmen today. Wind projects are expected to bring up to 1750 megawatts of clean, renewable energy to the national electricity grid by the end of 2015.

Addressing Pakistani government officials, senior executives from General Electric – including GE's Vice Chairman of the Board John Rice – and private sector wind developers in Islamabad, Deputy Chief of Mission Williams said: "These wind projects are a positive example of a public-private partnership in the important field of renewable energy. The U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), a U.S. government development bank, is in the process of negotiating long-term, low-interest financing with Sapphire Wind Power Company, Ltd. and has four other wind projects in various stages of financial review." For all of these projects, GE will provide the turbines. While these five U.S.-financed projects will add an estimated 250 megawatts to Pakistan's electricity grid, the U.S. Agency for International Development plans to provide assistance to upgrade the transmission lines, which will benefit a total of 25 energy projects in the area. All projects together are expected to bring a total of 1750 additional megawatts to the grid by the end of 2015.

GE, the main supplier of wind turbines for power projects in the Sindh wind corridor, updated the U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission on the progress of its wind projects. The GE delegation members expressed optimism that the Pakistani government will partner with GE to expedite the approvals and permits required for the financial close of these projects.

United States and Pakistan Launch the Pakistan Reading Project

Islamabad, February 13, 2014 – The United States and Pakistan launched the Pakistan Reading Project today, marking the beginning of a five year, \$160 million investment in reading education in

Pakistan. Funded through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the project will improve the reading skills of 3.2 million children across Pakistan, build the capacity of 94,000 primary school teachers, and provide over 6,000 scholarships to train aspiring teachers.

U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson, U.S. Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues Catherine Russell, and State Minister for Education, Training, and Standards in Higher Education Baligh-ur-Rehman addressed teachers and parents at the Islamabad Model Secondary School for Girls, Chak Shahzad and then met with schoolchildren.

Ambassador Olson said, "The Pakistan Reading Project is an opportunity to improve the reading skills of millions of Pakistani children. ...We hope this project will reinforce a national culture of reading - in classrooms, communities, and homes." U.S. Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues Catherine M. Russell said, "The United States has invested in girls' education because we know it is one of the most effective development investments for a girl's future employment."

The Pakistan Reading Project will reach students in 67 districts and will help ensure high quality literacy instruction at the primary school level. The project will also provide teacher training opportunities by expanding the number of colleges and universities offering specialized bachelors and associate degrees in education that focus on reading.

The Pakistan Reading Project is one part of a comprehensive education program that the United States implements in Pakistan in partnership with the government of Pakistan. This program includes building or rehabilitating more than 850 schools; establishing centers for advanced education studies at three Pakistani universities; expanding English skills for more than 5,000 low-income students; and awarding more than 4,800 scholarships for university students to pursue education through the Pakistan-USAID Merit and Needs Based scholarship Program. For more information on the United States' assistance for education in Pakistan, visit:

http://photos.state.gov/libraries/pakistan/323264/factsheets/201307_education.pdf

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The United States Launches Pakistan’s Pioneering Mobile Agriculture

Project, February 4, 2014, The United States, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), launched a new pilot project to introduce mobile enabled advisory and financial services for peach and potato farmers and fishermen in Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

As a result of this project, over 1,700 small and medium sized farms and 15,000 people in Swat will gain access to mobile banking. With information and financing more readily available, farmers can learn practices to increase their crop yields, gain increased access to markets, and conduct efficient and safe financial transactions.

“This pilot initiative will provide a platform to establish the basis and modalities for the promotion of mobile enabled advisory and financial services in the agriculture sector, starting with the peach, potato and fisheries sectors of Swat,” said USAID’s Mission Director Gregory Gottlieb at the Islamabad event.

Shahi Rome, a peach farmer from Swat said, “We need weather updates in order to be informed about possible rain or hail so we can decide in time when to spray and irrigate. Through timely information my efforts and investment will not be wasted.”

Working in partnership with USAID through its Firms Project, the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will provide advisory and market information, and Telenor Pakistan – one of the largest telecom service providers in Pakistan – will provide technological assistance for the mobile service. USAID Mission Director Gregory Gottlieb, Minister for Agriculture and Information Technology, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mr. Shahram Khan Tarakai, Chairman Pakistan Telecommunication Authority Syed Ismail Shah and Director and Head of Products & Financial Services, Telenor Pakistan, Mr. Khurram Malik attended the launch of the pilot project and spoke at the event.

The initial phase of the project will test the commercial viability of private sector enterprises, including multinational corporations, to launch similar services in other sectors and regions of Pakistan.

USAID's Firms Project is part of a comprehensive U.S. economic growth assistance program 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, which allows them to earn more for the crops they grow.

For more details regarding Economic Growth and Agriculture sector kindly visit USAID's website at; <http://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/economic-growth-agriculture>

U.S. Embassy Premieres “Art for Social Change” Film, Highlights Young Pakistani Artists’ Visit to the United States, January 24, 2014, U.S. Embassy Islamabad and the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN) hosted the premiere of the short film “Art for Social Change,” which documents the experiences of 14 Pakistani artists on an exchange program to the United States, on January 24 at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad. The 14 artists represent a larger group of emerging artists whose work appeared in the “Pakistani Voices” exhibit at the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C.

“The artists used a silent yet powerful medium to share their culture with an American audience, to engage in a cultural dialogue,” said U.S. Embassy Minister Counselor for Public Affairs Peter Brennan at the premiere. “All the artists whose work was selected for this exhibit are to be commended for their fearlessness in calling attention to the struggles of everyday people, and highlighting critical new ways of thinking.”

While in the United States, the participants collaborated with U.S. art activists, engaged in community art projects, and explored ways to use their art to promote key social issues in their

communities.

“Not only did the artists have the chance to learn about U.S. arts culture, they also met with local counterparts to learn how to transform an idea for social change into a community art project,” explained Assistant Cultural Affairs Attaché Jen McAndrew. “We hope this exchange will give the artists the tools to use their art to make a positive impact in their communities back in Pakistan.”

At the reception following the screening, the artists also exhibited new artwork inspired by their U.S. exchange experience. To find out when “Art for Social Change” will air on local television, follow the film’s Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Art-for-Social-Change/712736475416732>. For more information about the “Pakistani Voices” exhibit at the Phillips Collection in Washington, visit www.phillipscollection.org/exhibitions/2013-10-01-exhibition-pakistani-voices.aspx.

The U.S. government invests nearly \$40 million annually on exchange programs for Pakistani citizens. More than 1,200 Pakistanis participate in the various high school, undergraduate, graduate, and professional U.S.-sponsored exchange programs each year. As a result, the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network is one of the largest U.S. alumni networks in the world.

Consisting of more than 13,000 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 trainings, roundtable discussions, and community engagement activities. Learn more about PUAN at www.pakusalumninetwork.com.

The United States Reaffirms its Commitment to Improve Healthcare in Pakistan, January 22, 2014, U.S. Ambassador Richard Olson attended the release of Pakistan's National Institute for Population Studies Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) for 2012-13 at a ceremony at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad. Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, and State Minister for National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination Saira Afzal Tarar were also present.

Ambassador Olson highlighted the ongoing partnership between the United States and Pakistan to improve the health of the Pakistani people in remarks he delivered at the release ceremony. He remarked that, "More women now receive prenatal care. More births are assisted by a skilled provider. And more babies are delivered in a health facility...The focus on women and children is fundamental because healthy women and children develop a healthy society."

Since 2002, the United States has provided \$320 million in support of Pakistan's health sector. The U.S. Agency for International Development launched its flagship Maternal and Child Health Program

in June 2013 to help improve the health and well-being of women and children and to expand coverage to the most marginalized and hard to reach populations.

In addition to the Maternal Child and Health Program, the United States is supporting Pakistan's efforts to expand its healthcare services through a number of programs. For example, the United States Government financed a new gynecology ward at the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Center in Karachi that provides care to 140,000 underserved women and trains 1,300 health care professionals annually. The United States is also funding construction of a new \$10 million public hospital in Jacobabad which will serve 1.2 million residents of northern Sindh, southern Punjab, and eastern Balochistan.

The Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) has been used by 90 countries to establish a standardized way to provide data for health and population policies and programming.

Timely collection, analysis and use of reliable demographic and health data are crucial for planning, monitoring and evaluating health programs. Data for this survey was collected from a nationally representative sample of nearly 13,000 households, and more than 15,000 women and 3,000 men between the ages of 15 and 49 years were interviewed.

To read more about United States assistance to Pakistan for meeting health challenges please visit: <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/Maternal%20and%20Child%20Health.pdf> (PDF 448 KB)

U.S. Ambassador Visits Faisalabad, Promotes Education, Business, and Agricultural Partnerships, January 21, 2014, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson visited Faisalabad today to highlight education, business, and agricultural partnerships between the United States and Pakistan. During his first visit to the city, Ambassador Olson met with Faisalabad District Coordinating Officer Noor Ul Amin Mengal and other leaders to discuss how the United States and Pakistan can work together to enhance educational exchanges, entrepreneurship, and advanced agricultural research that will increase food security in Punjab.

During his visit, Ambassador Olson inaugurated the new Lincoln Corner at Government College University Faisalabad. The Lincoln Corner will serve as an information center with materials about the United States, reference books, periodicals, media, and internet connectivity. "This Lincoln Corner represents a strong and growing partnership between the people of the United States and Pakistan," said Ambassador Olson. "The resources here will create opportunities for an open dialogue between our cultures and build bridges of mutual understanding."

Ambassador Olson highlighted opportunities for investment in American franchises by inaugurating Faisalabad's first Hardee's restaurant. During this event, he applauded entrepreneurship and

investment that will create employment for Pakistanis.

Since 2003, the United States has had a strong partnership with the University of Agriculture Faisalabad, supporting a \$12.4 million endowment for faculty development, agricultural sciences research, technology transfer, and product commercialization. Ambassador Olson discussed this partnership and other projects that enhance agricultural research and food security with university leadership.

One Hundred Forty Pakistani Students Set to Embark on U.S.-funded Undergraduate Study, Islamabad, December 19, 2013, U.S. Embassy Minister Counselor for Public Affairs Peter Brennan congratulated 140 Pakistani students traveling to the United States for undergraduate study as part of the U.S. government-funded Global Undergraduate (Global UGRAD) Program. Brennan congratulated the participants saying, "We are proud that in Pakistan we run the single largest array of exchanges of any U.S. Embassy in the world - sending over 1,200 Pakistanis to the United States every year. This shows the depth of our commitment to young Pakistanis, and our intent to invest in Pakistan's future."

One hundred and forty Pakistani students will soon depart for a semester of study at U.S. colleges and universities under the Global UGRAD fellowship program, a U.S. Department of State initiative. The U.S. government fully funds these fellowships for the entire period of study. The United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP) administers the program.

"The really exciting thing about this group of undergraduates is that so many of these students come from remote or economically disadvantaged areas of Pakistan," said Rita Akhtar, Executive Director of USEFP at a pre-departure orientation to help students prepare for study in the United States. Akhtar noted that this year's group includes 63 students from Punjab, 35 from Sindh, 16 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 10 from Gilgit-Baltistan, five from Balochistan, three from Azad Jammu and Kashmir, six from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and two from Islamabad. The students, sixty percent of whom are women, will pursue degrees in a wide variety of disciplines, including humanities and social science, engineering, science, law, art and design, economics, and business administration at more than 50 different colleges and universities located throughout the United States.

The Global UGRAD program was launched in the fall of 2010 when the first cohort of around 50 students departed for the United States. More than 650 students have participated in the program to date. USEFP is a commission established in 1950 by the governments of Pakistan and the United States. USEFP's mission is to promote mutual understanding between the American and Pakistani people through educational and cultural exchange. Since its inception 63 years ago, more than 4,100

Pakistanis and 873 Americans have participated in USEFP-administered exchange programs.

U.S. Government Expands Merit and Needs Based Scholarship Program through HEC to Benefit 3,000 Additional Pakistani Students

December 16, 2013, Islamabad, December 16, 2013 - The United States government will launch a second phase of its Merit and Needs Based Program which will benefit 3,000 deserving but financially constrained Pakistani students. This was shared by Gregory Gottlieb, Mission Director, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Pakistan in a meeting with 29 vice chancellors of partner universities and Professor Mukhtar Ahmad, Executive Director, Higher Education Commission, Government of Pakistan.

A total of 1,807 scholarships were awarded in Phase-I of the Merit and Needs Based Scholarship Program to financially needy students and more than 1,350 of them have obtained undergraduate and graduate degrees. The scholarship program also encouraged other donors to award scholarships at participating institutions resulting in a more than doubling of the number of students enrolled since 2004. Based on the successes of the program, needs based scholarships have increased from two to more than 70 public and private universities since 2004.

"I am pleased to announce that 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 young and talented Pakistanis," said Gregory Gottlieb, Mission Director, USAID. "Eighteen additional universities have also been included and new disciplines of study will allow Pakistani youth to obtain careers in the job market," he added.

Professor Mukhtar Ahmad, Executive Director, HEC thanked the United States for its continued support of Pakistan's education sector and noted that students are selected for the scholarships based on financial need, after fulfilling university admission requirements. He added that fifty percent of the scholarships are designated for female students in the expanded program.

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. To learn more about U.S. education initiatives in Pakistan, see: <http://goo.gl/auHXF>.
(Urdu) (PDF 2 MB)

Global UGrad Alumni Reunion Demonstrates Community Service

Commitment, December 13, 2013, U.S. Embassy Islamabad and the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN) welcomed more than 300 alumni of the Global Undergraduate (UGrad) exchange program to the second annual UGrad reunion in Islamabad. The U.S. Embassy's Chargé d'Affaires Thomas Williams and Rita Akhtar, executive director of the U.S. Educational Foundation in Pakistan, greeted the students, who represented all regions of Pakistan.

During the reunion, which takes place December 13-15, participants will share their experiences in the United States, participate in workshops and speaker sessions discussing entrepreneurship and creativity, enjoy cultural and music performances, and brainstorm ideas for community service projects that benefit Pakistan's social and economic development. The reunion will culminate in four community outreach projects in Islamabad: a blood donation drive, a park clean-up with local school children, an outreach event with the disabled, and an anti-littering flash mob performance to highlight environmental awareness.

"There are so many impressive young people in Pakistan, and each of you is a talented representative of this nation's bright future," Chargé d'Affaires Williams said at the reunion. "To think that my country has played a role in advancing your education and helping your nation's prospects makes me very proud of the Global UGrad program, and also of you."

The Global UGrad program in Pakistan, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, is the largest in the world. Since 2010, the U.S. Embassy has sent nearly 700 Pakistani university students to the United States for one semester of study in a U.S. university. Through U.S.-based training, practical experience in leadership positions, and community engagement, Global UGrad participants gain the skills needed to implement long-term civic and economic change in their communities. The U.S. Educational Foundation in Pakistan implements the program.

Upon their return, alumni of the Global UGrad exchange become members of the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN), one of the largest exchange alumni networks in the world. PUAN has 11 chapters throughout Pakistan. More than 13,000 students and professionals who have participated in U.S. government-sponsored exchanges are members. The network's mission is to encourage people-to-people relationships between the United States and Pakistan. Learn more about PUAN at www.pakusalumninetwork.com.

U.S. Embassy and International Islamic University Help Combat Gender Based Violence in the Workplace, December 10, 2013, Leading corporations discussed their efforts to enforce laws protecting women from workplace sexual harassment with more than 200 academics, social activists, U.S. alumni, university students, and working women today at the

International Islamic University.

U.S. Embassy Islamabad's Counselor for Public Affairs Angela Aggeler delivered opening remarks at the event, saying, "This anti-sexual harassment law passed because civil society groups worked together with members of Parliament who shared their vision of justice in the workplace. This type of collaboration is already benefitting women across Pakistan, as hundreds of women have taken legal action against sexual harassment in their workplace." Aggeler concluded, "We need to work together —the international community, the government, the private sector, civil society, and grassroots advocates— to let Pakistanis know that gender-based violence is a serious human rights abuse."

U.S. Department of State's Senior Advisor on Gender Based Violence, Saba Ghorri, moderated a panel of experts including Fouzia Saeed, an activist who worked with the Women's Parliamentary Caucus for the passage of the Protection Against Harassment of Women in the Workplace Act, Syeda Kiran Zaidi human resource specialist from Telenor, Faisal Mushtaq CEO, Roots School System and Dr Munazza Yaqoob from IIU.

Hosted by the U.S. Embassy Islamabad and the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council, the event was part of U.S. support for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence campaign. The international campaign started on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ended on December 10, International Human Rights Day.

The United States supports efforts to end gender-based violence around the world. As Secretary Kerry has stated, "Investing in girls is a critical part of our duty to promote prosperity, security, and peace around the world. Empowered girls grow up empowered women. They grow up to be empowered mothers, leaders, and innovators."

The U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council, launched by former Secretary Clinton in 2012, and supported by Secretary Kerry, links U.S. and Pakistani corporations and universities to initiatives that advance economic opportunities and education for women in Pakistan.

Ambassador Olson: U.S. committed to help Pakistan create economic opportunities, December 6, 2013, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson underscored the U.S. government's commitment to increase opportunities for entrepreneurs in Pakistan at the 2013 Pakistan StartUp Cup awards ceremony which took place at the Islamabad Marriott Hotel today.

The StartUp Cup, jointly organized by the U.S. Embassy and The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) Islamabad Chapter, is a business model competition that took place over 19 weeks, with more than 400

Pakistani start-up businesses participating.

Prize money of PKR 1,000,000 for the winner and 750,000 and 500,000 for the runners up was awarded to the top three businesses. The winner of the Pakistan StartUp Cup will compete in the First Annual World StartUp Cup in Yerevan, Armenia, in January 2014.

In his key-note address, Ambassador Olson said, “We believe Pakistan’s future prosperity will be determined by the success of innovative and fast-growing companies. When entrepreneurs here in Pakistan succeed, they create economic opportunity not only for Pakistanis, but for people all over the world, including the United States.”

Ambassador Olson also stated that the U.S. Embassy through its Khushali ka Safar (“Journey to Prosperity”) program is providing financial support to encourage innovative, dynamic young Pakistani entrepreneurs who are ready to take on challenges and surmount obstacles in converting their ideas into reality.

“The StartUp Cup is one of many initiatives the U.S. supports to strengthen entrepreneurship education in Pakistan. We are talking to Pakistani-American diaspora investors who are interested in Pakistan’s tremendous potential and how they can support Pakistan’s next generation of entrepreneurs. We are also sponsoring, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Pakistan Private Investment Initiative. This is an investment fund which will soon be an avenue for small and medium-sized Pakistani companies to access the equity capital they need to expand and prosper,” said Ambassador Olson.

Sarah Hashwani, President of TiE Islamabad, said that 96 percent of the Pakistan StartUp Cup participants were able to create a viable business model as a result of the competition.

Ambassador Olson Lauds Pakistani Police Officers Combatting Gender-Based Violence, December 5, 2013, U.S. Ambassador Richard Olson presented closing remarks at a law enforcement conference of Pakistani policemen and policewomen that discussed taking a stand against violence. The conference commemorates the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence campaign. Honorable Judge Jazeela Aslam and gender activist Maliha Hussein gave presentations to raise awareness about laws in Pakistan designed to protect women and girls against violence.

Female and male law enforcement discussed the laws and court rulings pertaining to sexual harassment and acts of violence against women.

In his remarks, Ambassador Olson said, “In your duties as law enforcement officers, you work

together and prove that female colleagues deserve the same respect, training, and career advancement as men. As Mohammad Ali Jinnah said, 'No struggle can ever succeed without women participating side by side with men.' Keeping Pakistan safe is a tremendous contribution to your country. As law enforcement officers, all of you, especially female officers, play an important role in protecting women and girls from violence."

Every year, men and women throughout the world observe 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence in an effort to counter gender based violence that continues to span the globe. The 16 Days campaign focuses on different forms of violence faced by women and girls and the impact it has on them and society as a whole. This week, the U.S. Embassy also hosted a panel discussion for university students and held a workshop with school children about preventing violence against women.

English Access Microscholarship Program Combating Gender-Based

Violence, December 4, 2013, Fifty English Access Microscholarship students discussed the significance of combating gender-based violence on December 4 at National University of Modern Languages (NUML). The event was part of the U.S. Embassy's outreach to highlight the ongoing 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) campaign. The international campaign started on November 25, the International Day of Elimination of Violence against Women, and will end on December 10, International Human Rights Day.

Ambassador Richard Olson of the U.S. Embassy delivered remarks at the event. "The U.S. government remains committed to addressing gender based violence," Olson said. "One of the key ways we do so is through exchange programs that provide Pakistani professionals with opportunities to build their capacity and to share best practices."

Access Program students, ages 14-16, discussed the impact of gender-based violence and the significance of combating this behavior. They also wrote on a wall mural their pledges to avoid and prevent violence against women. Ambassador Olson added his own pledge to the mural.

"The 16 Days campaign offers an opportunity to renew the global commitment to free women and girls from violence," Ambassador Olson concluded. "We all need to work together — the international community, governments, private sector companies, civil society, and grassroots-level advocates — to raise awareness of gender-based violence as a human rights issue."

The English Access Microscholarship Program provides a foundation of English language skills to talented 13- to 18-year-olds from socio-economically disadvantaged sectors through after-school classes and learning activities. The program gives participants English skills that lead to better jobs

and educational prospects. Since the program began in Pakistan in 2005, over 8,000 scholarships have been awarded in 21 locations throughout the country.

U.S. Scholarships Support Business and Agriculture Students, December 4, 2013, Eighty one students are pursuing advanced degrees at Pir Mehr Ali Shah (PMAS) Arid Agriculture University in Rawalpindi and at Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad thanks to need-based scholarships provided by the United States government. Mr. Larry Sampler, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Assistant Administrator, Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad, Higher Education Commission (HEC) Executive Director, Prof. Dr. Rai Niaz Ahmad Khan, Arid Agriculture University Vice Chancellor, and Prof. Dr. Masoom Yousafzai, Quaid-i-Azam University Vice Chancellor, met scholars today to celebrate their academic achievement and to discuss their educational progress.

Sampler commented, “The United States is proud to have invested in higher education in Pakistan over the last five decades. A well educated population is the foundation of a strong economy and a strong and growing Pakistan. We will continue to work very closely with the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan to implement this very successful scholarship program for deserving students.”

The scholarships are part of a long-term commitment by the United States to promote and facilitate academic achievement in Pakistan. The program, which grants scholarships to business and agriculture students, is a part of USAID’s Merit and Needs-Based Scholarship Program. Since 2004, 1,350 students have earned degrees under the program. Over 450 additional students are currently receiving assistance to complete their degrees. Students are selected for scholarships based on financial need and university acceptance. PMAS-Arid Agriculture University and Quaid-i-Azam Universities are among the 11 local partner institutions of the scholarship program. This program also helps partner universities establish student enrollment and financial aid systems. Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad, HEC Executive Director, expressed his appreciation for U.S. support for the education sector in Pakistan. He noted that fifty percent of the scholarships are designated for women in the upcoming expansion of the project.

The Merit and Needs Based Scholarship program is part of the United States’ comprehensive education assistance program in Pakistan. This program includes creating accredited education degree programs at 90 teachers’ colleges and universities, building or rehabilitating more than 850 schools, establishing Centers for Advanced study of energy, agriculture, and water at three Pakistani universities, and expanding English skills for over 5,000 low-income students. To learn more about U.S. education initiatives in Pakistan, see: <http://goo.gl/auHXF>.

U.S. Exchange Program Alumni Discuss Combating Gender-Based

Violence, December 3, 2013, More than 200 students, activists, and educators discussed best practices for combating gender-based violence on December 3 at Islamabad's National University of Science and Technology (NUST). Hosted by the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN) and NUST, the event was part of PUAN's outreach to highlight the ongoing 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) campaign. The international campaign started on November 25, the International Day of Elimination of Violence against Women, and will end on December 10, International Human Rights Day.

Minister Counselor for Public Affairs Peter Brennan of the U.S. Embassy delivered remarks to open the event. "The U.S. government remains committed to addressing gender based violence," Brennan said. "One of the key ways we do so is through exchange programs that provide Pakistani professionals with opportunities to build their capacity and to share best practices."

PTV World anchor Sidra Iqbal moderated a panel of experts who were all alumni of U.S. government sponsored exchange programs: Ms. Aqsa Ghairat Ali Khan, Executive Director of the Women's Organization for Rights and Development (WORD); Mr. Syed Irfan Haider, Director of Operations of Acid Survivors Foundation; and Ms. Ayesha Saddique Khan, barrister and member of the Islamabad High Court. Panelists discussed how to strengthen local efforts to prevent violence against women, and ways activists can develop and share new and effective strategies.

"The 16 Days campaign offers an opportunity to renew the global commitment to free women and girls from violence," Minister Counselor Brennan concluded. "We all need to work together—the international community, governments, private sector companies, civil society, and grassroots-level advocates—to raise awareness of gender-based violence as a human rights issue."

PUAN is one of the largest U.S. exchange alumni networks in the world. Its mission is to encourage people-to-people relationships between Pakistanis and Americans. More than 13,000 students and professionals are members of PUAN, which organizes a number of events across Pakistan, including community service projects, leadership trainings, roundtable discussions, and community engagement activities

Pakistan and United States Discuss Security, Strategic Stability, and Nonproliferation Issues, November 22, 2013, Additional Secretary for United Nations and Economic Coordination Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry and Acting Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Rose Gottemoeller co-chaired the sixth round of the Pakistan-U.S. Security, Strategic Stability, and Nonproliferation (SSS&NP) Working Group in Islamabad on November 21, 2013.

The delegations had a productive exchange of views on issues of mutual importance, including international efforts to enhance nuclear security and peaceful applications of nuclear energy. The participants also shared views on nonproliferation challenges as well as on the multilateral regimes on chemical and biological weapons, export controls, and the importance of regional stability and security.

The delegations reaffirmed that the Working Group remains an invaluable forum for discussing issues of critical mutual importance and stated that they looked forward to future sessions.

The SSS&NP Working Group is part of the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue, re-energized during the visit of Secretary of State John Kerry to Pakistan in August and reaffirmed by Prime Minister Sharif and President Obama in October 2013. It follows a meeting of the Energy Working Group in Washington, D.C., on November 12. The Defense Consultative Group, a third bilateral forum within the Strategic Dialogue, also met on November 21 in Washington.

Ambassador Co-leads U.S.-Pakistan Energy Trade Mission, November 18, 2013, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson and Pakistani Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources Shahid Abbasi led an oil and gas trade mission to Houston November 14-15.

During the two-day mission, nearly 30 private Pakistani companies, state-owned enterprises, and oil and gas officials met with leading U.S. energy companies to identify business opportunities, explain incentives offered by the Pakistani government, and attract investment from the private sector to Pakistan's oil and gas sector. The trade mission delegation consisted of officials from the Pakistani Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources, heads of seventeen leading Pakistani oil & gas firms, including both state-owned enterprises and private firms, and representatives from the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Department of Commerce.

Ambassador Olson commented, "This trade mission represents the strong emphasis the United States places on its trade and investment relationship with Pakistan, and U.S. support for stronger business to business ties between our two countries."

The Energy Trade Mission was organized in conjunction with the bilateral U.S.-Pakistan Energy Working Group held on November 12 in Washington, the first of the working groups to meet under the reinvigorated bilateral Strategic Dialogue announced by Secretary Kerry and Prime Minister Sharif in August. The mission follows Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's official visit to the United States on October 20-23, during which he emphasized the government's focus on reforming Pakistan's energy sector and increasing U.S.-Pakistan ties in the private sector.

These efforts build on the sustained and substantial efforts the United States, through USAID, has

undertaken to help Pakistan meet its critical energy needs, including adding 1,000 megawatts since 2009 to Pakistan's national grid--enough electricity for more than 16 million Pakistanis. Additionally, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the U.S. Government's development finance institution, is in the process of negotiating a \$95 million loan to a prospective 50 MW wind power plant in southeastern Pakistan's Gharo-Keti Bandar Wind Corridor.

U.S. Consul General Launches Global Entrepreneurship Week, November 17, 2013, At the Pak100 Awards and Massachusetts Institute of Technology Enterprise Forum Pakistan (MITEF) Summit today, United States Consul General in Lahore Nina Fite remarked that "the United States is committed to supporting Pakistan's young entrepreneurs, whose innovative thinking has the potential to unlock great economic prosperity."

The AllWorld Network Pakistan 100, comprised of Pakistan's 100 fastest growing private companies, co-hosted the event with MITEF Pakistan. Ken Morse, self-made entrepreneur and founder of the MIT Entrepreneurship Center, and Jason Pontin, editor of MIT Technology Review and Chairman of the MIT Enterprise Forum, traveled from the United States to attend the event.

In her remarks to 250 Pakistani entrepreneurs and business leaders to officially launch Global Entrepreneurship Week, Consul General Fite underscored the importance that the United States places on its economic relationship with Pakistan and said, "The United States believes that fast-growing businesses are the key to Pakistan's economic future. We also believe that increased trade and investment are an important element to the future of the U.S.-Pakistan relationship, and as such we are working hard to strengthen our economic relationship."

Consul General Fite described partnerships between Pakistani and U.S. universities and programs such as StartUp Cup, a U.S.-funded competition that promotes entrepreneurial ideas. Over the past several weeks, nearly 200 start-up businesses have participated in a series of successful Build-A-Business workshops in Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi. The winner of the Pakistan StartUp Cup will be named during the closing ceremony in early December.

The United States Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, supports business leaders by providing them training and access to technology and financing. The United States' recently launched Pakistan Private Investment Initiative will help entrepreneurs and businesses access the equity finance they need to flourish.

For more information about U.S. support for entrepreneurship in Pakistan, please see:
http://photos.state.gov/libraries/pakistan/676673/Urdu%20PDF/Entrepreneurship%20_English_.pdf

United States Helps Afghan Refugees and Pakistani Hosting

Communities, October 25, 2013, Simon Henshaw, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) on October 23-25 visited Pakistan to demonstrate U.S. commitment to the needs of Afghan refugees and Pakistani hosting communities. While in Pakistan, Henshaw met with States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) ministry and UN officials and PRM implementing partners. He also visited a range of U.S.-funded project sites in Haripur, Kyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Henshaw visited boys and girls refugee schools which are being expanded from 6th grade to 7th and 8th grades. U.S. government funding for this project fills a specific gap between UN-supported and Government of Pakistan-funded schools which respectively cover primary and high school education. "The full participation of women and girls in society is essential, and the U.S. government's support to the girls' refugee school in Haripur demonstrates our shared commitment to education for all children," Henshaw said.

Henshaw also reviewed projects supported by the joint Government of Pakistan and UN Refugee-Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) initiative, including a Basic Health Unit and primary school that serve both Afghan refugees and local Pakistanis. He also met with youth receiving livelihood (vocational) training in carpentry, welding, and plumbing through a U.S. government grant that helps Afghan refugee and Pakistani youth gain skills and employment needed for self-reliance. Recent graduates of the training program shared their experiences in using their new skills to find employment and provide for their families. "I was impressed with the practical application of the skills training and glad to see so many of the training graduates receiving good jobs and even starting their own small businesses in Pakistan and Afghanistan," Henshaw commented.

Since 1979, Pakistan has generously hosted a shifting population of Afghan refugees. While millions have voluntarily returned home since 2002, some 1.62 million registered Afghan refugees remain in Pakistan. "The United States remains committed to working closely with the Government of Pakistan and Pakistani host communities in meeting the needs of Afghan refugees," Henshaw said.

The United States is the leading donor of humanitarian assistance in response to the plight of Afghan refugees. In fiscal year 2013, PRM provided \$88 million to support Afghan refugees in the region, including their return to Afghanistan. PRM works closely with the Governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to find durable solutions for Afghan refugees. It also partners with ten non-governmental organizations to support programs that benefit both Afghan refugees and Pakistani hosting communities.

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Dedicated to



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