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Part of Pakistan Awareness Initiative -PAI

Voicing against injustice – in memory of those journalists lost in search of truth

CONTEXT

Countries and Donor agencies are listed in Alphabetical order

Editor's Note	3
Belgium's Foreign Minister Didier Reynders message of condolence	4
Denmark's Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt message of condolence	5
Denmark reacts to terror attacks on school in Peshawar.	5
Lahore highlights: Music with Noori Band, CM meeting... and much	5
LEGO BUILD THE CITY event in Karachi	7
Lahore: Ambassador participates in Harmony for Justice and Peace dialogue.	7
Denmark supports 35 Dar-ul-Amans (DUA) in Punjab.	7
Empowering women and youth: Oxfam Novib launches new project in Pakistan supported by Denmark	8
Denmark and UN Women launch program on Women Leadership in social reconstruction	10
France: Terrorists attack on Army Public School in Peshawar: Statement by Francois Hollande, President of the French Republic	11
Attack against Army Public School in Peshawar: Statement by French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius	11
French Film Festival (17-22 November 2014)	12
Pakistan – Attack at the Wagah border post (November 2, 2014)	12

Central African Republic – Death of a Pakistani officer from MINUSCA	13
Launch of “Social Sciences Open Doors ”	13
1st edition of the Forum on Sustainable Architecture and Cities	13
Germany: Foreign Minister Steinmeier condemns terrorist attack on a school in Pakistan	14
Germany ready to mend fences between Pakistan and Afghanistan	14
Germany provides more than 1 million EUR for the relief of IDPs through WFP	15
Launching Ceremony of Women Empowerment and Protection Policy for FATA	& 16
Training on voting: participants learn to surmount later disputes on development schemes	17
PM Sharif stresses importance of TVET	18
German Ambassador meets Speaker and German Friendship Group of the National Assembly	19
Inauguration of the Green Star Afghan Refugee Clinic in Islamabad	19
Germany and UNDP partner to support displaced persons with 1 million euros	20
Launching of sustainable water management project	21
Greece Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Evangelos Venizelos condemned the attack	22
Italy Prime Minister Matteo Renzi condemned the attack	22
Ambassador Janjua Visits Pakistan Navy Ship "Alamgir" at Taranto Port, Italy	22
The Pakistani community in Italy organized a meeting in Rome	23
SAMP Syed Tariq Fatemi meets Presidents, holds Bilateral Meetings, Addresses ASEM Summit in Milan	23
The Netherlands: Education for All - Project visit by Ambassador De Vink	24
Exploring Opportunities in the Dairy Sector	25
Dutch cattle now available for Pakistan’s dairy sector	26
Norway condemns terrorist attack on school in Pakistan	26
Humanitarian field visit to Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province with WFP	27
Malala Yousafzai from Pakistan and Kailash Satyarthi from India were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in the Oslo on Wednesday 10 December	28
Mystic Sufi Festival 2014	28
Spain: President of the Government Mariano Rajoy sent condolences to the Prime Minister of Pakistan	29
Sweden: Women Power at the Swedish Residence	29

UK: HM QUEEN ELIZABETH II SENDS A LETTER OF CONDOLENCE TO THE PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN	29
HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES SENDS A LETTER OF CONDOLENCE TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF PAKISTAN:	30
The British Deputy High Commission in Karachi held a vigil to remember the victims and the affected families of the attack on Peshawar Army Public School.	30
the British High Commissioner to Pakistan wrote a message in a Book of Condolence for the victims and affected families of the attack at Peshawar Army Public School	31
Philip Hammond condemns the attack on a school in Pakistan	31
Responding to today's attacks at the Army Public School in Peshawar, British Prime Minister, David Cameron, tweeted:	31
WWI Christmas Truce Memorial Football Match	31
British High Commission hosts 'SHAPE The FUTURE' competition awards ceremony	31
British High Commission organises panel discussion on 'Social Entrepreneurship'	32
Chevening scholars	33

Editor's Note

This issue of Bridge-Europa is dedicated to those students and teachers who lost their lives in one of the worst terrorist attacks in Pakistan's history. They lost their lives immediate after Malala made all the Pakistani children and the children worldwide proud on being children. This shocking tragedy saddened the whole world that stood by the side of these sacred scholars.

This coward and heinous act of terrorism against humanity reminded the ghastly Beslan School siege of September 2004 in Russia where at least 385 hostages were killed, including 186 children

The Pakistani children born in the shadows of terrorism and anarchy are the worst hit generation of recent era either by losing their lives are orphaned by the dreadful wave of terror. These children going through and living with torment and trauma of every day's violence, school closures following the strike calls, political sit-ins, religious curriculum, fear of disease like dengue and Polio, access to the quality of education, seminaries (Madersah) and their rights to live as children. With all of these disadvantages, Pakistani children have risen to the excellence like Aitezaz Hussain, a 13-year-old-boy who gave his life while saving hundreds of lives by stopping a suicide bomber from entering his classroom in January 2014, had he not stopped the bomber, perhaps hundreds of children and teachers would have lost their lives, Noble Laureate Malala, Iqbal Masih, who defied slavery and got killed, 6-year-old Ayan Qureshi, the world's youngest Microsoft Certified Professional, Maria Toorpakai Wazir - the youngest ever winner of the National Women's Squash Championship, 3 The students, Sana Batool, Shazia Bibi and Iqra Irshad were honoured for their project titled working of wind turbine with low air pressure and were awarded \$1,000 by King Abdul-Aziz and his Companions Foundation for

Giftedness and Creativity, Pakistani student, Haroon Tariq, broke the world record by securing a total of 47 As in his International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) O Level and A Level exams from the University of Cambridge International Examinations and 6 years old Fatima Khulood Zia after qualifying MENSA test and became the youngest most intelligent person in Pakistan.

Children are also the victims of the incumbent's inability to respond to the children's deaths and emergencies caused by rampant traffic, rotten health care system and failure to provide food and rescue children from the death haunted area of Thar.

In Sep 2011, 45 students were killed when a bus overturned in Chakwal. In January 15, 2014, 18 students were killed in another traffic accident in Nawabshah. In November 2014 the death toll of newly born reached 19 in Sargodha District Headquarters (DHQ) Teaching Hospital combined with doctor's negligence, oxygen and incubators shortages. Again in December 2014, five infants died in the Chandka Medical College Hospital children's ward in Larkana due to lack of oxygen supply. In Thar more than 220 children have starved to death in an ongoing crisis.

Poverty, fear, insecurity and increased fanaticism have long deprived Pakistani children of their childhood. Their early years have witnessed too much too soon making their cognitive abilities traumatised by the situation.

These children hold our future, they are our dream, our hope and whoever or whatever hurt them in any way, must be stopped and stopped now.

Our hearts are sinking into sadness and we all hope that sacrifice of Army Public School's students and teachers will unite this divided and chaotic nation. All the politicians will learn from daring teachers how to protect our kids from terrorism, accidents, disease, hunger and poverty.

Goodbye little angels and angelic teachers, rest in peace and sleep tight; we know you are somewhere in the sky, living with peace as bright shining stars. You are not alone, the whole world has honored you; your sacrifices have this world to acknowledge the fact that the people of Pakistan are the hardest hit nation by terrorism.

**Happy New Year with Peace, Prosperity and Hope
Syed Naeem Uddin - Editor**

Belgium

Foreign Minister Didier Reynders strongly condemned the attack and offered condolences to victims

saying "These are acts of utmost cruelty that touch the core of a society and negate the most basic human rights. Radicalisation and extremism always lead to destruction and loss of life. It is international diplomacy's duty to promote moderation, prevent radicalisation and fight impunity through respect of international humanitarian and human rights law. This endeavour is at the core of Belgium's foreign policy

Denmark

Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt while speaking in parliament condemned the attack and said "It is a very serious situation. I am simply appalled that the Taliban can find to attack a school. Over 100 deaths are reported. It is heartbreaking and shows the evil Taliban stands for; and it stresses the importance of the fact that we are still fighting the Taliban, also in relation to what we do in Afghanistan

Denmark reacts to terror attacks on school in Peshawar.

The recent tragedy in Peshawar, where more than 130 students and staff members were killed by militants, has left us all saddened and heartbroken. The attack has led to worldwide condemnation, including in Denmark.

The Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt stated that "I am simply devastated that Taliban can attack a school. It is heart-breaking". The Prime Minister also underlined that it is not a fight between the West and Islam, but that this is about some evil people who carry through such terrible attacks on school children.

The Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Martin Lidegaard, also strongly condemned the attacks. He said that there is nothing more sinister and deplorable than when terrorists attack completely innocent children.

At the Danish Embassy, we are also all shocked and devastated. The Ambassador would like to reassure that Denmark will remain committed in its support to the people of Pakistan, and that primary education also in 2015 will remain one the Embassy's focus areas.

"Every child has a right to education".
— with Joana San.

December 26

Lahore highlights: Music with Noori Band, CM meeting... and much

more

This week, Ambassador Sorensen and his team spent five days in Lahore. Here are some highlights from the visit.

Sanjan-Nagar Institute of Philosophy and Arts hosted the Ambassador, who had the joy of playing music with members of the famous Noori Band. Dedicating the song "Leaving on a Jetplane" to the kids, who tragically lost their life in last week's attack in Peshawar, the Ambassador played the guitar and sang the vocal, while Kami Paul played the drums. Ali Hamza and Zeb Bangash gave background voice in the chorus, when the Ambassador did a couple of recordings of classical evergreens like "Brown-eyed Girl" and "Wonderful Tonight"

Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif and the Ambassador had a fruitful meeting, where they exchanged views on a range of current issues. The Ambassador also updated the Chief Minister on the Embassy's dialogue with Danish companies about the business opportunities in Pakistan. Energy, especially renewable, was in focus of the discussion.

Together with the Embassy commercial advisor, he met a range of representatives of the local business community. They discussed how Denmark and Pakistan can further expand their bilateral trade. Sectors of special interests were agriculture, dairy, energy efficiency, and water technology.

Governor Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar welcomed the Ambassador at the Lahore Governor's House. Responding to the terror attack in Peshawar, the Ambassador expressed condolences on behalf of Denmark to the people of Pakistan, and he stated that Denmark will support Pakistan's efforts.

Director General Kamran Lashari from the Walled City of Lahore gave a briefing about the ongoing work to preserve and reconstruct parts of the old Lahore city centre. The Ambassador welcomed this beautification of Old Lahore.

Provincial Minister for Labour & Human Resources briefed the Ambassador on the ongoing work with fulfilling the ILO conventions, and complying with other labour standards. They discussed the importance of GSP+, which so far has proven very important to Pakistan's export in 2014.

On his way back from Lahore to Islamabad, the team visited the Chamber of Commerce in Gujranwala. The Ambassador gave a presentation on Denmark's commercial strongholds to a group of around 50 local business people. Many Danes of Pakistani roots actually come from this part of Punjab.

The Ambassador was thrilled to attend a traditional Pakistani wedding of a personal friend, who is also

a strong proponent of closer ties between Denmark and Pakistan.

Earlier during the week, we posted stories from the MoU signing ceremony on women's shelter homes (Dar-Ul-Amans), and the dialogue with the World Council of Religions dialogue on Peace & Harmony.

LEGO BUILD THE CITY event in Karachi.

Does your childhood have memories of playing with the Danish world famous Lego bricks? Now you have the opportunity to relive those memories with your family as I KNOW MY TOYS is having the LEGO BUILD THE CITY event at the Dolmen Mall Clifton in Karachi.

Our Consul General, Mrs. Naheed Irshaduddin attended the event and enjoyed seeing hundreds of families explore the fun, creativity and endless possibilities of the LEGO brick. At the event, children can build their own models and win cool prizes as well.

LEGO has been providing children with play experiences for more than 80 years with the mission to develop children's learning abilities by fostering creativity. The LEGO Group also has a series of global initiatives to support children's right to grow and they continue to contribute to raise the quality of education by implementing innovative and hands-on teaching methods in schools around the world.

The event started on Dec 20th 2014 and will end on Jan 5th 2015. Timings are from 3pm to 8 pm and for families with kids 6-12 years & 1.5-5 years of age. DON'T MISS IT!

Lahore: Ambassador participates in Harmony for Justice and Peace dialogue.

These days, Ambassador Sorensen and his team are in Lahore. Today, the Ambassador was invited by the World Council on Religions to a dialogue on Harmony for Justice and Peace. This dialogue brings together representatives from various religious groups and civil society activists.

Last week's terrible attack on the school in Peshawar dominated the dialogue. Members from the various religious groups had come together to stand united against militancy and to find constructive solutions to bring peace and harmony to all members of the Pakistani society.

The Ambassador appreciated the initiative. He stated that Denmark stands fully behind the people of Pakistan. He shared that the Embassy will work even harder in the months and years ahead to support Pakistan with the various instruments that his Embassy has available: development assistance, stabilization efforts and the efforts to create more jobs and growth through commercial activities and increased trade.

Denmark supports 35 Dar-ul-Amans (DUA) in Punjab.

Today the Social Welfare Department (SWD), Government of Punjab and the Academy of Family Physicians Lahore, Pakistan (PAFP) signed a MoU to provide free medical services to residents of 35 Dar-ul-Amans (DUAs) in Punjab.

The partnership is part of an overall program to structure and upgrade protection services for women and children who seek shelter as victims of domestic violence and abuse. It is being financially supported by Denmark and Norway in collaboration with our partners Médecins du Monde France (Mdm) and the Social Welfare Department, Punjab.

Ambassador Sorensen and Mr. Syed Haroon Sultan Bukhari, Provincial Minister of Social Welfare participated as speakers and guest of honor.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Ambassador Sorensen congratulated the parties. He appreciated the role of the Dar-ul-Aman in protecting vulnerable women and children. "It is an important initiative as these shelter homes provide victims shelter, protection and knowledge about their rights. They also help give them hope and the opportunity to rebuild their lives", said Ambassador Sorensen.

Mr. Vittorio Oppizzi, General Coordinator MDM shared that due to the program success, MDM expects to phase out soon from the program and hand it over to the Department of Social Welfare for future supervision and management.

Currently the 35 DUAs are providing shelter and protection services to around 75,000 individuals, out of which around 80 per cent are women and 20 per cent are children.

Empowering women and youth: Oxfam Novib launches new project in Pakistan supported by Denmark. 05.12.2014

2nd December 2014: "Early marriage is a major challenge in Pakistan. 40 percent of girls are married before the age of 18. Early marriage often denies children their basic right to good health, education and freedom from violence, abuse and exploitation. Most fundamentally, it deprives a child the basic right of simply being a child." This was stated by the Ambassador of Denmark, Mr. Jesper Moller Sorensen, who was the chief guest at the launching ceremony of the new project 'Gender Empowerment and Institutional Development Program.'

The nationwide project is being implemented by Oxfam Novib and its Pakistani partners. It is supported by the Government of Denmark with a donation of 15 million Danish kroner (\$2.5million). It

will be implemented in all four provinces, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Bajaur Agency of Pakistan.

Opening the ceremony, Mr. Arif Jabbar Khan, Country Director of Oxfam in Pakistan, highlighted Oxfam's vision of a society where everyone, also youth and women, are valued and treated equally, able to influence the decisions that affect their lives while assuming their responsibilities as active citizens. "Human development is driven by empowered women. Oxfam continues to place the highest priority on supporting women and girls to become leaders and to ensure that their roles in society and the economy are properly valued and recognized," said Mr. Khan.

The project will work across Pakistan with young people especially young women and girls to enable them to claim, practice and support adherence of their reproductive health rights in a more favorable policy environment and without any discrimination. The project will focus on life skill education, reproductive health rights and advocate for prevention of early child marriages.

Ambassador Sorensen reflected on Denmark's support to gender equality. "Promoting gender equality is a consistent feature in all Denmark's development and humanitarian assistance programs. Our support to work on gender equality is based on a rights-based approach. This approach focuses on improving women's access to fundamental rights, to resources and to influence."

The Ambassador also highlighted that the project will engage parents and teachers, local and national governments, parliamentarians, media, religious scholars and civil society across Pakistan. "By also including these groups, the initiative aims to create an environment for effective citizenship and responsive governance, where people - especially youth and women - can exercise their reproductive health rights without any discrimination of gender," said the Ambassador.

During the launch, the audience was engaged in a dialogue on gender and youth rights through an interactive play performance by members from the Interactive Resource Centre. The audience was asked to decide what the ending of the story play should be, endorsing that any decision to be made needs to be based on information and knowledge.

Guest of Honor, Ms. Maiza Hameed, Member National Assembly of Pakistan and Chief Coordinator of Prime Minister Youth Skills Development Scheme affirmed the government's commitment to empower youth in the country and highlighted various initiatives taken by the government to lift young people out of poverty, discrimination and marginalization.

Mr. Arie Schuurmans, Associate Country Director of Oxfam Novib in Pakistan thanked in his closing remarks all participants and specifically the Danish government for providing the funding support

together with Oxfam Novib.

The event was well attended by representatives from the governments of Pakistan and AJK, public sector officials, religious scholars, donor agencies, NGOs, civil society organizations, academia, students and the media.

Oxfam Novib will implement the project with its partners across Pakistan. Oxfam Novib is part of Oxfam international confederation of 17 independent non-governmental organizations across the globe and works with local groups, civil society and government to promote social justice and equal rights for all in Pakistan. For more information on Oxfam Novib, please log on to www.oxfamnovib.nl

Denmark and UN Women launch program on Women Leadership in social reconstruction

28.11.2014

Peshawar, 27th November 2014 – As Pakistan continues to face the effects of complex emergencies and natural disasters, very little importance has been given to the role of women in the process of social reconstruction. This was highlighted by several speakers during the launch of UN Women program on “Women Leadership in Social Reconstruction”, which is being financially supported by the Government of Denmark.

The launching ceremony was hosted by the Social Welfare and Women’s Empowerment Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in collaboration with UN Women.

Addressing the participants, Danish Ambassador Mr. Jesper Moller Sorensen stated that “every time there is a disaster or conflict, it is the women who immediately come on the frontline to take care of their families – whether it is the young, the elderly, the sick or those living with disabilities. They are the most affected. They need the most support.” The Danish Ambassador also highlighted that in vulnerable countries such as Pakistan, it was even more critical to understand the gender implications during and after natural disasters and crisis “By integrating gender concerns in the mainstream planning of peace, security and humanitarian actions, we do we not only promote women leadership and participation – we also build communities and countries in becoming disaster resilient”, said Ambassador Sorensen.

Ms. Sangeeta Thapa, Deputy Country Representative, UN Women Pakistan, highlighted that the programme aims at responding directly to equality principles expressed in Pakistan’s Constitution, CEDAW and others signed by the Government of Pakistan within the framework of Social Reconstruction. “To us, social reconstruction process means to facilitate the reintegration of dislocated persons into their homes and villages and revitalize socio-economic activities in the region. In the

context of gender, it means empowering women enough to be able to affectively participate in the decision making process at all levels of relief and rehabilitation”, said Ms. Thapa. She appreciated the Government of Denmark for extending its support, which would give continuity to UN Women’s work in ensuring that peace and security, and humanitarian actions are shaped by the leadership and participation of women, including grass root women.

Dr. Mehar Taj Roghani, Special Advisor to the Chief Minister of KP on Social Welfare and Women’s Empowerment stated that serious gaps existed in emergency preparedness and disaster risk management capacities. She appreciated the collective partnership to overcome these gaps in promoting stabilization, peace and security in the region.

Other eminent speakers also spoke about the important role of women in social reconstruction processes, including Ms. Meiraj Hamayun (Member of Provincial Assembly and Member Women Parliamentarian Caucus of KP), Ms. Nafeesa Khattak (Member of National Assembly), Mr. Munir Azam (Commissioner of Peshawar) and Mr. Syed Hidayat Jan (Secretary, Social Welfare and Women Empowerment Department, Government of KP).

Women leaders from the community shared painstaking testimonies from the field with a request for women representation, participation and leadership to be ensured in social reconstruction processes - and peace initiatives in areas of complex emergencies and disasters.

The funding from the Danish Government will be utilized to support UN Women’s program to work with the Government of Pakistan and key partners in enhancing synergies so as to facilitate regional networking and partnerships; support advocacy for in-country and cross regional programming on integrating gender concerns in peace initiatives; undertake Training for Trainers on Gender and Peacekeeping with civil armed forces, as well as strengthen capacity for gender responsive policy frameworks and action plans.

France: Terrorists attack on Army Public School in Peshawar: Statement by Francois Hollande, President of the French Republic

The French President condemns in the strongest terms the despicable attack against the Army Public school in Peshawar which has caused the death of more than one hundred people, including more than 80 children.

There is no word to qualify the infamy of such an attack against children in their school.

France stands in solidarity with the victims and their parents. The government of Pakistan is assured on France’s support in the fight against terrorism.

Attack against Army Public School in Peshawar: Statement by French

Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius

The Pakistani Taliban have today attacked a school in Peshawar. As the crisis is still unfolding, there is already a very high number of victims, mostly children.

France condemns this monstrous act. I send my sympathies and my condolences to the families of the victims.

In this dramatic ordeal, France stands with the people and the government of Pakistan and assures them of its full solidarity in the fight against terrorism and extremism.

French Film Festival (17-22 November 2014)

The Embassy of France in Pakistan organized a film festival “A French Filmmakers Perspective” in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad from 17th to 22nd November 2014, in collaboration with the Alliances Françaises of Karachi and Lahore. The festival introduces the new generation of French directors’ featured films inspired by social aspects of South Asia. Two recent films will be screened on the evenings of Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd of November at the Embassy of France in Islamabad.

Noor directed by Çağla Zencirci & Guillaume Giovanetti and set in Pakistan will be screened on the opening night, Friday 21st of November at 6.00pm.

Son Epouse directed by Michel Spinosa and set in India will be screened on Saturday 22nd of November at 4.00pm.

Prior to each screening, the directors will talk to the audience about the idea and process behind the development and making of their respective films.

An award winning independent film, *Noor* is based on the story of a real life Kushras: *Noor*, who wants to be a man and find a girl who will accept him as he is. This road-movie is a poetic and political exploration of transgender issues, set in Pakistan’s breath-taking landscapes. The film is co-directed by Çağla Zencirci & Guillaume Giovanetti, who will present their featured film debut for the first time to the Pakistani audience in Islamabad on the 21st of November 2014 in presence of *Noor* himself.

The latest release of director Michel Spinosa’s acclaimed films, *Son Epouse (His Wife)* is a continent-hopping drama set between Indian Tamil Nadu and France. The plot starts off when a French woman drowns off the coast of Madras and her estranged husband travels to India to meet a woman who claims to have been possessed by his wife’s spirit. The film stars, French actors Yvan Attal and Charlotte Gainsbourg and unknown talented Tamul actors, portray a powerful love story set in India’s rich cultural environment.

This festival organised by the Embassy of France not only gathers filmmakers whose work focuses on South Asian society, it also represents the successful partnership between western filmmaking productions and local artists and crews. As a result of such artistic dynamics, the viewer is introduced to a poetic perspective on the hidden beauties of South Asia, directed by awarded French directors.

Pakistan – Attack at the Wagah border post (November 2, 2014)

France condemns the attack which has targeted civilians at Wagah on November 2 after the ceremony that takes place every day as the border closes between Pakistan and India.

France expresses its condolences with the victims' families.

It assures the Pakistani authorities and people of its solidarity against terrorism.

Central African Republic – Death of a Pakistani officer from MINUSCA

(Bangui, October 9, 2014)

France condemns yesterday's attack that killed a Pakistani officer from the UN Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and injured several soldiers serving with the Pakistani and Bangladeshi contingents.

We extend our condolences to the victim's family as well as the Pakistani authorities and pay tribute to the courage of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi soldiers. The perpetrators of this attack must not go unpunished.

France pays tribute to the crucial commitment of the UN mission, supported by the European force EUFOR and the French operation, Sangaris. Given the renewed violence in Bangui over the last few days, we call for the implementation of the cessation of hostilities agreement signed in Brazzaville on July 23 and for the speeding up of efforts to encourage national reconciliation, the demobilization of armed groups and preparations for elections. The only way to restore stability in the Central African Republic is through a political process.

Launch of "Social Sciences Open Doors " (Karachi, 9th October)

The Embassy of France in Pakistan and the Alliance Française de Karachi are starting a « Social Sciences Open Doors » program. Monthly meetings will be organized in the framework of this program for promoting intellectual relations between Pakistan and France and initiating a dialogue between the research scholars, thinkers, writers, journalists of the two countries on topics of current interest in the field of contemporary social sciences.

Every month a guest-speaker from France will participate in the discussion-sessions organized at the Alliance Française in Karachi, in collaboration with partner universities or research centers.

For introducing this program, a press briefing will be held on Thursday, October 9, 2014 at 4 pm at Karachi Press Club with the participation of Mr. Franck Mermier (anthropologist), Ms. Noha Sadek (Historian of Islamic art) and Martine Herlem-Hamidi (Counselor for Cooperation and Cultural Affairs, Embassy of France in Islamabad).

1st edition of the Forum on Sustainable Architecture and Cities (Karachi, 13-14 October) / Islamabad, 16-17 October)

Climate change, which has been confirmed by the last report of Intergovernmental Panel on climate

change (IPCC), is significantly changing our living environment all over the planet: increase in temperatures, melting of glaciers and polar ice caps, heating of the seas and oceans and increase in their levels by nearly 20 cm, climate deterioration resulting in the increase in duration of heat-waves and rainfall extremes.

The international mobilization is materializing through the holding of annual conferences, Poland in 2013, Peru in 2014. France will host the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) in 2015. Desirous of taking into consideration the progress achieved in the fight against global warming, particularly through initiatives at European level, France also wants to prepare a “positive agenda”, particularly by highlighting the actions proposed and implemented by the civil society, local architectural communities, companies, trade unions and NGO’s.

In this context, the Embassy of France in Pakistan is organising a Forum on Sustainable Architecture and Urban Management and an exhibition on Sustainable Architecture in Karachi and Islamabad. The objective is to raise, in conformity with the terms of reference of COP21, the awareness among the target stakeholders for the Paris Conference and collect their concerns and suggestions.

The Forum on Sustainable Architecture and Cities is organised by the Embassy of France in Pakistan, with the support of The Institute of Architects Pakistan (IAP), in partnership with IAP Karachi Chapter and COMSATS University.

To know more about the exhibition “Architecture = Sustainable” in Islamabad, [click here](#) and in Karachi, [click here](#).

Germany

Foreign Minister Steinmeier condemns terrorist attack on a school in Pakistan

date of issue 16.12.2014

Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier issued the following statement today (16 December) on the attack by radical Islamic Taliban on a school in northwestern Pakistan that killed over 100 people according to media reports:

Zusatzinformationen

I condemn this criminal attack in the strongest possible terms. The appalling cowardice of taking children as hostages and murdering them goes beyond anything that Pakistan, which has been afflicted by terror and violence for years, has experienced to date.

We join the people of Pakistan in grieving for the victims of this bloody terrorist attack. Our thoughts

are with all those who have lost loved ones. We wish the many injured a speedy recovery.

Germany ready to mend fences between Pakistan and Afghanistan

QUETTA: German Ambassador to Pakistan, Dr Cyrill Nunn on Monday vowed to mend fences between Pakistan and Afghanistan for a durable peace in the region.

"A stable Afghanistan is in Pakistan's interest," the ambassador told a function with regard to conservation of water organised by Taraqee Foundation at a local hotel.

Amjad Rashid, the Chief of Taraqee Foundation also spoke on the occasion and shed light over the issues relating to Balochistan.

"Similarly a prosperous Pakistan is in Afghanistan's interest," he added. Dr Cyrill said that Germany was ready to help in bringing the two neighbors closer to each other.

Regarding Iran, the ambassador stated that his country wants to have a negotiated settlement of issues relating to Iran.

He said the German government was committed to support and help Afghan refugees living inside Pakistan.

"We are not running out of Afghanistan, rather we will continue to support its government," the ambassador said.

He said Germany would train Afghan security personnel and civil servants to improve the situation in the impoverished country.

The ambassador spoke at length about the geographical importance of Balochistan and its natural resources.

Federal Minister for Borders, General (retd) Qadir Baloch while addressing the function said that the region (Pakistan and Afghanistan) had in the past been turned into a nursery of terrorism.

"US and the West turned this area into a hub of terrorism to oust the Russians from Afghanistan," Qadir Baloch recalled.

The federal minister stated that extremism in this part of world was posing a threat to peace in the world. "If effective measures are not adopted, then it would endanger world peace," he added.

The minister also mentioned that both Pakistan and Afghanistan have committed to eradicate terrorism from the region. "Both countries have agreed in principle to wipe out terrorism," he said.

Germany provides more than 1 million EUR for the relief of IDPs

through WFP

Germany supports the relief activities of the World Food Program (WFP) for the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the north-west of Pakistan through a “twinning-project”.

The German grant of more than 129,000,000 PKR will be combined with an in-kind-grant of the Government of Pakistan with a donation of 6,863 metric tons wheat.

This will enable WFP to provide fortified wheat flour to 510,000 beneficiaries, a total of 85,789 families, for one month in FATA region & Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The Special Representative of the German Federal Government for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Ambassador Dr. Michael Koch, who is visiting Islamabad today, told the press: "Germany supports people in dire need. In the approaching winter season, enhancing food and nutrition security will be crucial."

Launching Ceremony of Women Empowerment and Protection Policy for FATA

Although women in FATA play an important role in their society, they are facing many forms of inequalities in their daily lives as well as they are often neglected in development processes. In the last week of November 2014, a launching ceremony of the Women Empowerment and Protection Policy in FATA with more than 90 participants took place in the FATA Secretariat. The aim of the policy is to create a safe and secure environment for women in FATA in all spheres of life. The policy is the first of its kind in Pakistan.

In his opening address Secretary Social Sectors Department, Abid Majeed highlighted the important role of women in FATA and stressed the need for support towards the participation of women in fostering an inclusive and vibrant society in Pakistan. He added that achieving equality between women and men is an international recognized goal. Gender equality means equal treatment of women and men in all spheres of life. It can be measured in terms of opportunities for education, access to health facilities, right to inheritance, political participation or income generation. Women should have equal opportunities to use their skills and knowledge for contributing to prosperity, peace and development in any given society and culture.

Ms Almut Knop, Head of Development Section, German Embassy Islamabad, emphasized the importance of the promotion of gender equality in German Development Cooperation and its relevance for the sustainability of development programmes. She also shared the fact that Germany’s

economic success in the 20th century was also due to the fact that women got more rights concerning labour or voting and through this could highly contribute to economic development. She expressed her appreciation to the FATA Secretariat for having drafted this policy and conveyed her best wishes for its implementation.

Since 2011, the *Result Area Prevention of Violence against Women in FATA* as part of the German *Support to Good Governance Programme* is cooperating with the Women Empowerment Wing of the Social Welfare Directorate of Social Sectors Department FATA. One important milestone of the cooperation is a comprehensive Women Empowerment and Protection Policy for FATA. The policy was drawn up in a series of consultations with representatives of FATA line department, non-governmental organisations, female students from FATA and internally displaced women hailing from FATA and living now in Jalozai camp. The policy covers nine concrete steps of action amongst which are: a FATA council for the empowerment and protection of women, legislation for women's protection, and service provision for women's protection in women facilitation centres. The Women Empowerment and Protection Policy for FATA was approved by the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in July 2014.

Training on voting: participants learn to surmount later disputes on development schemes

Recently, members of a Community Based Organization (CBO) from Rokhan Khel in the Frontier Region Peshawar participated in a training workshop to learn methods for reaching consensus on sustainable decisions for development projects in their community. The workshop used a transferable, participatory and conflict sensitive game to facilitate the transparent to reach to a lasting consensus, not merely consensus.

First of all, participants indicated on a map of Rokhan Khel where they live and placed two development projects that would cater their needs. Participants proposed projects such as street pavement, water supply, irrigation, protection walls, agriculture development and the like.

The representatives from the CBOs were then asked to vote on other people's projects in front of everyone. After counting the votes, only the top four projects were retained. Next, participants were told that due to budget cuts only two of the four projects could be implemented, and that they could vote again on the top two projects they wished to keep. Contributors whose projects were eliminated could air their concerns in order for the group to realise that public voting or consultations alone does not lead to fairness and lasting consensus.

To find fair schemes, participants were asked to cast another set of votes; this time, without knowing who would profit from which and keeping only the schemes that received the highest number of

votes. The results were astonishing: Participants chose a protection wall and an agriculture training project that benefited the entire community. Being left in the dark about whether they would profit from a scheme, participants decided in favour of community interests instead of personal interests, leaving everyone better off.

Vice-President of the CBO, Sahib Khan, told the Independent Project Reporting (IPR) team that this exercise ensured fair selection of the projects through voting. "This practice guarantees choice of schemes without quarrelling and disputes," he added.

The workshop was organized by the Livelihood component of FATA Development Programme. The programme is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and co-funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the French Agency for Development (AFD) and being implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

PM Sharif stresses importance of TVET

The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, termed the provision of market-driven technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as one of the major priorities of his government during his visit to Germany on 10 November in Berlin.

Speaking at the Pakistan-German Business Forum, which was attended by a large number of Pakistani and German businessmen, the Prime Minister said that Pakistan is blessed with many young people.

"This young population can play an important role in the socio-economic development of Pakistan if they are given employable skills", said the Prime Minister.

In this context, he lauded the support of Germany in the assistance of overhauling Pakistan's TVET system in addition to many other areas of cooperation.

Earlier, Dr. Julie Reviere, GIZ Programme Director of the Education Projects in Pakistan gave a presentation on the TVET Reform Support Programme, which aims at introducing major reforms in the TVET system of Pakistan. The programme seeks to mitigate the challenges Pakistan faces in the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system in the area of access, quality, equity and relevance; the objective is to create a skilled workforce which is able to satisfy the demands of the market and will help the economy grow.

The TVET Reform Support Programme is funded by the European Union, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Royal Norwegian Embassy and has been

commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is implementing this programme in close collaboration with the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), the TEVTAs and the private sector.

German Ambassador meets Speaker and German Friendship Group of the National Assembly

German Ambassador Dr Cyrill Nunn hosted a dinner for the Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and the Members of the National Assembly's Germany-Pakistan Friendship Group on 28 October 2014 at the German residence in Islamabad.

Among the high-ranking guests of the event were Mr Muhammad Baligh Ur Rehman, State Minister for Education and Training, Mr Stefano Gatto, Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to Pakistan, and the heads of the five German political foundations represented in Pakistan.

The Pakistan-Germany Parliamentary Friendship Group had been the first bilateral friendship group that was established in the Parliament of Pakistan upon the initiative of the now Speaker of the National Assembly during the past legislative period.

During his visit to Pakistan in April this year the President of the German Parliament (Bundestag), Professor Dr. Norbert Lammert, and Sardar Ayaz Sadiq agreed to further strengthen the ties between the Parliaments of both countries. The German political foundations play an important role in facilitating bilateral exchange and providing platforms for substantive discussions on many key political issues, like electoral reform, federalism and participation of women. The dinner provided an opportunity to further elaborate on concrete steps in this regard.

Ambassador Dr. Nunn emphasized during the dinner the importance of the Friendship Group: "Germany and Pakistan have a tradition of good and amicable relations. The Pakistan-Germany Friendship Group in the National Assembly plays a major role in this context. I am confident that the group will continue to work to intensify relations between the two countries in cultural, economic and political terms. The German political foundations will be making a major contribution to this end."

Inauguration of the Green Star Afghan Refugee Clinic in Islamabad

The official opening ceremony of an Afghan Refugee Clinic was held middle of October at the outskirts of Islamabad. Mr Peter Felten, Minister Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission of the German Embassy and Mr Olaf Zymelka, Head of the KfW Pakistan/Afghanistan Division in Frankfurt, Germany

formally inaugurated the clinic together with the team of Green Star.

The initiative of establishing the Afghan Refugee Clinic, taken by the German Government through KFW Development Bank together with Green Star, aims to provide quality medical services free of cost to Afghan refugee community members. Various services are available such as an Out-Patient-Department, labor room, screening room, counseling room and pharmacy.

During a tour through the community housing of approximately 550 households, the German delegation learned about hygiene practices, safe water options, medical health care services, children's health issues and general health demographics

Some of the community women shared their thoughts on the services being provided to them and expressed their gratitude for this initiative. In addition, an eye camp was set up on the side by a voluntary partner, Sight Savers, who also used the renovated clinic to provide free services to the community. The delegation expressed their gratitude to Green Star and appreciated their work.

Germany and UNDP partner to support displaced persons with 1 million euros

17 October 2014: Cyrill Nunn, German Ambassador to Pakistan, and Marc-Andre Franche, Country Director of UNDP in Pakistan, signed an agreement of 1 million euros at the German Embassy today to support the rehabilitation and return of displaced persons from the North Waziristan Agency of FATA. Tariq Orakzai, Director General of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, also attended the signing ceremony.

The partnership between Germany and UNDP aims to help the provincial and district authorities to manage the emergency situation and prepare for the return and rehabilitation process. The measures will directly benefit the affected people by working with both the displaced persons and the host communities to improve social cohesion, access to basic services and increase livelihood opportunities. The acquired skills will make the displaced persons more self-reliant during the displacement period and give them the means to participate actively in the return and rehabilitation phase.

The German Ambassador to Pakistan, Cyrill Nunn said:

“Germany supports this programme because it addresses the immediate needs of the affected people while at the same time preparing them for a sustainable return to their home. I am confident that it will directly benefit them in their daily lives. I commend UNDP for their important work.”

Marc-Andre Franche, Country Director of UNDP Pakistan said:

“I want to thank the Government of Germany for its generous support. This partnership will enable UNDP to effectively support the capacities of the FATA Disaster Management Authority (FDMA), the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and the FATA Secretariat, while promoting social cohesion and expanding livelihoods opportunities and delivery of basic services in these areas, particularly for women.”

Background Information:

According to the FATA Disaster Management Authority (FDMA), the official number of registered Internally Displaced People (IDPs) as of 27 August 2014 stands at 96.555 families. Most of the displaced people have taken refuge in host communities in the bordering Districts of KP (including Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan, Hangu and Karak). Under these circumstances, the TDPs continue to face immense difficulties with limited or no access to basic amenities while being exposed to extreme weather conditions. The worst affected and most vulnerable groups are the women and children who represent more than 70 percent of IDPs.

Launching of sustainable water management project

The Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) launched a sustainable water management project for the district Killa Abdullah funded by the Federal Republic of Germany on 10th September. The project aims to improve the livelihoods of the Afghan refugee - and host communities through sustainable water management, ultimately contributing to enhanced social cohesion. The launching ceremony was attended by the Minister for Planning and Development, Dr. Hamid Achakzai, Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Urban Planning Mr. Sardar Mustafa Tareen as well as representatives of the provincial assembly and line departments.

The project “*Enhanced social cohesion & stability through sustainable water management in district Killa Abdullah, Balochistan*” addresses the scarce water resources which affect the livelihood opportunities of the rural poor and which are a source of conflict between host and Afghan refugee communities. Greater emphasis on economic growth that brings economic opportunity to the rapidly growing population is the key to future success and stability within the border region. Sustainable water management to enhance the livelihoods of the population living in district Killa Abdullah will have positive impacts on the social cohesion between the two communities.

During his speech, Minister for Planning and Development, Dr Hamid Achakzai enumerated reasons that had hampered the process of development. Balochistan’s geography and demography has dictated its development history to a significant extent; constituting about 5% of the total country’s

population, 70% of the population resides in scattered, sparsely populated settlements around water resources amid an arid and rugged terrain.

The Minister thanked the Federal Republic of Germany for its contribution and ensured full cooperation of the Government of Balochistan for the implementation of this project which will benefit the livelihoods of the rural poor.

Minister Local Government, Rural Development and Urban Planning, Mr. Mustafa Khan Tareen congratulated BRSP for such a productive participatory initiative to ensure sustainable development of rural areas. He emphasized that the hosting communities are in dire need for longer-term sustainable development initiatives and will require more assistance in the near future.

He thanked the Federal Republic of Germany and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH for their support and ensured the support from the Local Government Development Department to achieve the overall goal and objectives of the BRSP project.

Greece

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Evangelos Venizelos condemned the attack in a press release and said "We are shocked at the incomprehensible, barbaric, inhuman terrorist attack of the Taliban of Pakistan on a school in the city of Peshawar; an attack that resulted in the deaths of dozens of innocent children. The fact that the terrorists targeted children is abhorrent, evoking rage at the craven killers who murdered defenseless children. We express our deep condolences to the families of the victims and our undivided support for the people and the Government of Pakistan

Italy

Prime Minister Matteo Renzi condemned the attack on his Twitter account, saying "Killing children at school is an inconceivable horror, the world must react to this violence

Ambassador Janjua Visits Pakistan Navy Ship "Alamgir" at Taranto Port, Italy (2014-11-21)

Ambassador Tehmina Janjua visited Pakistan Navy's warship "Alamgir" which is making a port call at Taranto, Italy's largest naval port.

PNS "Alamgir", which is the first Pakistan Navy ship to visit Italy since 1980, will also take part in a joint exercise with Italian Navy. The two navies have excellent ongoing collaboration and have also participated jointly in the multinational anti-piracy operations in the Indian Ocean including the

Combined Task Force 150 and Combined Task Force 151.

The Commandant of PNS Alamgir C.V. Faisal Amin hosted a dinner on-board the ship which was attended by the host military, political and administrative authorities. These included the Commander of Italy's South Maritime Command and the Prefect of the City of Toronto.

Earlier in the day, the Ambassador was given a detailed tour of the Italian Aircraft Carrier "Giuseppe Garibaldi". The Ambassador was accompanied by the Defence Attaché and the Commanding Officer of Alamgir.

Ambassador Janjua presented the captains of PNS Alamgir and ITS Giuseppe Garibaldi with commemorative plaques from the Embassy of Pakistan in Rome. While speaking on the occasion, she said that bilateral defence collaboration between the armed forces of Pakistan and Italy was robust with immense potential for further expansion.

The Pakistani community in Italy organized a meeting in Rome (2014-10-26)

The Pakistani community in Italy organized a meeting in Rome on Sunday 26 October 2014, to observe the Kashmir Black Day.

More than 100 community members including Kashmiri representatives attended the meeting. The event was held to mark the anniversary of the landing of the Indian troops in Srinagar on 27 October 1947 that led to the illegal occupation of the territory of Jammu and Kashmir by India.

Speakers at the event recalled the immense sacrifices rendered by the people of Indian Occupied Kashmir in their struggle for the realization of their right to self-determination. They condemned the violations of human rights committed on the hapless people of Kashmir over decades. It was underlined that a durable solution to this issue could only be found through implementation of resolutions of the UN Security Council.

Speakers also condemned the recent escalation of violence by Indian forces along the Line of Control and the Working Boundary that had resulted in loss of life and injuries among civilians in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. They called on the international community to play its role in assuring the realization of the right of self-determination by the Kashmiri people.

SAMP Syed Tariq Fatemi meets Presidents, holds Bilateral Meetings, Addresses ASEM Summit in Milan

(2014-10-16)

Prime Minister's Special Assistant, Tariq Fatemi, heading Pakistan's delegation to the 10th ASEM Summit taking place in the Italian city of Milan, held a large number of bilateral meetings with world leaders, in addition to participating in the Summit engagements. These included the Presidents of South Korea and Switzerland, Prime Minister of the Netherlands, as well as the Foreign Ministers of China, Russia, Norway, Kazakhstan, Laos and the British Minister of State.

2. During the meetings, matters of common interest, including the gamut of bilateral relations, came up for discussion. The Special Assistant also briefed his interlocutors on the regional security situation, especially the escalation along the Line of Control and Working Border with India, following unprovoked violations of ceasefire by the Indian forces. He stressed that Pakistan had demonstrated maturity and restraint, remaining committed to constructive and result-oriented dialogue to build peace and stability in South Asia.

3. On Afghanistan, the Special Assistant reaffirmed Pakistan's solidarity with the Afghan people, while expressing the confidence that Pakistan's western neighbor would emerge as a stronger, more stable, and unified country.

4. The Special Assistant also delivered a statement in the Second Plenary Session of the Summit, whose thematic focus was "Global Matters in an Interconnected World." He lauded the bi-regional forum for its contribution towards enhancing cooperation between Asia and Europe through sustained dialogue. He drew the world leaders' attention to the depredations of climate change which was wreaking havoc on the economies of countries like Pakistan. He called for joint global response for concrete mitigation measures and disaster management solutions through innovation and technology sharing. He also reiterated Pakistan's commitment to Millennium Development Goals and the Post-2015 Development Agenda. He said that access to peaceful uses of civil nuclear energy through an inclusive, non-discriminatory and criteria-based framework was essential to enable developing countries to meet their growing energy needs.

5. Referring to the situation in Middle East, he called for addressing the causes that had led to the emergence of new militant entities, which illustrated the frightening fact that terrorism presented a global threat. Moreover, the world leaders needed to use their collective influence to finding a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian issue, in accordance with the UN resolutions.

The Netherlands

Education for All

Project visit by Ambassador De Vink

November 24, 2014

Ambassador de Vink recently visited Quetta and viewed the projects that the Dutch Government has contributed towards with the Government of Baluchistan.

These included projects to improve access to quality education for all children and especially to increase the opportunities for girls to complete their basic education. The Baluchistan Education Programme was focused in three districts of Baluchistan with specific objectives. These included the expansion and improvement of the existing infrastructure of 340 schools, creating additional classrooms and upgrading primary schools to middle and secondary levels. The project also promoted child friendly and participatory teaching methodologies in all the targeted schools, including capacity building for teachers, effective monitoring mechanisms, reactivation of the Parent Teacher School Management Committee, as well as the strengthening of the Education Management Information Systems.

The Netherlands has also supported the Baluchistan police by providing Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) training on international best practices aimed at addressing gaps in crime scene awareness, physical evidence detection, collection and investigation. The training is now provided at the Police Training College with the assistance of the Netherlands Government in modern classrooms with online classes also available and a developed IT centre.

Exploring Opportunities in the Dairy Sector

Avenues of Pak-Dutch Cooperation

News article | November 18, 2014

An interactive session on “Exploring Opportunities in the Dairy Sector: Avenues of Pak-Dutch Cooperation” was held recently in Lahore in collaboration with the Dairy Training Centre and Veepro.

The guests represented the corporate dairy sector, academia, various government and skills development bodies and the media. Coming on the heels of the resumption of cattle trade between the Netherlands and Pakistan, the event was an interactive gathering and an occasion for information sharing.

Mr. Frans van Rijn Charge d’Affaires said, “Pakistan is also a great milk producing country, however, its population is growing fast and so is the demand for dairy products. The sector will need to expand and modernise quickly to provide in this growing demand. As a fellow dairy producing nation,

theNetherlands can help Pakistan in this regard.

He added, “Indeed it’s a perfect match: the Dutch have the products, the expertise and the services needed by Pakistan to make this transition in the dairy sector. The Netherlands is a small country with less than 17 million people but it is the 2nd biggest agricultural exporter in the world. The Dutch are known for their high-quality, high-intensity and high-sustainability agribusiness – especially in this field.”

Mr. Anne Terpstra, a representative of DTC, spoke about how the right management and the right animals can increase profitability: “Managing dairy animals is the one of the most complex jobs in the world. Dairy farming professionals in Pakistan need to brush-up their practical skills in a way that they are able to communicate with their cows in order to identify issues in the farm management and provide corrective measures for enhanced productivity. With such good management, Dutch dairy animals in Pakistan can produce at the same high levels as they do in the Netherlands.”

Dutch cattle now available for Pakistan’s dairy sector.

News article | November 7, 2014

Today cattle trade between the Netherlands and Pakistan has resumed after 11 years. The import restrictions have been lifted and a protocol has been agreed, finally allowing trade to resume. The availability of world class Dutch dairy cattle presents a unique opportunity to Pakistan’s growing dairy sector.

After all, the Netherlands are the cradle of the famous Holstein Friesian cow, and have perfected this healthy and fertile breed over the centuries. Dutch Holstein Frisian cows can produce no less than 30,000kg of milk in a lifetime; a yield that is unmatched worldwide.

Moreover, the Netherlands also provide the best feed, medicine and management skills to fulfil the complete genetic potential of these cows, tremendously raising the potential profitability of dairy farming in Pakistan.

The Netherlands’ excellence in dairy farming is a prime example of the high-intensity, high-sustainability agribusiness that Pakistan needs to modernise and expand its agricultural sector, to address the growing demand for the next generation.

To learn more about importing Dutch dairy cattle and related products, please contact the Trade Section of the Netherlands Embassy at ISL-EA@minbuza.nl

The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) has published the instruction for exporting cattle to Pakistan.

Norway:

Norway condemns terrorist attack on school in Pakistan

Last updated: 16.12.2014 // ‘I condemn today’s terrorist attack on a school in Peshawar in the strongest possible terms. Targeting children and teachers in this manner is despicable,’ said Minister of Foreign Affairs Børge Brende.

More than 100 people are reported to have been killed in the attack – most of them schoolchildren. A number of teachers and military personnel have also lost their lives. There were more than 500 people in the school when it was attacked. The Pakistani Taliban has claimed responsibility.

‘I am deeply worried about the escalating violence in Pakistan. It is a tragedy that so many people have been killed in a meaningless assault just a few days after we celebrated a peace prize in support of children and their right to an education. Those responsible for today’s attack must be brought to justice,’ said Foreign Minister Brende.

‘Protection of schools is a priority in Norway’s global education efforts. Norway has taken a leading role in developing international guidelines for the protection of schools and universities in situations of armed conflict. This attack shows that such guidelines are absolutely essential,’ Mr Brende said.

Humanitarian field visit to Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province with WFP

On 10 to 12 December the Embassy took part in a humanitarian field visit organised by World Food Programme Pakistan (WFP) to Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province together with other donors and the Section for Humanitarian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo.

On the first day of the trip, we visited Jalojai Refugee Camp where more than 30 000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the tribal areas along the Afghanistan border are residing. At Jalojai we got to see the food storage facilities of WFP and learn about what type of food and nutrition assistance the IDPs receive. We were able to talk to some of the staff who assist and register newly arrived IDPs and learn more about how the distribution of monthly food rations are conducted. In addition, we visited one of the health facilities that WFP is running inside the camp. We also got to meet representatives from the Provincial Disaster Management Authority.

The second day of the trip was set aside for a visit to the Swat valley, where our first stop was at a health facility run by WFP and partners outside the city of Mingora. The purpose of this facility is to provide pregnant women and mothers of new-borns information on nutrition, child vaccine and

hygiene. At the facility, both children and their mothers are checked for signs of acute malnutrition. When necessary, they will receive free food rations specifically designed to treat malnutrition and the children will get necessary vaccines.

Final stop was one of the side valleys to Swat that was severely hit in the 2010 floods. There WFP in cooperation with local NGOs is doing reconstruction and flood prevention work with the local communities in order to avoid that future floods will be as disastrous for the local population. Among the activities that WFP runs there is reforestation, training in search and rescue, adaptation of agriculture and livestock grazing practices to combat the challenges of erosion and soil degradation on the mountain slopes.

It was of course an added bonus for the Norwegian participants to get to see Malala's hometown on the same day as she received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo.

Malala Yousafzai from Pakistan and Kailash Satyarthi from India were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in the Oslo on Wednesday 10 December

Malala Yousafzai from Pakistan and Kailash Satyarthi from India were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in the Oslo on Wednesday 10 December.

To honour the laureates the Norwegian Embassy in Islamabad invited to high tea at the residence where the live broadcast from the ceremony in Oslo was shown. Among the many guests were human rights activists, journalists, politicians and friends of the Norwegian Embassy in Islamabad.

Malala, being 17 years old, is the youngest ever laureate to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Malala is from the Swat valley and is fighting for girls' right to education.

Mystic Sufi Festival 2014

The 13th International Mystic Music Sufi Festival 2014 was held on 4 December in Islamabad. The performances were a treat to watch and judging by the many thunderous rounds of applause much appreciated by the audience. Similar events were organized on 6 and 7 December in Lahore, and is scheduled to be held on 28 December in Azad Kashmir.

This year it is pertinent to note that the Sufi Festival has brought together a diverse group of Sufi singers from Pakistan, Syria and Iran to showcase Sufi poetry and music that was created more than a thousand years ago. It has also been a great platform for over a decade to bring the best and the most inspiring Sufi Traditions of the Muslims to the rest of the world.

The Royal Norwegian Embassy Islamabad – Pakistan is supporting local civil society organizations in Pakistan for the Culture Diversification Programmes and Restoration of Built Heritage and local art and crafts. Under the ongoing financial support with Rafi Peer Theatre Workshop, Lahore, the Embassy has organized number of special events

Spain

President of the Government Mariano Rajoy sent condolences to the Prime Minister of Pakistan in the name of the Spanish people: "I cannot imagine a more disgusting terrorist act on human dignity. My country has also known the indiscriminate pain and suffering of terrorism and violence. For this, you can count on my Government's full support and the firm commitment of Spain in the fight against this scourge

Sweden: Women Power at the Swedish Residence

More than 30 Pakistani female parliamentarians participated in an informal lunch discussion at the Swedish residence recently.

The luncheon was hosted by H.E. Tomas Rosander and his wife Dr. Christina Rosander. Also participating at the luncheon were locale female entrepreneurs, female representatives of international NGOs and the European Union, as well as women from some of the diplomatic missions. The Ambassador and his wife made brief presentations of issues topical in the gender discussion in Sweden. A vivid, informal discussion followed, ranging from domestic violence to female representation in politics. The event was a follow-up of the very interesting discussion earlier this year between representatives of the women's caucus in the Parliament in Islamabad and the delegation accompanying the Speaker of the Swedish Parliament on his visit. At this occasion both sides expressed great interest in a continued dialogue. Ambassador Rosander assured the participants that enhanced contacts with the Pakistani Parliament was a priority for the Embassy and he was hoping to follow-up with similar events covering also other areas.

UK: HM QUEEN ELIZABETH II SENDS A LETTER OF CONDOLENCE TO THE PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN

Earlier this afternoon, Her Britannic Majesty Queen Elizabeth II sent a personal message of condolence to the President of Pakistan, His Excellency Mamnoon Hussain.

Her Majesty wrote:

"It was with great sadness that I learned of the tragic loss of life in Peshawar. On behalf of the people

of the United Kingdom, Prince Philip and I wish to convey to you and to the people of Pakistan our deepest sympathy.

As fellow members of the Commonwealth, we place so much emphasis on young people and the hope they inspire across the world. I am particularly saddened that so many of the victims were children and their teachers, struck down at their place of learning.

My thoughts and prayers are with the families of those who died. I wish the many who were injured a swift and full recovery, and my heartfelt condolences go to all those who have been bereaved. Elizabeth R".

In addition to the letter from Her Majesty The Queen, the British Prime Minister David Cameron wrote to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond, International Development Secretary Justine Greening and Home Secretary Theresa May have also written personal letters of condolence to the people of Pakistan. The British Chief of the Defence Staff has written to Pakistan's Chief of the Army Staff, General Raheel, to express the British Armed Forces' heartfelt sympathy with the victims of Tuesday's attack.

HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES SENDS A LETTER OF CONDOLENCE TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF PAKISTAN:

In his letter to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales said:

"My wife and I feel utterly devastated and heartbroken by the truly appalling events which took place recently in Peshawar.

We join with all Pakistanis in utter shock and grief at the sheer, indescribable brutality of the attacks on innocent school children and staff. We would be so grateful if you could convey our deepest and most profound sympathies to the families of those affected.

Our special thoughts are with yourself and the Pakistani people at such an agonizing time for the whole country".

The British Deputy High Commission in Karachi held a vigil to remember the victims and the affected families of the attack on Peshawar Army Public School.

The British Deputy High Commissioner in Karachi, John A. Tucknott MBE said,

"On behalf of the British Government and its people, I extended deepest condolences to the families and friends of all those who have tragically lost their lives and to Pakistan and its people for their sad loss. The United Kingdom stands strong with Pakistan in their struggle against terrorism."

December 17

This afternoon, **the British High Commissioner** to Pakistan wrote a message in a Book of Condolence for the victims and affected families of the attack at Peshawar Army Public School. Writing in the book, opened at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad, Philip Barton said:

"On behalf of the British Government and people, and the staff of the British High Commission. I would like to express my heartfelt condolences to all those affected by yesterday's barbaric act of terrorism in Peshawar. The United Kingdom stands shoulder to shoulder with the people of Pakistan in their struggle against terrorism."

Foreign Secretary statement on Pakistan school attack

Philip Hammond condemns the attack on a school in Pakistan

Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said:

I am appalled by news of a terrorist attack on a school in Peshawar today and by the tragic loss of life. I send my deepest sympathy to the victims and their families.

Nothing can justify such a horrific attack on children going to school. The UK continues to stand shoulder to shoulder with the government and people of Pakistan in the fight against terrorism and extremism.

Responding to today's attacks at the Army Public School in Peshawar, British Prime Minister, David Cameron, tweeted:

"The news from Pakistan is deeply shocking. It's horrifying that children are being killed simply for going to school."

WWI Christmas Truce Memorial Football Match

The British High Commission in Islamabad marked World War I Remembrance through a friendly football match featuring Pakistan Army XI vs International XI Team. In case you are wondering about the score, Pakistan Army XI won the match by a scoreline of 3-1.

British High Commission hosts 'SHAPE The FUTURE' competition awards ceremony

The competition aimed to engage young people in the broader international debate on a new set of Sustainable Development Goals to follow on from the Millennium Development Goals after 2015.

The 'Shape the Future' Competition concluded on Wednesday 10 December with an awards ceremony hosted by the British High Commissioner, Philip Barton CMG OBE. The painting and creative writing competition, launched in September by the British High Commission and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) in Pakistan, invited students from across the country to put forward their views on the changes they believed would make the most difference to people's lives in Pakistan. The competition aimed to engage young people in the broader international debate on a new set of Sustainable Development Goals to follow on from the Millennium Development Goals after 2015. Students participated from across Pakistan including Karachi, Peshawar, Sargodha, Islamabad, Faisalabad and Rawalpindi. Their entries displayed the talent of Pakistan's youth and their understanding of the ongoing discussion on the post-2015 development agenda. Another aspect of the Shape the Future activities involved holding debates with students of Development Studies at Iqra University, SZABIST and Bahria University in Islamabad. These debates engaged Pakistan's youth on a range of post-2015 development issues ranging from education, health, gender and environmental sustainability. A report based on these discussions was represented to UNDP Country Director Marc-Andre Franche.

Around 40 paintings and essays were displayed at the awards ceremony, and the winners were announced by Philip Barton. The awards ceremony was attended by members of the development sector and the diplomatic community.

Congratulating the winners for their hard work and highlighting the importance of the Millennium Development Goals, the British High Commissioner, Philip Barton CMG OBE said I am delighted to host the 'Shape the Future' competition awards ceremony. This has given us the opportunity to appreciate the talent of Pakistan's young people and their understanding of development priorities. I have thoroughly enjoyed reading their essays and seeing their paintings. The university debates provided a wonderful platform for us to hear students' views on a number of key issues that will have an impact on the future of Pakistan. This evening has shown just how much the young people of Pakistan care about their country and are working hard to achieve sustainable progress.

British High Commission organises panel discussion on 'Social Entrepreneurship'

The British High Commission organised a panel discussion on 'Social Entrepreneurship' today at the National University for Science and Technology (NUST) Islamabad.

As part of the Global Entrepreneurship Week, this initiative aims at inspiring young entrepreneurs from across Pakistan and helping them explore their potential as self-starters and innovators. Renowned entrepreneur and anchor, Sidra Iqbal moderated the session which comprised of Mr. Arif Masud Mirza, Head of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) Pakistan, Mr. Jonathan Williams, Head of Chevening Pakistan and Press Attaché at the British High Commission Islamabad.

The panellists stressed that social entrepreneurs could become the drivers of innovation. They also debated that entrepreneurs can also expand opportunities to lift themselves and their families out of poverty, which will benefit Pakistani society at large.

Speaking at the occasion, British Deputy High Commissioner, Mr. Patrick Moody, said: The discussion today has shown that social entrepreneurship can be a valuable tool for any country and can change many lives. Here in Pakistan, there is huge potential to use entrepreneurship as a solution for not only economical problems, but also for unemployment and for social welfare services. This is one of the reasons the UK is supporting the growth of a vibrant, resilient, and innovative small and micro business sector in Pakistan. Over the next few years, the UK will help over a million poor people access microfinance, 60 per cent of whom are women. We will support entrepreneurs across Pakistan and nurture innovation by providing thousands of loans to small businesses. We are also providing vocational skills training to some of the poorest people in Punjab enabling them to get jobs and earn money on their own.

Pakistan and the UK share longstanding cultural, historic and business ties. We stand with Pakistan, specifically its talented young people, to help them strengthen their society using entrepreneurship as an effective tool.

On behalf of us all at the British High Commission and members of the Chevening alumni community in Pakistan, GOOD LUCK to this year's batch of **Chevening scholars** who are starting their courses in the UK this autumn [#IamChevening](#).

Tomorrow, all 18 scholars from Pakistan will meet each other - and the rest of this year's Chevening scholars from across the globe – for the first time. If you want to apply to be a Chevening scholar next year, you have a few more weeks left to apply.

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

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