

Bridge Communications & Research - BCR

604-280 Morningside Ave, Toronto, Canada, Phone 647 975 7611, email:
naemasiatrade@hotmail.com Web <http://bridgecommunicationsandresearch.com/index.html>

Bridge-Europa - January 2014

Part of Pakistan Awareness Initiative -PAI

Connecting People -Building Bridges –Spreading Harmony-Voicing against injustice

CONTEXT

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Editor's Note



Another year has passed. Last year, regrettably, the sufferings of people on many places continued to be a challenge and seem to be unending. Silently and every now and then rhetorically, international community attempted to fix the problems but that was too late, too little and on some places, unfortunately, nothing at all. It looks obvious that Poverty, Wars, Violence, Displacements, abuse against women

and children and ethnic oppressions will keep on haunting all of us during 2014.

In a recent study conducted by the Pew center “One third of 198 countries reviewed saw high or very high levels of internal religious strife, such as sectarian violence, terrorism or bullying in 2012, compared to 29 per cent in 2011 and 20 percent in 2010”. The 198 countries studied account for more than 99.5 per cent of the world's population.

Disappointingly, Pakistan's situation suffered a profound plunge during 2013. Appreciations poured in when first democratic transition took place in Pakistan in 2013, but the benefits of democracy or behind the shield of democracy, are shared only by 3% of this penurious nation. Crisis of Taliban, Human Rights, Energy, Education and Corruption persisted as stronger as ever before. Pakistan remained a killing ground for civilians including children and women, journalists, Police, Military, and

minorities. None of the politicians resigned or stripped of ministerial powers despite this disgraceful failure to protect the innocent lives.

In the last issue, we proposed many things after a coward twin church bomb attacks on September 22, 2013, in Peshawar – Pakistan when 86 innocent church goers killed and many injured - nothing has changed. Real plotters are still at large, bereaved families still waiting for the compensation and the minorities are left at the mercy of terrorists – they can strike again, whenever they want. This is not that our beliefs and faiths are under attack, but this is about how serious the governments are to ensure the security of their citizens and minorities. It's also about how the civilised world reacting to such carnage.

In 2012, an estimated 450 members of the Shia Muslim community were killed in targeted attacks all over the country. Shia Hazara community was specifically targeted on many occasions and 125 were killed in Balochistan alone.

Human Rights Watch has painted a bleak picture of Pakistan in its 2013 World Report 2013. Report states “Pakistan’s human rights crisis worsened markedly in 2012 with religious minorities bearing the brunt of killings and repression.”

“Pakistan’s religious minorities endured another year of persecution, insecurity, and fear,” Mr. Hasan of HRW Pakistan said. “The government’s failure to reform or repeal the blasphemy law provides extremists with legal tools to impose bigotry and perpetrate abuse.”

The persisting mass killing have overshadowed the small discriminations and single or double killings as people are used to double digit body count.

There are many isolated and bloody occurrences that either goes unreported or underreported in this country. There is no place where victims can go for justice as police is unable to protect its own well protected high profile officers.

How long this modern world will act as a silent spectator against this state sponsored discrimination? We had suggested a number of strategies to pressurize the Government of Pakistan like repealing blasphemy laws and rewriting of The Constitution of Pakistan, Part III: Chapter 1, The Constitution of Pakistan, Notes for Part III: Chapter 3 and The Constitution of Pakistan, Part VII: Chapter 3A.

Human Rights Watch 2013 report about Pakistan reveals that the “abuses under the country’s blasphemy law continued as dozens were charged in 2012. At least 16 people remained on death row and 20 were serving life sentences for blasphemy.

Another minority declared non-Muslims with a constitutional amendment on Sept 6, 1974, are living under the cloak of fear and there are many cases where Ahmadis are killed, ransacked and harassed.

Under the umbrella of The Ordinance XX which later came to be known as the Blasphemy Law. Members of the Ahmadi religious community have been major targets for blasphemy prosecutions and subjected to specific anti-Ahmadi laws. Militant groups forced the demolition or closure of Ahmadi mosques and vandalised Ahmadi graves across Punjab province”.

A US government-appointed panel, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom has also indicated that the risks to the minorities living in Pakistan have reached to a crisis level. The report has raised serious concerns about the killings of Shia Muslims and alongside Christians, Ahmadis and Hindus. Report says that blasphemy laws “are widely used to violate religious freedoms and foster a climate of impunity.” This report could place Pakistan under sanctions for failure to maintain Religious Freedom for minorities.

There are many instances where minorities are killed brutally in the name of blasphemy. Later, it’s revealed that the killing was caused by anger or personal enmity. The convicts still got away with a slap on the wrist.

This religious fervor has only proved lethal and devastating equally for the Muslims and minorities. Pakistani nationals abroad and the people of Pakistan origin are equally affected and hurt the same way like people residing in Pakistan. In fact, Pakistanis abroad feel highly embarrassed on what is going on in Pakistan because they have to answer their fellow citizens about inability of the government, killings and wellbeing of love ones living in Pakistan. They do what they can like Senior British Foreign Office Minister, Baroness Warsi, who always been deeply concerned about the situation in Pakistan and do the best she can. In her new year message to the people of Pakistan she said” I think of those killed at the All Saints Church in Peshawar in September. 2013 was again another year with too many attacks against minorities and innocent civilians”, make it clear that all of us standing by the victimized minorities and civilians killed during 2013.

The government of Pakistan is busy spending time and resources on the issues related to ego and revenge. Military, Intelligence Agencies, Taliban, banned outfits and armed wings of the political parties are rampant and many parallel governments are in place. Politicians are planning for tomorrow by introducing their progeny, fascinating slogans and religious shield. According to an article published in the Washington Post on September 2, 2013, “the United States has delivered nearly \$26 billion in aid to Pakistan over the past 12 years”. Military, Intelligence Agencies, Taliban, banned outfits and armed wings of the political parties are knitted together by ideology, profit, sympathy or faith.

Sincerely

Syed Naeem Uddin

Editor/ Publisher

<http://bridgecommunicationsandresearch.com/index.html>

604-280 Morningside Ave, Toronto, Ontario, M1E 3E8, Canada, Ph: 011 647 975 7611

The objectives and Why Bridge-Europa?

Create awareness in general public about the EU/Western support and lifesaving efforts in Pakistan. Promote more cooperation and harmony among citizens of Pakistan and EU/Western through awareness and public diplomacy.

Connect donors and people for the maximum usage of funds and eliminate corruption

Aware Pakistani youths/ professionals and general public about scholarships, professional/ career development opportunities and exchange programs.

Withstand against increasing hate crimes and faith division

Why Bridge-Europa?

Despite the colossal and continuing EU aid, sacrifices of the NATO troops and journalists, EU role to save lives in disaster and help Pakistan from toys to advanced technology, anti-western sentiments are all time high. This is because people do not know about all of it and EU media campaigns worth millions of dollars seem to achieve no results. Bridge-Europa will reach to the underprivileged people where poverty and fanaticism is preying on youth to radicalism. Bridge-Europa is free and our demographic research and email access will deliver Bridge-Europa where it's really needed and also to the places with public access to send out a message of harmony, acceptance and dialogue. A safer Pakistan is a step towards better world. As long as animosities exist nobody can work to improve pathetic conditions to poverty, disease, human rights, corruption, strong democracy climate, Iced Himalaya and wild life in Pakistan.

Present & Past Memberships

- The American Political Science Association - APSA
- International Political Science Association - IPSA
- Institute for Cultural Democracy – ICD
- European Journalism Centre - EJC
- Canadian Association of Journalists – CAJ
- Canadian Journalists for Free Expression – CJFE

Belgium: Didier Reynders congratulates Malala Yousafzai on winning the 25th Sakharov Prize: date: 10 October 2013

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Didier Reynders is delighted that the European Parliament has awarded the 25th Sakharov human rights prize to Malala Yousafzai.

Minister Reynders welcomes the exceptional personality of the 16-year-old Pakistani who certainly deserves this prize for human rights and democracy. This distinction is not only for her, but also for millions of other young people around the world whose human rights are violated or simply denied, especially regarding education.

The education of girls is what Malala Yousafzai is fighting for. It is also the most effective tools in the fight against authoritarianism and for freedom and development.

Denmark: Danish Ambassador participates in the PILDAT Forum on Youth & Democracy. 27.11.2013 12:02

Lahore; November 27, PILDAT held a Forum today on Pakistan, Youth and Democracy in Pakistan to create awareness among the youth about challenges to democracy in Pakistan and to discuss the role the youth of Pakistan can play in strengthening democracy and democratic institutions. Young Parliamentarians, students of different universities and colleges, members of youth wings of political parties and former members of Youth Parliament Pakistan participated in the Forum.

PILDAT's report on Assessment of the Quality of Democracy in Pakistan in first 100 Days of National and Provincial Governments was shared with the participants.

H.E. Mr. Jesper Moller Sorensen, Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan, was the guest of Honour while Mr. Javed Jabbar, former Senator and Federal Minister and Mr. Ghazi Salahuddin, Senior Analyst, were the keynote speakers at the Forum. Mr. Ahmed Bilal Mehboob, President PILDAT, presented an overview of the assessment of Quality of Democracy in First 100 days of National and Provincial Governments in Pakistan.

Addressing the young audience, Danish Ambassador Sorensen highlighted that a democratic society equals to a civil society, where the youth plays an important role in creating a culture attuned to democracy, liberty and freedom. "This is exactly the process that Denmark wants to support, because we want to make sure that Pakistan continues to move in a positive direction, where the democratic voices are outspoken, heard and mainstreamed in society," said the Ambassador. He also acknowledged the successful partnership with PILDAT, which aims to promote democratic values among the younger generation in Pakistan. "I am extremely proud that Denmark is involved in activities like today and that we are supporting processes which are so important for the future of Pakistan. Our partnership with PILDAT also provided the opportunity to remain active in electoral reforms – reforms which contributed to the elections this May. I am confident that through the great work of the civil society and the commitment of the youth in Pakistan, Pakistan will be going in the right direction – striving towards democracy and peace."

Youth is not determined by one's physical age but by one's dreams and visions, said Mr. Javed Jabbar. He said that Pakistan is a unique country. Democracy allows citizens to participate in decisions that affect their lives. He said that democratic system is not necessarily Parliamentary system and we should not be afraid to explore if a Presidential form of Government, the one through which President is directly-elected, is more suitable to Pakistan. Mr. Jabbar said that his

favourite reform is to make voting compulsory in Pakistan as in other 35 countries of the World. For youth to prosper and for democracy to be sustainable, youth must employ reasoned dialogue, based on understanding of issues, respecting other people's opinions and exercise tolerance.

Youth of Pakistan do not read books which is the biggest crisis facing this young country, said Mr. Ghazi Salahuddin. Make a personal exploration of your country; get to know it so that you can represent it and relate it to the rest of the World. Understand the value of ideas. Democracy is an idea that has changed the World, he said to the youth participants. In order to treat others as equals, youth must understand the concept of equality and human rights, regardless of gender, colour, caste or creed. What defined Malala as a brave girl was that she read books. Imagination is the key to creating ideas. Our future depends on libraries, reading and day-dreaming, said Mr. Salahuddin.

Presenting results of PILDAT's Democracy Assessment exercise of first 100 days of National and Provincial Governments, Mr. Ahmed Bilal Mehboob, President PILDAT, said that PILDAT's Democracy Assessment Group – DAG has scored the strengthening of the democratic process in the first 100 days at 44.5%. In comparison, this was scored at 44.2% in 2012. The Performance of Democracy, getting a relatively weaker score of 25.6% is still higher as compared to the score of 20.9% awarded to performance of democracy – or governance in other words - in 2012 by the Democracy Assessment Group. At the conclusion of first 100 days of National and Provincial Governments in September 2013, the aggregate score of quality of democracy stands at 54%, which shows a marked improvement over the score received by the same – at 45% - in 2012. Pakistan's 10th General Election, though not without its flaws, was relatively better and unlike the previous nine elections, subject to the rule of law. The independence of the Election Commission of Pakistan has been assessed at 58.8% - a relatively weaker score than 63.4% in 2012. In concluding his presentation, Mr. Mehboob said that challenges to democracy are weak governance, perception of prevailing corruption, insurgency and its ideological moorings, weak political parties and weak parliamentary oversight of the Government and State institutions. While democracy is stronger than ever before in Pakistan, in the assessment of the Group, unless all citizens, especially youth, get involved in deepening and strengthening democracy, the cause for establishing a viable and sustainable democratic system would not be well-served.

The reports on Assessment of the Quality of Democracy in First 100 days of National and Provincial Government can be assessed at the following

link:http://www.pildat.org/publications/publication/SDR/AssessmentoftheQualityofDemocracyinFirst100daysofNationalandProvincialGovernments_Sep2013.pdf

The Forum was organised by PILDAT under the project titled Supporting Monitoring of Democracy,

Electoral Reforms and Development of Youth in Pakistan, which is supported by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), Government of Denmark.

Denmark supports National Peace Summit: 26.11.2013 09:36

National Peace Summit highlights role of political parties in engaging youth in peace-building

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) Pakistan in partnership with Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) Pakistan organized a day-long National Peace Summit at Aiwan-e Quaid in Islamabad on November 23, 2013. The Summit, which is financially supported by the Government of Denmark acknowledged efforts for peace building undertaken as part of Pakistan Peace Initiative's ongoing national peace campaign under the project entitled "Promoting Dialogue for Peace building through Media and Youth Mobilization in Pakistan".

Representatives of major political parties, inspirational youth leaders, media professionals, representatives of the civil society, international development community and academia attended the summit.

Key politicians from major political parties debated issues related to youth of Pakistan during an interactive session entitled "2013 Election Manifestos of Major Political Parties and Focus on Youth".

Guest of Honor Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan H.E. Jesper M. Sorensen and Chief Guest Federal Secretary Information, Broadcasting & National Heritage, Dr. Nazir Saeed, inaugurated the Summit and also spoke on the occasion.

Addressing the audience, Ambassador Sorensen stated that Denmark fully supported the Pakistan Peace Initiative and termed it a step in the right direction. Ambassador Sorensen also termed peace as more than the absence of war. "Peace can only thrive if you have an environment, where there is coexistence, social justice, hope, imagination and creativity. The PPI program has been a great platform to sensitize media, youth and local leaders on how to seek the common ground between one's own group and another group of people and thereby build empathy and tolerance and lessen polarization in society." Ambassador Sorensen concluded his remarks by emphasizing that continued efforts were necessary to ensure that communities are empowered to recover and reconcile from the devastating effects of violent conflict and to ensure that the effects we see today can be prevented from becoming tomorrow's cause of conflicts.

Inspirational youth leaders such as Ali Moeen Nawazish, Youth Ambassador GEO TV & Jang Group; Haroon Rasheed, Creator of Burqa Avenger animated movie; Waseem Badami, ARY News

Anchormen; Farah Hussain, ATV Morning Show Host; Sohaila Muhammadi, young marshal arts star from Balochistan; and Sarmad Tariq also attended the Summit and actively engaged participants in a lively discussion during an interactive session entitled “Learning by Doing: Inspirational Role Models of Social Entrepreneurship & Peacebuilding”.

The Summit also featured Signing and presentation of the Petition for Peace and screening of PPI project documentary.

Project beneficiaries shared their inspirational success stories with the audience during the session entitled “Dialogue and Peace: Reflections from District Dialogue Forums”.

Artist Mobeena Zuberi distributed awards among the winners of peace poster competition SFCG Pakistan organized on the occasion as part of the National Peace Summit activities.

SFCG Pakistan and its implementing partners SDPI, Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC), Intermedia Pakistan, Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF) and Uks Resource Center, with support from Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), are implementing “Promoting Dialogue for Peacebuilding through Media and Youth Mobilization in Pakistan” project in 25 districts all across Pakistan including Gilgit-Baltistan, FATA and Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

The overall objective of the project is to shift people’s attitudes and behaviors towards a tolerant and constructive solutions-oriented approach by engaging and building the capacity of youth leaders, journalists and local leaders through training and workshop activities in building peace in their communities.

Danish Minister for Development Cooperation visits Pakistan launches new USD 50 million program

06.11.2013 12:30: Islamabad, PK - November 6, 2013 - The Government of Denmark today launched its new development program for Pakistan 2013-2016. Denmark will contribute USD 50 Million for democratic development, regional stability, human rights and gender equality. Denmark will almost double its commitment from around USD 8 million annually to USD 14 million over the next three and half years as a continuation of the first program launched in 2010.

The Danish Minister for Development Cooperation, Mr. Christian Friis Bach, who is on a two day visit to Pakistan, hosted the ceremony under the large presence of representatives from the civil society, media, diplomatic core and UN agencies. Mr. Tariq Fatemi, the Special Assistance to the Prime Minister was the Guest of Honour.

In an interactive session, Mr. Bach talked about the new program in the context of Denmark’s

overall development strategy, "The Right To a Better Life". He stressed that the Danish development program framework reflected the strategic choices made to support Pakistan in its democratic transition, especially taking account of the continued conflicts in the north-western border areas.

The Danish development strategy has a rights-based approach and focuses on the underlying power relations and fundamental causes of discrimination and poverty, giving priority to actions aimed at benefiting the poorest. The main objective of the program is to contribute to improving the lives of poor people and their ability to create a better life for themselves.

Background:

Denmark launched its first development program for Pakistan in 2010. The new program is a three and half years program and consists of two major components:

- The first component aims to provide support to peace building, livelihoods and education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Balochistan. The support will be provided through a Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) with a total budget of USD 15 million, which is administered by the World Bank and implemented by the provincial authorities. The MDTF program focuses on reconstruction and economic development in the areas bordering Afghanistan and will strengthen the writ of the state, thus emphasizing its role as duty bearer. In addition, USD 11 million will be channelled to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for early recovery of educational services in the border areas.

The second component focuses on enhanced democratization, human rights and gender equality. The support will be provided to (i) state building, including to statutory bodies in the human rights area and provincial assemblies in their role as duty bearers (USD 7 million); (ii) civil society organizations as rights holder representatives in the areas of democratization, human rights and gender equality (USD 13 million) and (iii) the strengthening of bilateral ties through 'people to people' partnership programs (USD 4 million).

Denmark reiterates its support to countering terrorism in Pakistan

30.10.2013 11:32, Islamabad - Speaking at the inaugural session of the 7th Regional Workshop for Police Officers, Prosecutors and Judges in South Asia on Effectively Countering Terrorism, the Ambassador of Denmark, Mr. Jesper Moller Sorensen stressed that Pakistan is playing an important role in the global fight against terrorism.

“Pakistan is a key player in this region and in the global fight against terrorism. We will never forget the terrible losses terrorism has inflicted on this country. We are very aware of this, and we support Pakistan. That is also why Denmark has expanded its support to Pakistan through a stabilization program that addresses the challenges important to peace, security, and prosperity in this region. We are also supporting the long-term development in Pakistan through our development assistance program. In fact, we will launch the next phase of our development cooperation program next week here in Islamabad”, said Ambassador Sorensen.

Police officers, prosecutors and judges from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will over the next three days discuss the role of the police, prosecutors and judges in leading effective investigations and prosecution, and exchanging best practices at the national level and how to promote pragmatic regional cooperation.

Ambassador Sorensen encouraged participants in the workshop to work together on an intra-regional basis. “Planning of terrorist attacks may well take place in one region and being carried out in another. It is extremely important to build networks and exchange best practices within and between regions. It is as important as ever to work together, build trust, create counter-terrorism networks and exchange best practices”.

The regional workshop is jointly hosted by the Government of Pakistan and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), and organized by the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, with the financial support of the Government of Denmark, Australia and the United States of America.

Danish ambassador highlights importance of awareness on diabetes for improved healthcare in Pakistan

Karachi, October 12, 2013: “Diabetes has been termed as the ‘silent killer’ disease in Pakistan. With more than 7 million Pakistanis suffering from diabetes, which ranks Pakistan at 7th position in diabetic population, Pakistan is feared to have the fourth largest diabetic population in the world— around 13.8 million people if no interventions are made. Diabetes still has no cure, but effective treatment does exist, which can save precious lives. One of the most important steps in the fight against diabetes is to create more awareness on prevention and effective treatment”. This was stated by the Danish Ambassador. Mr. Jesper M. Sorensen during his visit to Indus Hospital, where he met with doctors, researchers and patients at a diabetic awareness seminar, arranged by the Danish pharma company Novo Nordisk.

Ambassador Sorensen stated that if people had access to the appropriate medication, quality of

care and good medical advice, they would be able to lead an active and healthy life and reduce the risk of developing complications. “Many people who suffer from diabetes in Pakistan - or are in the risk group – do unfortunately have limited knowledge about the existing possibilities for treatment and especially prevention. People from poor and rural areas in particular need more awareness and education on how to improve life quality through good healthcare”, said Ambassador Sorensen.

Mr. Rana Zafar, GM Novo Nordisk Pakistan said that “Creating awareness and education about diabetes is as important as its treatment, Novo Nordisk regularly arrange programs and seminars for creating awareness among diabetic patients and also for general public”. A free diabetes camp was organized by Novo Nordisk at the Indus Hospital where patients were tested for diabetes and also educated regarding diabetes care and treatment accordingly.

Ambassador Sorensen appreciated Novo Nordisk and Indus Hospital’s partnership to reach out to people and create more awareness on diabetes. He concluded the seminar by highlighting that there was a continuous need for more advocacy and partnership with different agencies that can bring in the desired changes in the life of every person living with diabetes.

Background:

In 2012, the total Danish export of goods to Pakistan was USD 93 million. The main areas were machinery, pharmaceuticals, food stuff and raw materials. In 2011, Denmark’s export of services to Pakistan amounted to USD 94 million, almost all related to the maritime industry.

In 2012, Pakistan’s total export of goods to Denmark was USD 95 million. Around 40 per cent was related to the textile industry. In 2011, Pakistan’s export of services to Denmark amounted to USD 81 million, of which 45 per cent was related to the maritime industry.

The Danish Embassy in Pakistan will open a commercial section on 1 December, 2013, headed by a commercial advisor. If it turns out that the one-year trial arrangement is successful and its services are requested by Danish companies, the arrangement will be made permanent.

Danish and Pakistani companies discuss how to increase trade

11.10.2013 09:48, Karachi: Danish companies and their Pakistani partners met today to discuss how to further increase trade between Pakistan and Denmark. The meeting, which was chaired by the new Danish Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Jesper Moller Sorensen, took place in Karachi within the framework of the Pakistan - Danish Business Club.

According to Ambassador Sorensen, Pakistan has huge potential for Danish companies. ” Pakistan

faces challenges in some of the areas where Danish companies have strong holds like renewable energy, energy efficiency, health care solutions and the food and agricultural industry. We want to work closely together with the companies already doing good business in Pakistan as they are role models for other Danish companies. Later this year, we will also open a commercial section at the Embassy to assist more Danish companies. It is also clear that some Danish companies are reluctant about Pakistan. They are concerned about security, energy shortages, and ending up in legal disputes. If some of these concerns are alleviated, even more Danish companies will engage themselves here.”

Novo Nordisk is a global leader for diabetes care products. Participating in the meeting, Head of Novo Nordisk Pakistan, Mr. Rana Azfar Zafar, stated that: “Millions of Pakistanis suffer from diabetes and do not get the proper care. Pakistanis' awareness about health risks, lifestyle diseases and diabetes is still limited. Novo Nordisk sees a vast potential in Pakistan, and with a population of almost 200 million people expected to rise to around 275 million in 2050, Pakistan should also be a very potential market for other Danish companies.”

The Danish toy brand LEGO, who started its operations in Pakistan through their distributor Marketing Plus with a soft launch of its website www.IKnowMyToys.com last year, launched its first Flagship Store of LEGO earlier this year in Karachi. It is set to expand its operations further to other major cities. Mr. Bilal Saleem, CEO of Marketing Plus stated that "almost 35 per cent of the population is below the age of 14, and the growth rate is expected to remain high for many years. As we seek to expand our operations in Pakistan, we also want to make our contributions in increasing the level of education by setting up institutes across the country to enhance the creativity among the Pakistani youth through the use of ingenious products by LEGO."

A.P. Moller - Maersk is the world's largest container ship operator and supply vessel operator. Mr. Morten Jensen, Head of A.P. Moller – Maersk in Pakistan, stated: "There are certainly many challenges in Pakistan, but for sure more opportunities. Surprisingly, Pakistan is offering a well-functioning, transparent and price competitive infrastructure creating a reliable supply chain. In addition, with more than 20 million people, Karachi is one of the world's largest cities with a rapidly growing middle class leading to a great potential for Maersk Line and for other Danish companies. The time is right for companies that dare become part of one of the potentially fastest growing economies in Asia.

FLSmidth, who provides engineering resources in areas such as cement, has been present in Pakistan since the 1970's through its local partner, Falcon Engineering Services. The Managing Director, Ihtsham Qureshi, says: "The new Government of Pakistan is business friendly, and it has secured an IMF loan which will enable other international actors also to invest in Pakistan. In the

coming years, we expect vast investments in infrastructure and energy projects, which will benefit companies like ours. I have no doubt that Pakistan offers a huge potential for other Danish companies as well”.

Manolo Gelato recently opened its first ice cream store in Islamabad, Pakistan. Managing Director, Mr. Shahid Arif, said: "The first five months have exceeded all our expectations. Just like in Copenhagen, many citizens in Islamabad also want high-quality ice cream. We are now looking to open more outlets in Pakistan. We are also looking at importing other high-quality Danish food products.”

Background:

In 2012, the total Danish export of goods to Pakistan was USD 93 million. The main areas were machinery, pharmaceuticals, food stuff and raw materials. In 2011, Denmark’s export of services to Pakistan amounted to USD 94 million, almost all related to the maritime industry.

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The Danish Embassy in Pakistan will open a commercial section on 1 December, 2013, headed by a commercial advisor. If it turns out that the one-year trial arrangement is successful and its services are requested by Danish companies, the arrangement will be made permanent.

Danish-Pak relations continue to expand through development and trade

11.10.2013 05:28, Karachi, 10 October: The Danish-Pak bilateral relationship has expanded considerably over the last couple of years. Denmark has just signed a new USD 50 million-framework development program and our aim is to increase trade ties with Pakistan. This was stated by the Danish Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Jesper M. Sorensen during his special presentation at the Karachi Council on Foreign Relations (KCFR).

The interactive session was held on the subject of “Expanding the Danish - Pakistani Partnership” and was organized by the Karachi Council on Foreign Relations (KCFR) in collaboration with the Center for Area and Policy Studies, Institute of Business Management (IoBM) in Karachi.

Addressing the participants, Ambassador Sorensen also shared that Pakistan was part of Denmark’s regional stabilization program. “Denmark is playing a very active role in supporting the democratic

development in Pakistan. We launched our first development program for Pakistan in 2010 under the banner of the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). We are soon opening our commercial section at the Embassy, as we believe that increased trade is a long-term and sustainable solution to Pakistan's challenges. We also have an active public diplomacy profile, because we want to reach out to the people of Pakistan - especially to the young generation - and inform them about what Denmark is doing in Pakistan. I am confident that our relations will continue to strengthen in the years ahead to the benefit of the people of Pakistan and the people of Denmark."

Earlier, Mr. Ahsan Mukhtar Zubairi, Secretary General and CEO of KCFR in his welcome address thanked Ambassador Sorensen for accepting the invitation to address the Karachi Council.

Mr. Zubairi spoke about the role of KCFR since its establishment. He said that KCFR was established in May 2003 as a society for specific purposes and basically operates as a think-tank. KCFR is playing its due role in promoting regional cooperation by inviting Ambassadors and High Commissioners from around the world to deliver lectures in Karachi. Mr. Zubairi added that the Karachi Council realizes the importance of high quality research on international, regional, bilateral and domestic issues.

Regarding Pakistan's relations with Denmark, Mr. Zubairi said that both nations maintain extensive bilateral friendly and economic cooperation and there is a lot of potential and opportunities for the two countries to further cement their relations.

Delivering the vote of thanks, Mr. Talib Syed Karim, Rector/ Executive Director of the Institute of Business Management (IoBM) thanked the Danish Ambassador for his gracious presence at the KCFR event and for his excellent presentation.

The Ambassador is on a three day visit to Karachi to meet Pakistani political representatives and representatives from both the Danish and Pakistani business community.

Denmark to increase support to Pakistan with new programme

30.09.2013 13:00, Islamabad: Following a successful first phase of development cooperation, the Government of Denmark and Government of Pakistan today officially signed a two-component framework programme to mark the start of a new programme cycle, 2013-2016. Signing on behalf of the Government of Denmark was the Danish Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Jesper M. Sorensen, while Ms. Nargis Sethi, Economic Affairs Division Secretary signed on behalf of the Government of Pakistan.

The Framework Programme for Danish Development Cooperation to Pakistan for 2013-2016 is a

USD 50 million programme. It is an integral part of Denmark's engagement in Pakistan underpinning political dialogue and strengthening bilateral ties.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Danish Ambassador appreciated the support of the Government of Pakistan and reiterated Denmark's commitment for enhanced bilateral relations through the development cooperation and other activities, including trade.

"Denmark is one of only five countries in the world that lives up to the UN target of granting 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) in development assistance. Denmark is providing 0.83 per cent – meaning that every citizen in Denmark through taxation pays around USD 570 to our development cooperation.

We have almost doubled our yearly commitment from around USD 8 million to USD 14 million, and we will continue to have a major focus on education, with a special emphasis on girls' education. We are looking forward to continue our very good cooperation in close coordination with the international and national partners", said Ambassador Sorensen.

Background

The new programme will continue Denmark's focus on a few areas with a strong emphasis on a human rights-based approach and poverty orientation as well as supporting democracy and stability in line with the Danish Development Strategy, "The Right to a Better Life",

The programme consists of two main components. The first is designed to provide support to peace building, livelihoods and education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Balochistan. The second focuses on enhancing democratization, human rights and gender equality.

The Government of Denmark launched its first phase of development cooperation with Pakistan in 2010 through its official development Agency, the Danish International Development Agency (Danida). The programme was a USD 28 million programme with a focus on providing quality education to children in conflict affected areas through UNICEF and reconstruction of infrastructure and delivery services in Fata, KPK and Baluchistan. Additionally, the Government of Denmark is working with the civil society in Pakistan in the areas of democratic development, human rights and gender equality.

Denmark has also provided humanitarian assistance to Pakistan during the earthquake in 2005 and during the floods in 2010-12, where Denmark contributed with more than USD 30 million for flood relief response.

France: FRANCE AND THE EUROPEAN UNION PROVIDE A 2.5 MILLION EUROS (370 MILLION PKR) GRANT FUNDING FOR THE FIRST PAKISTAN HYDROPOWER TRAINING INSTITUTE: “CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR HYDROPOWER”

On December 17th, 2013, Mr. Ali Reza Bhutta, Joint Secretary of Economic Affairs Division (EAD), His Excellency Mr. Philippe Thiébaud, Ambassador of France, and Mr. Denis CASSAT, Country Director of the French Development Agency (AFD), in the presence of Mr. Berend de Groot Director of cooperation at the European Union delegation signed the Grant funding agreement for the establishment of Pakistan Hydropower Training Institute (HPTI) at Mangla.

This grant was delegated to the AFD by the European Union. It aims at completing the rehabilitation of the existing training centre of Mangla and its transformation into a “centre of excellence for hydropower” in order to increase the capacity of both public & private hydropower operators. This centre will be, upon completion, the only centre in Pakistan ensuring sound and skilled development of hydropower projects in the country, both at technical and engineering levels.

The HPTI will integrate the latest international standards by:

- ▶ **Ensuring adaptation** of large dam infrastructures to climate change (droughts and floods);
- ▶ **Improving the resilience**, safety and profitability of hydropower projects;
- ▶ **Benefiting from carbon finance** by presenting eligible projects under Clean Development Mechanism (CDM);
- ▶ Selecting projects in line with the **best environmental and social practices**, therefore attracting international funding more easily.

Besides the grant of 2.5 million euros provided to the Government of Pakistan, France, through the AFD, **contributes to address the current national energy crisis** and emerges as a major contributor, in line with the pledge made by the French Government at the Tokyo Conference in April 2009 (i.e. 300 millions Euros in the energy and water sectors - currently committed at 75% i.e. 225

Million Euros).

To reduce the power demand and improve energy efficiency, the AFD is also co-financing with the Asian Development Bank a programme on **energy efficiency** in the domestic and industrial sectors. In addition, the AFD is supporting the **development of renewable energies** in order to improve the power supply in Pakistan. There are three projects currently being developed:

- ▶ Jaggran II hydropower projects (48 MW run-of-river hydroelectric power plant on the Jaggran river, Neelum Valley, AJK , 68 million Euros);
- ▶ Munda / Mohmand hydropower project located in Mohmand Agency (11 millions Euros- detailed design studies and initial phase);
- ▶ Harpo hydropower project in the Gilgit-Baltistan Skardu region (50 million Euros).

In the future, the AFD **will explore additional potential projects** to fund the rehabilitation or the extension of hydropower plants in various places in association with WAPDA and provincial operators like PHYDO, HEB, etc.

FRANCE: HEC/French Embassy “Needs based Scholarship programme” 2013

Government of France through its Embassy in Pakistan has announced the grant of Rs40 million to support a 200 scholarships programme for needy university students at undergraduate and graduate level. This is the second phase of the programme that has already been financed in 2012 by the French government. In close collaboration with the Higher Education Commission and 10 Pakistani universities, these scholarships will be granted to the meritorious but unprivileged students. A particular attention will be given to gender balance, in order to facilitate women’s access to high education.

His Excellency Mr. Philippe Thiébaud, Ambassador of France to Pakistan, organized the launching of the 2013 Needs based Scholarship programme on Friday 20th Dec 2013 at 12 noon at the French Embassy in Islamabad in presence of the HEC Chairperson, the Vice Chancellors of the participating

universities, selected students of previous program funded by the French Government.

These scholarships will be offered in the fields of Social and Basic Sciences, Architecture, Information Technology, Telecom and Business administration. The participating universities are: Quaid-E-Azam University-Islamabad, COMSATS Institute of Technology-Islamabad, Lahore College for Women University-Lahore, Forman Christian College-Lahore, Institute of Business Administration, IBA-Karachi, University of Peshawar-Peshawar, Institute of Business and Management-Karachi, University of Haripur-Haripur Hazara, Frontier Women University-Peshawar and Qaraqoram International University-Gilgat Baltistan.

This grant will definitely work a long way to strengthen the close bilateral ties between the people of Pakistan and France.

Germany: One million Euro German Grant for NRSP Microfinance Bank:

For institutional strengthening of the NRSP Microfinance Bank, the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development through KfW Development Bank is providing a 1 Million EUR Grant. The German support to the Bank is aimed at improving management and financial procedures leading to enhanced capacity for expanding the existing portfolio and launching additional products and services for the productive people.

The NRSP Microfinance Bank evolved from the decades long experience of the National Rural Support Program (NRSP) in providing small loans for enhancing livelihoods opportunities, especially supporting women entrepreneurs. With its headquarter located in Bahawalpur, the Bank services are expanding in Punjab as well in some other parts of the country. The present focus of the Bank is largely confined to financing agriculture centered activities.

The Financing Agreement for the German support was signed by the Joint Secretary Economic Affairs Division Mr. Ali Raza Bhutta, the Chairman of NRSP Microfinance Bank Dr. Rashid Bajwa, and the Director of the KfW Office Pakistan , Dr. Anna-Christine Janke. Present at the signing were Ms. Mandy Zeckra, Counsellor for Economic Cooperation and Development from the German Embassy in Islamabad and Dr. Parvaiz Naim, Senior Coordinator Energy Sector and Portfolio of the KfW Office Pakistan.

The German Government intends to provide further financing to the NRSP Microfinance Bank in the near future amounting to Euro 6 million.

Promotion of Technical Education in Balochistan

Stakeholders at a project handing over ceremony have vowed to continue joint efforts for the promotion of technical education and vocational training (TVET) in Balochistan. The handing over ceremony celebrated the finalization of the rehabilitation of Technical Training Centers in Quetta, funded by the German Federal Foreign Office. The ceremony was jointly organized by the Human Unity Networking Ability & Resources Balochistan (HUNNAR) and GIZ through its TVET Reform Support Programme. Ms. Barbara Voss, from the German Embassy represented the funding agency at the event.

The project started in October 2010 and supported three technical training centres: the Technical Training Centre (TTC), the Women Technical Training Centre (W TTC), and the Government Vocational Institute (GVI). Measures included the improvement of the training environment as well as the provision of advisory services to the centres.

Roshan Khursheed Bharucha, Chairman of HUNNAR, said that it was a great achievement to complete the project, as the HUNNAR has taken responsibility of the project in 2009. Under the project, three technical training institutes in Quetta have not only been upgraded to modern standards, but it was also possible to increase enrolment in the institutes. Despite various challenges, security issues and ground situation, she said that completion of the project has been made possible due to greater cooperation of the HUNNAR, GIZ and Department of Manpower Training of Government of Balochistan. She said that the beneficiaries of the project particularly women, after getting training from the rehabilitated training institutes have started their own businesses now they are able to support their families.

A number of stakeholders from Balochistan were able to join the event and appreciated the commitment of the German government to promote technical education in the province with special focus on the women. Ali Haider of Technical Training Centre, Quetta, Tasneem Akhtar, Principal, Women Technical Training Center, Quetta, and Kausar Akbar of Government Vocational Institute Quetta shared insights on the impact of the project on the overall improvement of the training and enrollment.

Dr Julie Reviere, Principal Adviser GIZ Education Sector, in her concluding remarks expressed the pleasure to be a part of the project, saying she is feeling proud to be among the ones who launched the project. She said that the project will help to improve the status of women in the province and will help them earn a decent livelihood. She said that due to the team work of HUNNAR, GIZ and the Government of Balochistan, the project has now got a practical shape and the local people are getting benefits of getting technical and occasional trainings. She said that the GIZ will continue to support the efforts for promotion of technical trainings of the women of the province in the future.

During the ceremony, project completion documents were handed over to the representative of the Government of Balochistan.

Human Rights Day – a day to celebrate past achievements and focus on the many remaining challenges

On 10 December the world celebrates Human Rights Day. The UN General Assembly proclaimed 10 December as Human Rights Day in 1950, to bring to the attention 'of the peoples of the world' the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. While thanks to the selfless work of hundreds of thousands of human rights defenders all over the world a lot has been achieved and many improvements have been made, even more remains to be done still, in order to ensure the protection of basic human rights for everyone.

The protection and promotion of human rights is a focus area of the German cooperation with Pakistan under the stabilization fund of the Federal Foreign Office. Several projects are implemented by Pakistani and International NGOs every year under this fund to help protect and promote women's rights, the rights of religious minorities, children's rights as well as economic and social rights in Pakistan.

Germany funds relief measures for earthquake victims in Balochistan

The German government provides **130.000 Euro (approx. 18,6 million PKR)** for earthquake relief in the province of Balochistan.

Through World Food Programme (WFP), different projects will be implemented to aid the earthquake victims and to support reconstruction.

PPAF launches German govt-funded Euro 10m renewable energy project in KP

Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) has announced the launch of Euro 10 million multi-technology renewable energy project focusing on deprived and marginalized communities in 10 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province including Chitral, Upper Dir, Lower Dir, Swat, Buner, Swabi, Karak, Bannu, Hangu and Lakki Marwat.

The project is funded by the Federal Republic of Germany and implemented through the German Development Bank – KfW. The project launched is envisioned to be followed by a second phase of

Euro 12.5 million.

A simple ceremony to this effect was held at Islamabad Club with former caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shamas-ul-Mulk in the chair. Deputy Head of Mission, German Embassy, Islamabad, Peter Felten, Head of Division, Crisis & Governance, KfW, Jens Clausen, CEO PPAF Qazi Azmat Isa and senior officials of PPAF and its partner organizations were also present on this occasion.

The project is planned to be implemented through six well-reputed PPAF partner organizations, who will be working in close collaboration with the provincial government of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and local stakeholders. The project districts have been selected on the basis of poverty ranking and potential for availability of renewable energy resources.

Overall objective of the project is to contribute to improvement of general living conditions and quality of life indices of the poor in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The project aims to increased access to energy for off grid, rural communities, reduction in use of fuel wood, kerosene and diesel as a source of energy for rural communities, increased employment and income generation opportunities for the poor through promotion of productive usage of the energy and strengthening of local civil society organizations and enhanced and inclusive participation of locals in decision making.

The rural and off-grid communities of the Project districts will be supported with renewable energy interventions using different technologies, such as mini and micro hydropower, solar lighting systems, solar-powered integrated water efficient irrigation. A limited number of renewable energy projects using wind-hydro-solar hybrid systems will also be piloted. The produced electricity will not only be used for lighting purposes but small and medium enterprises will be established, which will increase household income, add value to local products and transform lives of the poor and marginalized communities.

In the emerging area of renewable energy, PPAF has so far supported the implementation of more than 700 renewable energy projects of diverse types and various capacities. These include mini/micro hydroelectric projects, solar lighting and water pumping systems, wind energy projects, solar-wind hybrid systems, pressurized irrigation systems and biogas plants.

The carbon dioxide emissions of about 100 tons equivalent and other greenhouse gas emissions have been reduced through the implementation of renewable energy technologies so far, particularly through construction of Mini and Micro Hydroelectric Plants. Substantial improvements have been observed in local environment/landscape and noticeable enhancement in wildlife and

local forests.

Additional benefit of renewable energy projects are in the shape of good health, especially for women and children in the form of reduction in indoor pollution, improved lighting and heating facility. The turn-out to schools has augmented tremendously and children performance is noticeable in profile of their results through light at night. Communities are now more workable, secured and socially active.

PPAF adopts a community-led and demand-driven approach for multi-sectoral interventions. Integral to project design is working proactively with poor communities and local, regional and national non-governmental partner organizations. Due diligence, implementation supervision, rigorous monitoring of inputs/outputs, assessment/evaluation of outcomes and impact and quality assurance are hallmark of PPAF's work philosophy.

Pakistan Days in Germany

The focus during the Pakistan Days in Berlin and Munich is on proliferating Germany and Pakistan's trade relations. This objective has seen the arrival from Pakistan of the largest business delegation ever to visit Germany. Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle launched the event in conjunction with the Chief Minister of Punjab, Shahbaz Sharif, on 30 October.

The Pakistan Days are organised by the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Pakistan German Business Forum. More than 300 participants from Pakistan and Germany gathered at the House of German Business in Berlin on 30 October to work together on deepening German-Pakistan trade relations. The discussions centred around the search for new markets and fresh opportunities open to investors and businesses in the two countries.

Westerwelle: Continue economic reform

In his opening address, Foreign Minister Westerwelle highlighted Pakistan's economic potential rooted in its strategic position in South Asia, its wealth of mineral resources, its growing middle classes and the youth of its population. The German Foreign Minister pointed out that the recent agreement between Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund had restored confidence in the country's economic policy. Westerwelle, who has visited Pakistan three times, furthermore called on the Government in Islamabad to take a determined approach to the necessary reforms:

I encourage the Government of Pakistan to continue its reform policy, even if some of the

necessary steps will be unpopular, like raising the tax base or restructuring public enterprises.

Sharif: Confidence in Pakistan's economy and politics

Giving his speech in German, the Chief Minister of Punjab, Shahbaz Sharif, thanked Foreign Minister Westerwelle for being the first representative of a friendly country to visit Pakistan after the latest elections. That sign of friendship, he said, would not be forgotten in Pakistan.

The Chief Minister, whose brother is Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, called on people to have confidence in the country's economy and politics: "Democracy is now firmly rooted in Pakistan." Addressing the German participants, he spoke in favour of expanding trade relations:

Please, open your markets. Dismantle the obstacles. Invest in Pakistan, especially in the energy sector. Make profits, and simultaneously help drive our economic development.

Germany companies' growing interest in Pakistan

This populous South Asian country is becoming more and more interesting to German industry. The number of German businesses active in Pakistan has been growing again for some years. After the more moderate growth rates of recent years, Pakistan recorded strong economic growth of over 4% last year. At the same time, extensive investment is needed to develop infrastructure to keep up with the growth of the population and the economy and make full use of the country's potential for growth. This applies particularly to the energy sector. As the strongest economy in Europe, Germany represents an important market for Pakistan's businesses selling medical instruments and jewellery as well as textiles and agricultural products.

Pakistani companies win awards for producing skilled workforce

KARACHI Sept 26, 2013: Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP) on Thursday granted awards to a number of Pakistani enterprises for their contribution towards development of skilled workforce in Pakistan under its 1st Employer of the Year Award 2012.

Awards were given at a ceremony organized by the EFP in collaboration with technical and vocational education and training (TVET) Reform Support Programme, which is co-funded by the European Union, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Federal Republic of Germany and being implemented in Pakistan.

The First Employer of the Year Award, established by the Employers' Federation of Pakistan with the technical assistance of TVET Reform Support Programme, is to recognize and honour the efforts of large, medium and small enterprises for their contribution and commitment towards creation of

skilled workforce and provision of a safe and supportive work environment.

The awards were given in two main categories including Human Resource Development and Work Place Safety by categorisation of companies in large, medium size enterprises.

As per the results, evaluated by a jury of experts, PARCO won the first prize in the large enterprise category of Human Resource Development, while Barrett Hodgson Pakistan Pvt Ltd and Telenor Pakistan shared the second prize. Similarly, Rafhan Maize Products co Limited won the third position in the same category.

In the medium enterprise category of Human Resource Development Lotte Chemical Pakistan Ltd, EPLA Laboratories Pvt Ltd and Pepsi Co respectively won the first, second and third positions.

For the work place safety within the large enterprise category, Crescent Steel & Allied Products Limited won the first position, while Barrett Hodgson Pakistan Pvt Ltd and Clariant Pakistan Limited shared the second, whereas PARCO secured the third position in this category.

Within the medium enterprise category of workplace safety, TOTAL PARCO, Shafi Reso- Chemical and Lotte Chemical Pakistan Ltd won first, second and third positions respectively.

Accordingly Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of Barrett Hodgson Pakistan Pvt Ltd and Lotte Chemical Pakistan Ltd won the Best CEO of Year Award for winning awards in more than one category.

Mr. Arif Elahi, Secretary Industries, Government of Sindh, who was the Chief guest for the award ceremony, appreciated the initiative taken by the EFP had the following to say: "It gives me immense joy to be part of an event that is organized by a body that encourages healthy competition between companies and plays a vital role in bringing together corporate entities that have a huge part to play in shaping the national economy. He opined that the EFP Employer of the Year Award 2012 will play a catalytic role in promoting technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Pakistan with more active role of the private sector at delivery as well as policy formulation.

He also lauded the efforts of EU, Dutch and German governments for reforming the TVET sector of Pakistan.

Hans-Ludwig Bruns, Coordinator TVET Reform Support Programme/GIZ, in his keynote address appreciated the Pakistani enterprises for their contribution towards creation of a skilled workforce for Pakistan. He said in countries with better TVET system, the companies' plays an active role in policy formulation and delivery of training according to the market needs. He said TVET Reform Support Programme is also trying, through different reform measures, to promote and mainstream

the role of the enterprises in the delivery of TVET. Citing the example of a special initiative-Germany Pakistan Training Initiative (GPATI), Mr. Burns said it is a good example of strong cooperation among the enterprises, training providers and the government.

GPATI initiates technical & commercial training programmes in Pakistan, based on the famous German concept of the Dual Training. This concept is to be piloted in Pakistan in a modified form. The trainees would participate for training in the Training Institutes & On-the-Job Training in Partner Company's i.e. BASF, BMW, Daimler, DHL, Linde, Lufthansa Cargo, Merck, METRO, Schenker and Siemens and Pakistani companies such as AUTOCOM, SUPERTECH and OJ Engineering.

Khawaja Muhammad Nauman, President EFP, in his welcome address said without the technical assistance of TVET Reform Support Programme, this award would have not been possible.

German Ambassador inaugurated three water schemes in the regions of Gilgit, Skardu and Chitral

The German Ambassador, Dr. Cyrill Nunn, visited German funded projects implemented by the Aga Khan Foundation and German Development Bank KfW. He inaugurated three water schemes in Sultanabad Yasin/Gilgit, Sain Ghawari/Skardu and Ezh/Chitral.

The German government is funding these projects over a period of four years with 9.6 million Euro (approx. 1,4 billion PKR). The communities collect their share of the project prior to implementation. They deliver in-kind services as such labour and maintenance and manage the schemes collectively.

The rate of water-borne diseases was reduced by 50 %. Women who no longer have to fetch water from far away areas can work in other fields and generate an income. In Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral, over 50% of the communities have been provided with safe and clean water as well as trainings in personal hygiene and sanitation.

Italy: Mayor Ignazio Marino of Rome attends Ambassador's Lunch

(2013-11-20) : Professor Ignazio Marino, the Mayor of Rome was the Chief Guest at a lunch for women Ambassadors held at the Pakistan House. Ambassadors of Malaysia, San Marino, Estonia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Slovakia, El Salvador, Sudan, Luxembourg, Palestine, Sweden and Romania were among the guests.

Mayor Marino thanked Ambassador Tehmina Janjua for providing him with an opportunity to interact with the women ambassadors in Rome. He said that Rome was making efforts to enhance women participation in public life. Today, Rome is governed by 50% women.

He expressed his desire to make Rome a truly international and cosmopolitan city that embraced and celebrated its diversity. He said the foreign ambassadors could be excellent partners in the realization of this objective.

Ambassador Tehmina Janjua said that cultural events such as art exhibitions, musical performances and literary events could be highly valuable in promoting the sharing of ideas and mutual understanding between different peoples. Mayor Marino responded that he would welcome all such initiatives to make Rome a multicultural city.

The women ambassadors in Rome have formed an informal group to share ideas on how best to promote bilateral relations between Italy and their respective countries. The lunch hosted by Ambassador Tehmina Janjua was held in this context.

Norway: Climate Change in the Himalayas

Last updated: 11.12.2013 // Norway makes a big investment in increasing knowledge about climate change and air pollution in the Himalayas – new agreement of NOK 150 million with International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

-Increased knowledge and capacity is one of the most important tools we have to mitigate the effects of climate change. This is particularly important in the Himalayan region, which is very vulnerable to melting glaciers and other consequences of climate change which create significant challenges for food production and access to clean water, says Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Børge Brende.

This is the context in which Norway on Tuesday 10th December signed a new agreement with ICIMOD, a regional intergovernmental knowledge centre for questions related to climate change

and other changes in the Himalayas, for NOK 150 over a period of five years.

The agreement includes, among other programmes, a greater focus on programmes to document sources and effects of emissions of short-lived climate pollutants like black carbon in the Himalayan region, and possibilities for reducing these emissions. Several of the countries in the region experience great problems with air pollution.

- Black carbon emissions have serious health consequences, and we need more knowledge about emission sources and possible actions for reducing emissions. People who live in these mountain regions are already some of the world's most vulnerable groups, Brende goes on to say. –Through this agreement we will contribute to helping these groups adapt to the negative effects climate change will have on their livelihoods.

ICIMOD is the region's leading knowledge and learning centre for these questions. This year, they are celebrating the 30 year anniversary of their work towards the goal of ensuring that men, women and children in the Hindu Kush Himalayas will enjoy improved well-being in a clean and robust mountain environment. The organization also plays an important role in regional cooperation among the eight member countries Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan.

Pakistan, Denmark and Norway push for Sustainable Energy for All

26.09.2013 10:56

UNITED NATIONS, Sept: Pakistan, Norway and Denmark agreed that the three countries would push for a goal on sustainable energy for all as part of the post-2015 Development Agenda. The three countries made a joint statement on their resolve to expedite efforts to ensure energy for all after Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif joined his Norwegian counterpart Jens Stoltenberg and Denmark's Minister for Development Co-operation of Denmark Christian Friis Bach, who are also co-chairing a 32 member countries Group of Friends on Sustainable Energy for All.

The three leaders met on the margins of the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly today and were joined by Mr. Kandeh Yumkella, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Chief Executive for Sustainable Energy for All.

The three countries have been leading efforts at the United Nations in support of sustainable energy for all. Energy, the three leaders agreed, is the golden thread that connects economic growth, increased social equity, and an environment that allows the world to thrive. Realizing sustainable energy is central to eradicating poverty, increasing food production, providing clean water,

improving public health, empowering women and addressing climate change.

The trilateral statement follows the recent declaration by the General Assembly to declare 2014-2024 the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All; a testimony of the commitment of all Member States to this crucial issue.

The three leaders pledged their full support to the Secretary-General's initiative on Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) as a global partnership that can move the world forward. The initiative, a key priority of the Secretary-General, was launched in 2011 to catalyze and mobilize action towards the overall goal of sustainable energy for all by 2030 through three critical objectives:

1. Ensuring universal access to modern energy services;
2. Doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency; and;
3. Doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.

The leaders agreed that creating viable framework for achieving sustainable energy for all will require active engagement and participation by all stakeholders, including governments, private sector, civil society, the UN System and the multilateral development banks, including the World Bank Group.

Minister for Development Cooperation of Denmark, Mr. Christian Friis Bach added: It is important that we use the SE4ALL initiative as a key vehicle to further advance energy into the new development agenda. The SE4All initiative and the targets on access, renewables and efficiency are key because they integrate three dimensions of sustainability, promote efforts to tackle climate change and create strong energy partnerships.

The three leaders also agreed to continue this engagement with the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative and the United Nations to ensure promotion and inclusion of a goal on sustainable energy for all through the inter-governmental process towards a post 2015 Development Agenda.

UK: Case Study: How small stipends from UK aid are helping thousands of girls get an education in Pakistan

Sadia Noor lives in Abbottabad, Pakistan. Thanks to the support she received from UK aid while she was at high school she is now working as a teacher in a local school.

“When I was younger my family couldn't support my education, the stipend helped me. When I got

admission to college I got a job teaching, which supported my studies. Now I teach maths to classes 9 and 10”.

“I love teaching. It’s a very good profession because you get respect, and you get a chance to learn more yourself. Because I’m literate, I can educate other girls in my community. I have a motive, which helps me teach these children. My motive is to educate children like myself so they can stand on their own two legs as well”

A helping hand

In Pakistan, two-thirds of women are illiterate, and more than 9 million girls do not go to school.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the part of Pakistan which borders Afghanistan, conflict and military offensives over recent years have meant that more than 1 million children have had their education interrupted - either because they had to move away from the conflict areas or had their schools taken over as shelters.

Despite these barriers, enrolment of girls in primary schools in the region has increased over the last few years, and drop out rates have decreased. This is thanks, in part, to cash stipends, free text books, and other support from UK aid.

By 2015, across Pakistan, the UK intends to:

- get 4 million more children into school (around half of them girls)
- supply more than 6 million text books sets (around half of them will go to girls)
- construct or rehabilitate more than 43,000 classrooms, half of which will benefit girls
- construct new schools in conflict affected border areas which will benefit 6,500 girls; and in earthquake affected areas benefiting a further 3,874 girls

Help for the whole family

The UK has already helped more than 590,000 girls in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stay in school over the last few years by giving them small cash stipends.

Each girl receives 200 rupees (about £1.50) a month, and a set of free textbooks each year to help them get an education.

With an average family size of up to 7 or 8 and a third of the population living on less than \$1 a day, these small stipends and free text books can make the difference between daughters being sent to

school or having to drop out.

Headteachers across the region attribute increased enrolment, decreased drop-out rates, and decreased absenteeism to the stipends and free textbooks.

Investing in educating girls is transformational – for themselves, their family, and their community.

Girls who are educated are more likely to:

- earn more money - an extra year of schooling can increase their wage by up to 20%
- marry later – a girl who attends secondary school is less likely to marry during her teenage years
- have a better understanding of family planning – a woman has 1 less child for every 4 years of schooling
- have children later - girls aged 15 to 19 years are twice as likely to die during pregnancy compared with women aged 20 to 24
- have better health – women will get immunisation and other health treatments for themselves and their children

UK welcomes enhanced trade preferences for Pakistan

Baroness Warsi delighted today's vote confirmed the entry into force of Generalised System of Preferences Plus for Pakistan.

Today the EU Parliament voted to grant enhanced trade preferences for 10 developing countries, including Pakistan. Pakistan alone stands to gain an estimated \$500 million and 1 million new jobs from this agreement.

Senior Foreign Office Minister Baroness Warsi said:

I am delighted that today's vote has confirmed the entry into force of GSP+ for Pakistan from 1 January 2014.

The UK has been a tireless advocate of improved EU market access for Pakistan. Following UK leadership to secure emergency trade preferences in the wake of the devastating 2010 floods, the UK has again spearheaded the campaign for GSP+.

These trade preferences will provide substantial benefits for Pakistan's economy, bringing

sustainable growth and jobs. The vote is also a further sign of a deeper and more effective relationship that benefits both the UK and Pakistan”

In an open letter to Pakistan Foreign Office Minister Baroness Warsi reflects on the past year and looks to the challenges ahead..

Dear Pakistan,

It's the time of year for celebrations around the world, as many in the UK and Pakistan celebrate Christmas and Pakistanis worldwide honour Quaid-i-Azam's birth. These holidays signal the end of the year, providing an opportunity to reflect on the past and contemplate the challenges ahead.

This has been a hugely significant year in your history. As both the Minister responsible for our relationship with Pakistan, and as a proud British citizen of Pakistani heritage, I was delighted this year to celebrate the first democratic transition of power in Pakistan's history, when I visited with Prime Minister David Cameron. He was the first head of government to visit after that historic election, and we were struck by the optimism and the expectation of those that we met. This positive spirit must be captured and taken forward.

Let me also congratulate you on securing the GSP+ trade deal with the European Union. We in the UK worked tirelessly in support of you, which now gives Pakistani businesses unprecedented access to European markets, estimated to be worth up to £500 million next year. I know that it will provide the opportunities that your younger generation so desperately need: A stronger Pakistani economy will lead to a stronger Pakistan.

But I worry about the continuing challenges that you face. One in three Pakistanis still lives on less than 50 rupees a day. Some 12 million Pakistani children don't go to school. Less than 0.5% per cent of your population pays income tax. The national debt stands at \$60 billion, meaning that more than 60% of Pakistan's federal revenue is spent on paying interest and debt each year. And on Christmas day, I think of those killed at the All Saints Church in Peshawar in September. 2013 was again another year with too many attacks against minorities and innocent civilians. So today is the day to ask whether Pakistan is living up to the vision spoken by Mohammed Ali Jinnah when he said: "You are free; you are free to go to your temples. You are free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion, caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the State."

I consider you, Pakistan, as a friend and as a close partner, with whom we have many shared interests, and with whom we can talk frankly about our shared challenges. And it's because we consider your success our success, and your challenges our challenges that our aid programme with

Pakistan is one of our largest in the world, and that's why it focuses so strongly on education. Our investment in your future will provide education for 4m children, including 2m girls, by 2015, and will result in an additional 45,000 teachers. This is further evidence of our commitment, which is reinforced by your diaspora, which in the UK remits £627 million each year; they are your strongest supporters and loudest advocates.

You have set off on the tough road of economic reform, improving governance and tackling crippling energy shortages. We will support you on this road. I am a member of a British government that has had to take some incredibly painful decisions in tackling our national debt. We therefore know that your journey will be difficult, but you must stay the course. Because as every family knows, it is irresponsible for today's generation to live to excess, and to leave for the next generation the burden of picking up the pieces.

As a British government Minister I am delighted that our relationship is stronger than ever. It spans from our political relationship to the links between our business, and from our shared love of sport and music to our deep family connections. All make up the vibrancy of this intertwined partnership. That's why the UK always responds quickly and generously when you are in need. It's why we did all we could after the devastating earthquake in 2005, and after the terrible floods in 2010. I had the opportunity to visit Pakistan immediately after both. I saw firsthand the passion in Pakistan's youth as they mobilized to help. I felt your pain, and I felt proud of how British people, of all backgrounds, races and religions, responded in Pakistan's hour of need.

I was born in a small town in the north of the UK, but I was brought up by my parents to know Pakistan, to understand Pakistan and to love Pakistan. The country has achieved so much since its traumatic creation more than 65 years ago. It has overcome partition and a bloody separation from East Pakistan. You have been let down throughout your history by serious democratic shortcomings, corruption and the scourge of terrorism. On the eve of 2014 I know you have the strength and determination to break free from the failures of the past.

You are an incredibly diverse, vibrant and proud nation. Your land is home to some of the most world's most spectacular mountain ranges, incredibly fertile soil, and some of the oldest archaeological remains in existence. You gave the world 'the conqueror' Jehangir Khan, 'the voice' Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and the living saint Abdul Sattar Edhi.

You have a world-leading textile industry. The shalwar kameez which I wore on that first historic Cabinet meeting in 2010 which saw Britain's first Muslim Cabinet minister was made in Pakistan. You have a dynamic and young population, a growing high tech sector, and an increasingly vocal and active civil society, epitomized by brave people such as Malala Yousafzai. You have a lot to be proud

of. As I've said before, a part of my heart will always beat with Pakistan.

As you mark this special day the challenge I put to Pakistan, to each and every Pakistani, is can you be sure that what Pakistan is today, and the direction in which it is heading, will attract the love and warmth from my children and my grandchildren as it does from me and my generation? I urge you to dedicate 2014 to creating a Pakistan that we can all be proud of. I wish you a happy Quaid-i-Azam day, a Merry Christmas, and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Senior Foreign Office Minister

Baroness Warsi

UK and Pakistan hold joint conference to raise awareness of the opportunities in Pakistan for UK businesses.

The second annual UK – Pakistan Trade and Investment Conference was held in London on 17 December. The conference, which fulfils a UK commitment under the UK-Pakistan trade and investment roadmap, was attended by over 50 business representatives from UK and Pakistan companies, and delivered in partnership with the Pakistan Britain Trade and Investment Forum. The aim is to raise awareness of investment opportunities in Pakistan, the support available for UK companies considering the market, and provides a forum for business leaders from both nations to make important connections. The conference was attended by Senior Foreign Office Minister Baroness Warsi, with a keynote speech from UK Minister for Trade Lord Livingston. Discussions throughout the day focused on three key sectors – Energy, Education, and Retail.

Yesterday's conference is even more important following the [European Parliament granting Pakistan GSP+](#) status last week. GSP+ will be the most significant trade package offered to Pakistan from anywhere in the world. The UK spearheaded a comprehensive campaign stretching over several years to help Pakistan achieve this. This involved renegotiating the terms of GSP+ with our EU partners during 2012, ensuring Pakistan was eligible to apply for the scheme for the first time; and then worked in close partnership with the Pakistani government to ensure they made the changes necessary to meet the entry eligibility criteria.

Through the course of this year, in formal meetings, informal discussions, and general day-to-day contact, the UK has engaged hundreds of times with colleagues and opposite numbers in European capitals, Brussels, the European Commission and the European Parliament to ensure the application would be approved. UK Ministers, diplomats and UK MEPs mobilised their EU and international networks at each stage of the process to ensure this was the only decision that could be made.

Senior Foreign Office Minister Baroness Warsi said:

In my role as Minister for Pakistan over the last year I have visited Islamabad and Lahore, most recently with British business representatives, where I was struck by the diversity of businesses that are trading between our two nations, and the wealth of opportunity there is for business. Today's conference is an important step in raising awareness of the business opportunities that exist and building even more trade links between the UK and Pakistan.

There is much to be positive about for the future. I was delighted that the European Parliament voted last week to grant Pakistan the "Generalised Scheme of Preferences plus (GSP+)" – something the UK has been a tireless advocate for – and will present even greater opportunity for bilateral trade.

Minister of State for Trade and Investment Lord Livingston said:

Pakistan and the UK have a close relationship and trade is at the heart of this relationship - Britain is the top European destination for exports from Pakistan. We are working together to deepen our partnership for the long-term and our Prime Ministers have set us an ambitious target to boost bilateral trade to £3bn by 2015.

Huge opportunity exists for British companies to export and grow in Pakistan - with a population of 185 million and there is strong demand for the high value products and services that the UK has to offer, especially among the growing middle class. 100 UK companies are already operating successfully in Pakistan and [UK Trade & Investment](#), at home and through its offices in Karachi, Islamabad and Lahore, exists to support more firms to export to or grow in Pakistan. I encourage you to explore the huge business opportunities in Pakistan.

Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, Mr Wajid Shamsul Hasan said:

Historically, Britain and Pakistan have always enjoyed substantial trading relationship, with more than 100 British companies operating successfully in Pakistan. Pakistan's relations with the United Kingdom are on a growth trajectory in all areas of bilateral cooperation including trade, economic growth and development, cultural cooperation, security and education. I am sure this event will provide an opportunity to understand the trade and economic environment in Pakistan and to develop better understanding about doing business with Pakistan".

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

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