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USAID Mission Director Highlights Impact of the Citizens' Voice Project on Strengthening Engagement between Citizens and Government

Islamabad, March 18, 2015

Participants of USAID's Citizens' Voice Project view a map showing U.S. Government sponsored projects that enhance engagement between citizens and government officials in Pakistan.

Mission Director of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad Gregory Gottlieb addressed an audience of Pakistani civil society members at the Serena Hotel regarding the progress and impact of the Citizens' Voice Project. The Citizens' Voice Project is a U.S. Government sponsored program which seeks to facilitate and improve engagement between citizens and government officials.

"Our work with civil society partners has promoted improved democratic governance by strengthening the role of citizens in government planning and decision-making. These efforts lead to increased accountability, reduction in corruption, and improved public service delivery," said Gottlieb.

The five-year program is managed by the Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability. It provides support to Pakistani non-governmental organizations throughout the country which seek to improve governance in the energy, economic growth, agriculture, education and health sectors. The project is working with 210 civil society organizations in more than 100 districts across Pakistan.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability, Shahid Fiaz, commented, "This project is unique in the way that it has enabled citizens to become part of the solution to many of the issues this country is facing. We are now able to translate citizens' voices into constructive engagements with elected and public officials. This leads to meaningful dialogue and decisions."

The United States regularly partners with organizations from Pakistan's civil society to improve governance throughout the country by bolstering partnerships between Pakistani citizens and their elected government officials. For more information on U.S. assistance to Pakistan's governance and resilience sector, please visit: <http://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/stabilization>

Pakistani Showcase at the South-by-Southwest Music Festival Brings a New Perspective on Pakistani Arts to the United States March 13, 2015

The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, in cooperation with the Foundation for Arts, Culture, and Education (FACE), has sponsored six Pakistani bands to strengthen connections between the United States and Pakistan through a week of performances at the 2015 South-by-Southwest (SXSW) Music Festival in Austin, Texas. The bands represent a diverse cross-section of the Pakistani music scene, including traditional Manganiyar singer Mai Dhai; pop performer Haroon; folk drummers Sain Tanveer Brothers; and Khumariyaan, an instrumental group from Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. Rounding out the showcase are Sufi-rock Mekaal Hasan Band and indie-folk band Poor Rich Boy.

While in Austin, the bands will represent the first-ever Pakistani Showcase, playing at The Driskill on March 18. Pakistani Showcase members will also perform at the University of Texas at Austin, a university partner of the National Academy of Performing Arts in Karachi; globalFEST SpeakEasy; the International Day Stage; and the NatGeo and Balcony TV showcase at the Palm Door. The bands will meet with participants of the U.S. Department of State's groundbreaking Dosti Music Project, which brings together aspiring Pakistani, Indian, and U.S. musicians through collaborative musical performance. In addition to the Pakistani Showcase at the South-by-Southwest Music Festival, the U.S. Embassy supports year-round visual and performing arts programming in Pakistan.

The South-by-Southwest Showcase will bring a diverse group of Pakistani voices to one of the world's premier music festivals, providing an unparalleled opportunity for American audiences to gain a better understanding of Pakistani culture and tradition. The SXSW Music Conference and Festival, held in Austin, Texas every year since 1987, is now the largest music festival of its kind globally, attracting over 51,000 registrants to Austin every March. The goal of SXSW is to create an event that acts as a tool for creative people and the companies they work with to develop their careers, and to share ideas in music, film, and interactive technologies.

To learn more about the SXSW Pakistani Showcase, please visit:

<http://www.rockpaperscissors.biz/artists/8421>

To learn more about the Dosti Music Project, please visit: <http://dostimusic.org/>

U.S. and Pakistani Officials Meet to Discuss Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Islamabad, March 12, 2015

Senior officials from the governments of the United States and Pakistan met on March 12 in Islamabad under the auspices of the United States-Pakistan Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA). The officials reviewed progress under the bilateral Joint Action Plan, a plan created by President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif in 2013 to boost two-way trade and investment. Specifically, the two

parties discussed trade promotion efforts, entrepreneurship, diversification of agriculture, intellectual property rights, initiatives to boost investment, and workers' rights.

U.S. Ambassador Delivers Closing Remarks at the U.S. - Pakistan

Business Opportunities Conference Islamabad, March 11, 2015

U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson joined Commerce Minister Khurram Dastgir and Commerce Secretary Shazad Arbab at the closing ceremony of the third U.S.-Pakistan Business Opportunities Conference. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker served as the U.S. Head of Delegation and opened the two-day Conference on March 10.

Ambassador Olson said, "While today marks the conclusion of the conference, hopefully it is also the beginning of new business relationships, professional collaborations, and investments. May the connections you have made here continue to flourish." He re-affirmed the commitment of the United States, saying, "we are advancing our shared goals in support of peace, prosperity, and stability for Pakistan, the United States, and this entire region. We will continue to work with the government and with all of you to realize the full economic potential of Pakistan." Ambassador Olson also noted that the presence of U.S. Commerce Secretary Pritzker underscored the seriousness of the United States' commitment to building a stronger economic relationship with Pakistan.

More than 300 conference participants attended presentations regarding investment opportunities and financing options in Pakistan. The conference featured testimonials from U.S. and Pakistani companies regarding the Pakistani business climate. U.S. and Pakistani companies from various sectors were represented, including textiles, agriculture, information and communication technology (ICT), healthcare, energy, and infrastructure. The conference also featured a roundtable discussion for women entrepreneurs, highlighting the importance of integrating more women into the economy.

U.S. Launches Access to Credit Initiative for Small and Medium Sized Businesses in Pakistan

Islamabad, March 11, 2015

USAID Assistant to the Administrator, Larry Sampler (second from the left) launched the U.S.- Pakistan Partnership for Access to Credit program in partnership with Bank Alfalah, Khushhali Bank, First Micro Finance Bank and JS Bank.

As part of the third U.S.-Pakistan Business Opportunities Conference, the United States government launched the U.S.-Pakistan Partnership for Access to Credit program. Donald Larry Sampler, Assistant to the Administrator in the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) inaugurated the program, which will provide credit to qualified micro, small and medium-sized Pakistani businesses.

The program partners USAID with four Pakistani banks: Bank Alfalah Limited, JS Bank Limited, Khushhalibank Limited, and First MicroFinanceBank Limited who will provide loan capital to underserved businesses to help them expand, create jobs and increase revenues.

"Small businesses face challenges to growth, not just here in Pakistan, but in the United States as well. One of the key challenges to small businesses everywhere is access to credit. Businesses require capital to grow and expand, but far too often, loans are difficult to come by, particularly for smaller businesses," said Mr. Sampler, who is visiting Pakistan for the conference. He also said that the bank partnership is part of a larger umbrella of U.S. support to provide direct assistance to small and medium businesses to help them grow and expand into new markets.

Of the approximately 3.2 million businesses in Pakistan, nearly 3 million are small and medium sized. These small and medium size businesses produce more than 30 percent of Pakistan's GDP and 25 percent of the nation's total export earnings. The sector could contribute even more growth, but is constrained principally by a lack of access to credit. Pakistani banks perceiving the sector as too risky are reluctant to lend to small and medium size businesses. To change this perception and demonstrate the financial viability of lending to this sector, USAID through the U.S.-Pakistan Partnership for Access to Credit program has partnered with the local banks to provide up to \$60 million in loan capital to micro, small and medium businesses.

The United States has a long track record of supporting small and medium enterprises in Pakistan. In the last three years, USAID programs have helped create 23,000 jobs and provided business development services to more than 85,000 micro, small and medium enterprises in Pakistan.

For more information on USAID economic growth programs in Pakistan, please visit:
<http://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/economic-growth-agriculture>.

U.S. Commerce Secretary Pritzker Kicks Off U.S.-Pakistan Business Opportunities Conference Islamabad, March 10, 2015

From left: U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker, Ambassador Jalil Abbas Gilani, USAID Assistant to the Administrator Larry Sampler, and Ambassador Richard Olson

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker visited Islamabad to open the third U.S.-Pakistan Business Opportunities Conference, an event intended to engage the private sectors from both the United States and Pakistan, strengthen business-to-business ties, and boost bilateral trade and investment.

Addressing an audience of more than 400 people, many attending from overseas, the Secretary applauded the work being done by the Pakistani and American private sector companies represented. She commended them for engaging with government agencies seeking to improve Pakistan's business and investment climate and called on them to continue their efforts to expand trade and investment between Pakistan and the United States.

"The friendship between our two countries is strong," said Secretary Pritzker. "In addition to the work we do as government leaders, American businesses have a critical role to play as we seek to deepen our economic partnerships around the world and here in Pakistan."

In addition to calling for more trade and investment, the Secretary urged the Government of Pakistan to improve the business climate by implementing measures to increase transparency, enforce contracts, and streamline bureaucracy. Secretary Pritzker expressed her hope that the private sector in Pakistan would create greater opportunities for women in the workplace across all sectors of the economy.

This is the first time that the U.S.-Pakistan Business Opportunities Conference has taken place in Pakistan. Previous conferences took place in London in 2012 and Dubai in 2013. The Secretary lauded the opportunity to bring the private sectors of both countries together to build business to business ties and boost bilateral trade and investment, and asked the audience, "What better way to boost bilateral trade than to invite American companies to Islamabad so they can meet face to face with the Pakistan's business community?" The conference agenda included panel discussions on privatization, finance options and investment opportunities, as well as breakout sessions to facilitate networking between various industries and to discuss women's inclusion in the economy.

U.S. Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker Inaugurates U.S. - Pakistan Economic Partnership Week March 09, 2015 | Islamabad

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Pritzker meets with Prime Minister Sharif, Minister of Commerce Dastgir, and Minister of Finance Dar at the start of the U.S.-Pakistan Economic Partnership Week.

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker arrived in Islamabad, Pakistan today to launch the first-ever U.S. - Pakistan Economic Partnership Week. Her visit is critical to the United States' overall efforts to boost bilateral trade and investment with Pakistan.

Secretary Pritzker met with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at his office and joined him in inaugurating the week. "Global investors need to know that Pakistan is opening for business," said Secretary Pritzker. "It is in the United States' interest for Pakistan to be a stable, peaceful, and tolerant nation,

with a growing economy, at peace with itself and its neighbors. This week, we will focus on ways to increase trade and commercial ties between our countries and create new opportunities for Pakistanis and Americans alike."

U.S.-Pakistan Economic Partnership Week includes the third U.S.-Pakistan Business Opportunities Conference, a two-day event March 10-11; a working-level Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) meeting between the Pakistani and U.S. governments; and several other bilateral engagements scheduled throughout the week.

Secretary Pritzker, who is on her first official visit to Pakistan, thanked senior government officials for their dedication to improving the U.S.-Pakistan economic relationship and acknowledged the economic relationship between the two countries has, over the years, buttressed the overall relationship and is still growing.

U.S. Exchange Program Alumni Advance Global Women's Empowerment Islamabad | March 6, 2015

U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Richard Olson, with members of the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network at the opening ceremony of the 2015 International Women's Empowerment Conference. More than 300 alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs gathered at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad for the Opening Ceremony of the three-day 2015 International Women's Empowerment Conference co-sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN), and the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council.

Alumni from across South Asia participated in workshops and discussions about women's social, political, and economic empowerment together with prominent activists, artists, and community leaders from across Pakistan, South Asia, and the United States. The conference concluded with four community service activities that brought the alumni together with various community partners, including Edhi Homes, Sweet Homes Pakistan, and the Special Talent Exchange Program. In his keynote address to the alumni, U.S. Ambassador Richard G. Olson said, "During this conference, I encourage you to think about how the various sessions will enable you to achieve more in your respective fields and how, as a network, you can empower women across Pakistan, South Asia, and the world." He quoted renowned American author Maya Angelou, saying to participants, "'If you get, give. If you learn, teach.' This is my challenge to you as you interact with one another at this conference and when you return to your homes and communities."

The conference is one of many events sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad to commemorate

both International Women's Day on March 8 and Women's History Month throughout the month of March.

The U.S. government invests approximately \$40 million annually to send more than 1,300 Pakistanis to participate in various academic and professional exchange programs each year. PUAN is one of the largest U.S. alumni networks in the world. Its mission is to encourage people-to-people relationships between Pakistanis and Americans.

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

USAID Director Opens 2015 Pakistan Agriculture Conference and Exposition Islamabad, February 27, 2015

Gregory Gottlieb, USAID Mission Director and Sikandar Bosan, Minister of National Food Security and Research inaugurating the Pakistan Agriculture Conference and Exposition 2015, in Islamabad today. Director for U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Pakistan Gregory Gottlieb served as the keynote speaker to open the Pakistan Agriculture Conference and Exposition 2015 in Islamabad. The two-day exposition will showcase the latest technological advances in the agriculture industry and provide government agencies and the private sector a forum to discuss agriculture engagement strategies. The United States contributed a five stall pavilion to exhibit the agriculture development efforts supported by USAID in Pakistan.

Mr. Gottlieb said, "This is yet another example of how support for Pakistan's agriculture development is a priority of the United States. We believe our agriculture projects will continue to contribute to the growth of Pakistan's economy. Working together with a strong cadre of local farmers, agribusinesses and policymakers, the United States and Pakistan's joint efforts in agriculture development will contribute to a stronger, brighter future for all Pakistan."

Agriculture employs 44 percent of the national labor force and provides 21 percent of Pakistan's Gross Domestic Product. Speakers from the Ministry of National Food Security and Research, as well as representatives from the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council engaged audiences on wide range of

topics and spoke strategies to improve resources and development in the agriculture industry. During the past five years, United States agriculture assistance has helped nearly one million farmers increase productivity and income. This assistance helped Pakistan directly generate over \$45 million in domestic sales and \$28 million in export sales. Helping Pakistani farmers improve the quality of agricultural products while increasing productivity is a critical priority for the United States and approximately 800,000 farmer families have increased their incomes through the U.S.-Pakistani cooperation.

For more details on USAID's agriculture assistance for Pakistan, please visit:

<http://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/economic-growth-agriculture>

U.S.- Funded Ph.D. Scholars Return to Serve Pakistan's Education Sector

February 26, 2015

Director for U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Pakistan Gregory Gottlieb speaks to alumni from the USAID PhD Scholarship Program.

Four Pakistani scholars who recently returned from completing their doctoral studies in the United States highlighted their research and experiences during panel discussion on education at the Serena Hotel. In addition to the discussion, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Pakistan Mission Director Gregory Gottlieb and Pakistan Higher Education Commission Member Dr. G. Raza Bhatti highlighted U.S.-Pakistan cooperation in the education sector. The four scholars are part of a USAID-funded scholarship program that sent 34 Pakistani students to complete doctoral studies in the United States. The scholars, who are from wide range of academic disciplines, will return to Pakistan to serve as faculty members at top Pakistani universities.

During the event, Mr. Gottlieb noted, "These scholars are the bridge to the continuous improvement and modernization of teacher education in Pakistan. They have brought back to Pakistan a wealth of personal and professional experience, which can bring about a transformative change in the education sector."

The scholars included Afshan Huma, Fida Hussain Chang, Samina Nadeem who studied at the Michigan State University and Faizullah Jan who studied at American University in Washington, D.C. During the event, the group discussed ways to integrate internationally standardized teaching methodologies studied during their PhD programs into traditional Pakistani teaching methodology. Also, the scholars discussed the value of educational research resulting in new methods to empower students and colleagues to reach their full academic potential.

The U.S. government works to strengthen the quality of basic and higher education in Pakistan in an effort to promote prosperity and economic growth, leading to the improvement in the quality of life for all Pakistanis. The USAID Ph.D. scholarship program aims to provide higher education opportunities to promising under-served students to enhance their employability and engage in business,

government, and community research.

USAID is also working with the Higher Education Commission to establish Centers for Advanced Studies at four Pakistani universities. The centers will collaborate with American universities to improve curriculum development and conduct applied research in agriculture, energy, and water. The centers will have strong links to the business community and will address policy issues in the sectors. For more information on U.S. assistance to Pakistan's education sector, please visit: <http://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/education>

Clarification for the Record February 25, 2015

There have been inaccurate statements in the media characterizing the operating status of the Consulates General of the United States in Lahore and Peshawar.

For clarification, U.S. Consulate General Lahore and U.S. Consulate General Peshawar are open but have a limited operational status, which does not include provision of consular services, as has been the case for some time. U.S. Consulate General Karachi continues to provide full consular services, as does the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad. The U.S. Department of State routinely issues updates to travel warnings for countries around the world.

Pakistan's 2nd Annual StartUp Cup Competition Launched in Islamabad

Islamabad, February 21, 2015

The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad and the Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) Islamabad Chapter, in collaboration with the U.S. Pakistan Women's Council, launched the 2015 Pakistan StartUp Cup, an intensive, nationwide business competition. Entrepreneurs selected to participate in StartUp Cup will receive coaching through multi-day "Build-a-Business" workshops and regular mentoring to help turn their ideas into a commercial reality. Prize money of 10,000, 7,500, and 5,000 dollars will be awarded to the winner and two runners-up with the best startup concept.

At the opening ceremony, Thomas E. Williams, Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad said, "Programs like StartUp Cup foster greater inclusiveness in Pakistan's economy, particularly for women. The entrepreneurial solutions that arise from competitions such as StartUp Cup foster inclusiveness, grow economies, promote stability, expand the international supply chain, and spread the exchange of ideas."

Over the course of the seven-month program, aspiring Pakistani entrepreneurs will learn to design viable business models, develop customers, and launch their startup business concepts in the marketplace. This year's program will build on the success of last year's StartUp Cup, which saw over 400 entrepreneurs compete for one of the top three prizes. Last year's winning team went on to defeat 170 other entrepreneurs to win the first-ever World StartUp Cup competition in Yerevan,

Armenia.

The 2015 StartUp Cup in Pakistan will introduce new partnerships with entrepreneurship centers across Pakistan, including the world's first Women's Entrepreneurial Center of Resources, Education, Access, and Training for Economic Empowerment (WECREATE) in Islamabad sponsored by the U.S. Department of State in collaboration with the U.S. Pakistan Women's Council; the Lahore University for Management Science (LUMS) Center for Entrepreneurship; and Karachi-based technology incubator "The Nest I/O."

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

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

U.S. Ambassador Olson Inaugurates WECREATE Center for Women Entrepreneurs in Islamabad Islamabad, February 13, 2015

Reinforcing the U.S. commitment to advance gender equality through entrepreneurship in Pakistan, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson, U.S. State Department Special Representative for Commercial and Business Affairs Scott Nathan, and Additional Secretary for the Pakistan Ministry of Commerce Rubina Ather inaugurated the Women's Entrepreneurial Center of Resources, Education, Access, and Training for Economic Empowerment (WECREATE) in Islamabad. The WECREATE Center, the first of its kind in the world, will advance gender equality in entrepreneurship and provide training, support, and mentorship for women entrepreneurs in Pakistan.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Ambassador Olson said, "This center has enormous potential. It will help women overcome some of the barriers they encounter in Pakistan and develop initiatives to increase opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs to start and grow their own businesses. It will maximize public-private partnerships to increase women's participation in the economy and implement community-based programs to spur economic growth and innovation. The Center will offer mentorship, classes, resource materials, and access to a network of other women entrepreneurs across the country and around the world."

WECREATE Marketing and Communications Manager Mavra Bari commented, "The opening of the center is an opportunity to support not only new women entrepreneurs but also diverse ideas and

perspectives. It will give women a space to unleash their creative potential.”

The center is supported by the U.S.-Pakistan Women’s Council and sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, in partnership with StartUp Cup, TiE Islamabad, Change Mechanics, and the Hashoo Foundation. Launched by Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in September 2012, the U.S.-Pakistan Women’s Council is a public-private partnership that links U.S. and Pakistani universities, businesses, and other supporters, to initiatives that advance economic opportunities for women in Pakistan.

WECREATE Centers are currently in development in Zambia, Kenya, Cambodia, and Vietnam, with other Centers expected in the future. For more information on the WECREATE Pakistan Center, please visit www.facebook.com/pakistanwecreate and <https://twitter.com/WECREATEPak>

U.S. Department of Agriculture Supports Soil Fertility Symposium

Islamabad | February 4, 2015

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in concert with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) conducted a soil fertility symposium for 50 technical experts from the public and private sectors in Pakistan. The symposium is part of an ongoing effort to improve the efficacy of fertilizer application among farmers in Pakistan.

Guest speakers at the event included Dr. Thomas Reinsch, USDA National Leader for Soil Resources, and Michael Kucera, a farmer and recognized USDA expert in soil health. Dr. Reinsch, who has visited Pakistan previously, commented, "proper management is critical to improving soil health and contributing to the potential for higher yields for Pakistan's farmers. There are many affordable and simple practices that farmers can adopt and the potential for enhanced collaboration between farmers and the fertilizer companies is significant."

The one-day symposium focused on the importance of a balanced nutrient regime for farmers that follows the "Four R's" when applying fertilizer - the Right type, the Right amount, the Right time, and the Right place. When following the "Four R's" farmers can reduce their costs and maximize yields, helping to improve their profitability while reducing the harmful environmental effects of over-applying fertilizers. Key topics discussed included the proper applications of nitrogen, phosphorous, and micro-nutrients.

Agriculture continues to be a critical sector for Pakistan's economy, contributing 21 percent of Gross Domestic Product and providing employment for millions. USDA supports Pakistani agriculture by assisting in the development of agricultural productivity, furthering economic objectives, and working

to meet food security needs. This project and other USDA activities also receive funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The United States Condemns the Attack in Shikarpur - January 30, 2015

The U.S. Mission in Pakistan strongly condemns the attack on innocent people today at a mosque in Shikarpur and extends our deepest sympathies and condolences to the families of the victims. The United States stands in solidarity with the people and government of Pakistan in confronting this type of extremist violence. The United States supports the right of every person to practice their religion without fear of intimidation, death, coercion, or any form of reprisal – this is a basic human right, both in Pakistan and throughout the world.

Pakistan-U.S. Strategic Dialogue Joint Statement

January 13, 2015

Pakistan Adviser to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry met in Islamabad on January 13, 2015, for the fifth Ministerial level Pakistan-U.S. Strategic Dialogue. The last Ministerial level session of the Strategic Dialogue was held in Washington on 27 January 2014.

- The Adviser welcomed Secretary Kerry to Islamabad as an old friend of Pakistan. The two leaders reviewed progress made in bilateral relations in the past year, and held wide-ranging discussions on sustaining and further building the momentum in bilateral cooperation. Secretary Kerry conveyed that a strong, prosperous and democratic Pakistan is an essential partner for the United States in advancing the shared goal of a stable and peaceful region. Both sides reiterated their commitment to an enduring partnership between Pakistan and the United States, which is vital for regional security and stability. The two leaders reaffirmed the importance of the Pakistan-U.S. Strategic Dialogue for providing vision and direction for a strong and cooperative partnership between the two countries.
- Secretary Kerry conveyed condolences on the tragic loss of lives in the terrorist attack on Army Public School in Peshawar on 16th December 2014. He expressed solidarity with the people of Pakistan and appreciation for Pakistan's efforts to fight terrorism.
- Secretary Kerry expressed appreciation for the sacrifices of Pakistan's military personnel and civilians in the fight against terrorism and extremism, and he commended Pakistan's resolve and the steps being taken to tackle terrorism in a comprehensive and robust manner. He welcomed assurances of Pakistan's intent to dismantle all militant safe havens for terrorist and criminal networks. Building on the concrete results being achieved by operation Zarb-e-Azb, the two leaders discussed Pakistan's efforts to strengthen governance, expand development, and

facilitate the return and rehabilitation of temporarily displaced persons in the tribal areas. Secretary Kerry pledged to continue U.S. support for these efforts and has committed approximately \$250 million to assist in the relief, return and rehabilitation of TDPs, and will continue discussions as needs emerge.

- The two leaders expressed satisfaction that the Working Groups constituted under the rubric of the Strategic Dialogue contribute to strengthening bilateral cooperation and advancing shared interests, including in Pakistan's economic growth, increased trade and energy cooperation, regional stability, and countering extremism and terrorism. Both sides reviewed the progress made by the Working Groups on (1) Economic and Finance; (2) Defense; (3) Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism; (4) Security, Strategic Stability, and Nonproliferation; and (5) Energy. The two leaders affirmed their commitment to convene the inaugural session of the Working Group on Education, Science and Technology in 2015. They also acknowledged the importance of ongoing cooperation through assistance authorized under legislation known as the "Kerry-Lugar-Berman" act. Finally, they decided that the Working Groups are to continue meeting according to a mutually determined schedule.

Fostering Economic Growth

- Adviser Aziz and Secretary Kerry reaffirmed their shared commitment to expanding and deepening bilateral economic, trade and investment cooperation. The Economic and Finance Working Group reviewed the progress made in promoting bilateral economic relations in October 2014 in Washington. The United States acknowledged the progress made by Pakistan in steadying its economy and advancing the reform agenda defined by Prime Minister Sharif and his government in close cooperation with the International Monetary Fund and other multilateral institutions. Secretary Kerry welcomed Pakistan's efforts to improve its anti-money laundering and counterterrorism financing framework in cooperation with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).
- Both sides acknowledged the importance of expanded trade and investment ties as the key to a sustainable, balanced and enduring partnership. Recalling the deliberations of the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council meeting in May 2014 in Washington, the two sides committed to work towards smooth and effective implementation of the Joint Action Plan launched at the TIFA meeting. In this regard, Pakistan, while renewing its desire to seek a relationship based on trade and investment, not solely aid, underscored its desire for greater market access for its products through all means available.
- The two sides also renewed their support for the third U.S.-Pakistan Business Opportunities

Conference and the Pakistan-U.S. Economic Partnership Week to be organized in Islamabad to encourage increased bilateral trade and investment.

- Both sides expressed satisfaction with the activities of the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council and welcomed the forthcoming launch of the Women's Entrepreneurship Center in Islamabad. In addition, both sides committed to a particular focus on women's issues in the next meeting of the Economic and Finance Working Group. They also affirmed their commitment to expand the participation of women in the economy under the Memorandum of Understanding on Joint Efforts to Empower Women and Promote Women's Entrepreneurship.
- Secretary Kerry renewed the U.S. commitment to supporting private sector-led growth in Pakistan. Both leaders also welcomed the completion of the cooperative agreements of the Pakistan Private Investment Initiative (PPII) to leverage private equity for small and medium enterprises, and expressed hope that the financial closure of the projects will begin in 2015. The two leaders also welcomed the launch by USAID of four new partnerships with private-sector banks in Pakistan to improve access to finance for small businesses.

Support for Energy Sector

- The two sides reviewed the progress of the Energy Working Group since it last met in Washington in November 2013. Pakistan thanked the United States for the invaluable assistance in supporting Pakistan's efforts to resolve its energy crisis. In this regard, Pakistan also thanked the United States for its support for financing of Dasu Hydropower Project by the World Bank and for funding renewable energy projects through USAID and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC).
- Both countries expressed their satisfaction over the convening of the Diamer Bhasha Dam Project Business Opportunities conference by USAID and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce on October 8, 2014, in Washington. The United States reaffirmed its support for exploring the potential of the Diamer Bhasha Project to meet Pakistan's critical energy and water needs. Pakistan looked forward to the completion of the feasibility study of the Diamer Bhasha Project being conducted by USAID.
- Pakistan and the United States also underscored the importance of intensifying efforts to facilitate regional energy connectivity and continuing to upgrade Pakistan's transmission infrastructure. Pakistan appreciated the facilitative role of the United States for the Central Asia - South Asia electricity transmission project (CASA-1000).
- Both sides expressed support for cooperation in expanding power generation capacity,

including hydroelectric and renewable resources to bring additional capacity to the grid while minimizing the energy sector's contribution to global climate change; promoting the efficient use of energy resources; fostering development of Pakistan's gas resources and their efficient utilization; and continuing reforms to the energy sector to ensure its financial sustainability and to attract private sector investment.

Education Sector Cooperation

- The two leaders recalled the shared intent expressed by President Obama and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in October 2013 to further promote educational and research opportunities, and they welcomed the creation of the Working Group on Education, Science and Technology. They noted that the Working Group is intended to facilitate greater academic linkages and promote scientific and technological research collaboration between educational and research institutions of the two countries to foster economic growth. They looked forward to the early convening of the Working Group meeting.
- Both sides expressed satisfaction at the increase in U.S-Pakistan university partnerships in a range of fields, as well as the wide range of educational exchange programs including the Fulbright Program, to further promote educational and research opportunities for Pakistani students, especially women and girls. Both sides committed to continue working together to increase access and improve the quality of basic education throughout Pakistan.

Defense and Security Cooperation

- The two leaders discussed Pakistan's continuing efforts to defeat terrorism. Secretary Kerry expressed support for the Pakistan military's on-going operations in the tribal areas and the progress achieved so far. Secretary Kerry and Adviser Aziz agreed that U.S. security assistance has been effective and well deployed to assist Pakistan in its counterterrorism efforts.
- Both sides expressed satisfaction on the outcome of the 23rd round of the Defense Consultative Group (DCG) held in Washington December 2014 and committed to areas for future defense cooperation. They noted that the DCG Working Group played a role in strengthening cooperation to support both countries' security interests. Both sides renewed their mutual commitment to a strong defense relationship.
- Both the Adviser and Secretary Kerry condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The Adviser shared his perspective on effective counterterrorism cooperation and stressed that there is no distinction between good and bad militants. Secretary Kerry emphasized the need

for effective action against all violent extremists that threaten regional security. The two Leaders emphasized that no country's territory should be used to destabilize its neighbors. The United States and Pakistan renewed their common resolve to promote peace, stability, and transparency throughout the region and to eliminate the threats posed by extremism and terrorism. Both sides pledged to coordinate and cooperate on UN designations for terrorists.

- Both sides expressed satisfaction at the outcome of the Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism (LECT) working group held in Islamabad on January 12. The Adviser appreciated U.S. support to bolster Pakistan's counterterrorism (CT) and law-enforcement capacity. Both sides discussed steps to reinforce counterterrorism cooperation, share best practices towards developing a counter-narrative to militancy and violent extremism, enhance the overall rule of law, ensure ongoing cooperation to counter improvised explosives devices, and continue support for Pakistan's efforts to stabilize the border areas and improve border management.
- Pakistan and the United States attach high importance to preventing the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery to states as well as non-state actors. The US and Pakistan stand together in achieving the objectives of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1540, and both have consistently supported and implemented relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions.
- The United States welcomes Pakistan's ongoing efforts to harmonize its strategic trade controls with those of the multilateral export control regimes. Furthermore, the United States has full confidence in nuclear security in Pakistan and appreciates Pakistan's proactive engagement with the international community including through its hosting of IAEA training activities at its Nuclear Security Center of Excellence and its active participation in the Nuclear Security Summits.
- In this context, the two sides look forward to continuing the bilateral dialogue on Security, Strategic Stability and Non-Proliferation (SSS&NP). Both sides recognize their shared interest in strategic stability and emphasize their commitment to meaningful progress in the future.

Regional Cooperation

- Secretary Kerry and the Adviser noted that a peaceful, stable, independent, united and prosperous Afghanistan is vital for peace and stability in the region. Secretary Kerry welcomed the renewed and intensified engagement between Pakistan and Afghanistan, including President Ashraf Ghani's visit to Pakistan. Secretary Kerry encouraged continued dialogue and cooperation between both sides, recognizing the importance of cooperation to the stability of

Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the broader region.

- The two sides recognized that terrorism represents a common challenge to the region that requires common endeavors. They shared their mutual conviction that a stable, well-managed and peaceful Pakistan-Afghanistan border is vital for the success of counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and counter-IED efforts, with complementary coordinated counterterrorism efforts against militants conducted on both sides of the border. Both sides welcomed the steps being taken to strengthen Pakistan-Afghanistan bilateral mechanisms for enhanced security cooperation, including measures for effective border management and controls.
- Both delegations recognized that an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process is vital for achieving long-term peace, stability and progress in Afghanistan and the region. They welcomed the call by the new Afghan government to the Afghan Taliban and all armed opposition groups to resolve differences through political means. The Foreign Affairs Adviser reaffirmed that Pakistan would continue to facilitate the efforts of the Afghan government for peace and reconciliation.
- The two sides also concurred that regional economic cooperation is crucial to reinforcing Afghanistan's national efforts for economic development and deeper regional integration. Secretary Kerry welcomed Pakistan hosting the 5th Ministerial Meeting of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process in 2015 and congratulated Pakistan on hosting productive Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Coordination Authority meetings earlier this month.
- The Adviser and Secretary Kerry stressed that improvement in Pakistan-India bilateral relations would greatly enhance prospects for lasting regional peace, stability, and prosperity, as it would significantly benefit the lives of citizens on both sides of the border.

Enduring Partnership

- The Foreign Affairs Adviser and Secretary Kerry affirmed their commitment to a long-term and strong partnership between Pakistan and the United States anchored in the enduring friendship between their two peoples, which is not only in the interest of the two countries but also vital for the peace, stability and prosperity of the region. Affirming that both the United States and Pakistan are committed to democracy, human rights, freedom, and respect for international law, the two leaders reiterated their commitment to deepen and enhance the relationship between the peoples of the United States and Pakistan. The two sides committed to meet again for the Ministerial-level Strategic Dialogue in 2016.

U.S. and Pakistan Convene 2015 Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism

Working Group January 12, 2015

U.S. Ambassador-at-Large and Coordinator for Counterterrorism Tina Kaidanow, Interior Secretary Shahid Khan, and Foreign Secretary Aizaz Chaudhry convened the latest round of the U.S.-Pakistan Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism Working Group today at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad. The group discussed various U.S.-Pakistan areas of cooperation, including counterterrorism, rule of law, counter-narcotics, and border management. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Dan Feldman, National Security Council Senior Director Jeff Eggers, Ambassador Richard Olson and other senior U.S. officials participated in the working group.

Ambassador Kaidanow emphasized that, “the United States stands with Pakistan against the violence and criminality of groups that attack innocent school children, target civilians and law enforcement personnel, and undermine the stability and prosperity of Pakistan. We hope to share our mutual experience in ensuring the safety and security of our citizens, strengthening and protecting our borders, and building a secure future for our people.”

The working group is an important part of the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue. This is the fourth time the group has met since its inception in March 2010. In this meeting, the U.S. and Pakistani delegations explored ways to intensify the fight against terrorism and violent extremism and Pakistani officials outlined for the U.S. delegation the provisions of the recently created National Action Plan on terrorism. Ambassador Kaidanow highlighted areas in which U.S. assistance can be used to support Pakistan’s effective implementation of the plan. The group also discussed collaborative means to combat terrorist financing and disrupt the illicit networks that supply components for the creation of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Pakistan and the region.

Ambassador Kaidanow and Interior Secretary Khan concluded by agreeing to further intensive discussions on law enforcement and counterterrorism throughout 2015. The U.S. affirmed continued U.S. support and assistance to strengthen the capacity of civilian agencies involved in counterterrorism efforts in Pakistan.

United States Trains Faculty of Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design

Islamabad, December 10, 2014 - On December 10, eleven faculty members from the Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design (PIFD) who participated in a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) capacity development training program in 2014 met at the Serena Hotel to discuss follow-up actions from their visits to the United States, United Kingdom and France. USAID Mission Director, Gregory Gottlieb and Engineer Khurram Dastgir Khan, Federal Minister for Commerce, Government of Pakistan attended the debriefing event. Mr. Gottlieb, while speaking to the

trainees said, "I am confident that these trained teachers will go back to their classrooms and continue being even better teachers. Fashion design training is important, because it adds value to the textile and gems and jewelry sector in Pakistan. This is what essentially makes local products export worthy and will go a long way in making Pakistani fashion and auxiliary industries thrive."

The trained faculty members discussed how they would apply the knowledge of many cutting-edge trends and techniques in footwear, jewelry design and clothing and textiles. The trained teachers also shared with the audience their plans to transfer their new knowledge and skills to their students at PIFD. The students through this knowledge of international standards and best practices will augment their chances of finding competitive positions in the industry and sharpen their entrepreneurial skills.

The training supported by USAID, is part of a comprehensive capacity building initiative aimed at enhancing Pakistan's productivity and export competitiveness in economic sectors with high export potential. This classroom training will also help young graduates from PIFD access better incomes and new techniques at par with international standards. Fifty percent of the trained faculty is women.

The USAID training for Pakistan Project is a USD 33.9 million project that provides capacity development and training to Pakistanis in various sectors, including the economic growth and agriculture sector in order to enhance the capacity of future Pakistani leaders and professionals and develop the capacity of local partners. The project also invests in training in other areas, such as education, health, energy and resilience and governance. The project aims to train over 6,000 Pakistanis in these areas by May 2017.

For more details regarding USAID's impact on Pakistan's economic growth: 1.usa.gov/1dKTncZ

U.S. Assistant Secretary Brownfield inaugurates Joint Police Training Center in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

December 10, 2014 Contact: U.S. Embassy, Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 107/2014

Nowshera, December 10, 2014 -Assistant Secretary of State and head of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), Ambassador William R. Brownfield, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister, Pervez Khattak, inaugurated the Joint Police Training Center (JPTC) in Nowshera. The nine million dollar center funded by INL began working with elite police officers in May 2014 and will continue to train up to 600 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police officers and 200 levy forces annually in modern and advanced policing methods.

"The United States is proud to support efforts to improve citizen security and enhance police capacity

in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region," said Assistant Secretary Brownfield in his opening speech to Pakistani law enforcement officials. The JPTC is a modern training center and the first of its kind in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The facilities include barracks, helipads, a 400-meter shooting range, rappelling towers, combat sheds, and mock urban and rural terrain settings.

"This has all been achieved because of the remarkable partnership we share with the Pakistani government and people, including the law enforcement professionals who risk their lives each day to protect their communities," said Assistant Secretary Brownfield.

Since 2008, the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) has worked with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's police and financed the construction of police lines in Swat, as well as donated vehicles, radios, surveillance equipment, and life-saving personal protective gear.

For more information on INL programs in Pakistan, please visit:

<http://www.state.gov/j/inl/narc/c48591.htm>.

US Assistant Secretary Brownfield Congratulates Sindh Police's Defense of Human Rights

December 9, 2014, Karachi - Assistant Secretary of State and head of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), Ambassador William R. Brownfield, joined Inspector General Police (IGP) Ghulam Hyder Jamali at Sindh Police headquarters to mark the completion of a new Human Rights police training module. Pakistani police trainers will use this module to train new Sindh police recruits to respect and protect human rights.

Assistant Secretary Brownfield said, "With this new curriculum, the Sindh Police will take a step forward in ensuring that all police officers understand the need to respect the rights of all citizens, including women, children, and other vulnerable populations."

The Sindh Curriculum Development Team, funded by \$500,000 in assistance from INL and led by Deputy IGP Khalique Sheikh, developed the human rights module of the police training curriculum that will accompany other modules focusing on officer safety, forensics, and basic investigations. During the event, Assistant Secretary Brownfield committed an additional \$11 million to provide specialized assistance to expand the Karachi Police's Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) monitoring systems, which will more than double the existing system's capacity. He went on to announce the opening of a permanent INL office in the U.S. Consulate in Karachi to support Sindh's police, corrections, counternarcotics, and judicial institutions.

"The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs is

committed to a long-term partnership with the Sindh Police. I am proud of what we have accomplished together and I look forward to even greater cooperation in the future." said Assistant Secretary Brownfield. INL, on behalf of the U.S. government, provides assistance to advance civilian security and human rights protection and has dramatically expanded its support in Sindh over the past three years. Support includes rebuilding police stations destroyed in terrorist attacks, establishing dedicated women police posts, and donating basic equipment such as bulletproof vests and helmets, vehicles, ambulances, explosives detection kits, and an Integrated Ballistics Identification Systems (IBIS).

USAID, INTEL Pakistan, and Government of Sindh: Working Together to Improve Education Islamabad, December 4, 2014

Ambassador Richard Olson signs Memorandum of Understanding to improve the quality of education in Sindh with CEO of Intel Pakistan, Naveed Siraj, and Sindh Minister of Education, Nisar Ahmad Khuhro.

December 4, 2014 Contact: US Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 105/2014

USAID, INTEL Pakistan, and Government of Sindh: Working Together to Improve Education

Today, representatives from the United States Government, the Government of Sindh's Education and Literacy Department, and Intel Pakistan Corporation signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in Karachi reaffirming their commitment to improve access to quality education in Sindh province.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson said, "We all recognize that prosperity and a better life cannot be built without a strong foundation in quality education." He added, "The partnership we are commemorating today [will] enhance access to and the quality of education for children in Sindh."

Under the terms of the MOU, Intel will provide training to at least 800 government teachers, 4,000 students, and 4,000 out-of-school adolescents and adults over a period of three years. The training will enable them to use information communication technology (ICT) effectively in education, literacy, and daily activities. Intel Pakistan will also work with the USAID-funded Sindh Basic Education Program (SBEP) to support school and regional public libraries.

U.S. Consul General Brian Heath, USAID Provincial Director Leon S. Waskin; Secretary of the Sindh Department of Education Dr. Fazalullah Pechuho; and Intel Pakistan Country Manager Naveed Siraj joined Ambassador Olson at the signing ceremony at the U.S. Consulate General in Karachi.

Through USAID, the U.S. Government has provided support to the Government of Sindh's Education and Literacy Department with the \$155 million SBEP to construct 120 large public schools in seven districts of the province and five towns in Karachi.

U.S. Ambassador Promotes Trade and Investment Ties in Karachi

December 3, 2014 Contact: US Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 104/2014

Islamabad, December 3, 2014 – The Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) hosted U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson for a discussion with business and industry leaders on December 3 in Karachi. Ambassador Olson's remarks emphasized the importance of continued cooperation between the United States and Pakistan in order to enhance trade and investment ties and support Pakistan's entrepreneurs.

Ambassador Olson highlighted how both countries are partnering to create a "pro-business, pro-investment, and pro-innovation climate." He said, "We are proud that the United States is both Pakistan's largest trading partner and one of its largest investors. In 2013, two-way trade totaled more than \$5 billion and U.S. companies have invested \$1.3 billion in the Pakistani economy in the last seven years."

Ambassador Olson also outlined how both countries are moving from "an assistance-based relationship to one based more on trade and investment" and the United States' commitment to supporting long-term self-sufficiency for Pakistan. He pointed out that the United States is partnering with Pakistan to achieve growth and build a foundation for commercial success by building business ties and industry capacity, supporting Pakistan's young entrepreneurs, and addressing some of the challenges that have slowed the pace of economic growth in Pakistan.

The Ambassador also spoke about the October meeting of the Economic and Finance Working Group, an element of the Strategic Dialogue, led by Under Secretary for Economics, Energy, and Business Catherine Novelli and Finance Minister Ishaq Dar. The working group focused on the concrete steps both countries are taking to improve trade and investment ties, such as the joint announcement of a U.S.-Pakistan Economic Partnership Week in early 2015.

Ambassador Olson concluded his remarks by highlighting the important role that business and industry leaders can play in economic growth by saying, "...for the U.S.-Pakistan relationship to continue to grow, it is going to have to be less about what our two governments do than about what our peoples and businesses can accomplish together. "

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

Dedicated to



Daniel Pearl

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