



News Release



Office of Public Affairs

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Former USAID Director Recounts Pakistan's Agricultural Development

Islamabad, March 2, 2007 – Reforms in agriculture that were funded and guided by the United States, which collectively became known as “the Green Revolution,” lifted Pakistan’s wheat production from four million tons in 1967 to over nine million tons in 1977 to some 20 million tons today.

“Since Pakistan’s population has increased five or six-fold since independence from about 30 million in 1947 to perhaps 175 million today, the successful increase in food production has been essential,” Joseph C. Wheeler, former USAID Mission Director in Pakistan between 1969 and 1977, recalled this monumental achievement in a talk here Friday at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE).

“The Green Revolution in wheat came from research that produced improved varieties, better water management and adoption of a new fertilizer strategy – and, of course, from the hard work of Pakistan’s farmers,” said Wheeler who presided over the American effort to help Pakistan feed itself.

He said that the research breakthrough was the development of so-called short-straw varieties of wheat. If more nutrients were applied to traditional varieties, the plants grew taller and tended to lodge, producing little more grain. The new varieties used additional nutrients to put out more stems or tillers, each stem producing grain.

“These new varieties were developed through research at international and national research centers based on American models and with the assistance of US scientists,” Wheeler noted.

“An efficient stream of new research is vital to the continuation of the Green Revolution,” Wheeler emphasized.

The former USAID Director said that this great success story resulted from continued attention to research, water management and policies related to plant nutrition.

“These are the tools for continuing the Green Revolution to meet the needs of this new century. Through ‘Green Revolution’ Pakistan has proven that good science, good policies and great farmers can change the world for the better,” Wheeler observed.

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