



News Release



Office of Public Affairs

U.S. Embassy

World Water Day: USAID reaffirms its commitment in managing scarce water resources of Pakistan

Islamabad, March 22: The U.S. Agency for International Development Mission in Pakistan honors World Water Day by reaffirming its commitment to give Pakistanis the understanding and tools they need to efficiently manage the country's scarce water resources.

More than one in six people worldwide – 1.1 billion – do not have access to a safe and affordable water supply. Two out of every five people – 2.4 billion – lack access to adequate sanitation facilities. In Pakistan, more than one in ten children die before they reach their fifth birthday and sanitation-related diseases are responsible for 60% of all children's deaths.

USAID is working to help bring clean water to the Pakistani people and improve Pakistan's water resource management through several projects.

USAID's \$16.7 million Pakistan Safe Drinking Water & Hygiene Promotion Project launched in October 2006 will help bring clean water to over 30 million people nationwide. Working in 31 districts across Pakistan -- including three agencies in FATA and eight earthquake-affected districts – the project will train government officials and community members in the operation and maintenance of thousands of new water filtration units. Communities will receive training in water resource management and the promotion of good hygiene and sanitation. "These initiatives will significantly reduce the burden of preventable water-borne diseases in Pakistan," says Dr. Qadeer Ahsan, Health Specialist, USAID Pakistan.

This program supports the Government of Pakistan's Clean Drinking Water Initiative, which aims to ensure provision of clean drinking water in every union council by installing 6,000 water filtration plants. USAID's training efforts will directly benefit the users of nearly a quarter of these new plants.

In support of Pakistan's economic growth, USAID is funding a \$6,335,239 market-driven project implemented by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in collaboration with Balochistan's Department of Agriculture.

The project is assisting farmers in Balochistan to increase the efficiency of water use on their farms by 40%, and to improve agricultural production and agro-processing by introducing high-value, water-efficient crops such as olives, pistachios, almonds, grapes, and pomegranates. "Our projects are helping small farmers in Balochistan to improve

<p>ISLAMABAD Diplomatic Enclave, Ramna 5 Phone: 2082000 E-mail: infojbs@state.gov</p>	<p>KARACHI Collector's Lane, 8 Abdullah Haroon Road Phone: 5204200 E-mail: irckhi@state.gov</p>	<p>LAHORE 30, Empress Road Phone: 6034000 E-mail: irelahore@state.gov</p>	<p>PESHAWAR 11, Hospital Road, Peshawar Cantt. Phone: 5268800</p>
--	--	--	--

their water management practices that will ultimately provide them with sustainable livelihoods," says Aazar Bhandara, Economic Growth Advisor, USAID Pakistan.

So far, 16,000 people in the province have benefited from the Balochistan water project, affecting 1,800 acres of land, while 13,500 people have benefited from enhanced crop-production and agro-processing.

In addition, through its \$7,500,000 U.S./Pakistan Science and Technology Partnership Program, USAID is providing matching grants for innovative projects, including water retention schemes.

(For more press releases, please visit our website: <http://islamabad.usembassy.gov>)