



News Release



Office of Public Affairs

U.S. Embassy

USAID Expands Midwife Training Program across Sindh and NWFP

Islamabad, November 3, 2006 - Efforts to improve the health of mothers and newborn children reached a new milestone this week as a program funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) expands training for midwifery tutors and master trainers across Sindh and the North West Frontier Province. Supporting the Ministry of Health's national program to increase the number of births attended by skilled attendants, USAID's Pakistan Initiative for Mothers and Newborns (PAIMAN) is training over 2,000 community midwives countrywide.

Over two dozen midwifery experts and trainers from Sindh and NWFP will participate in this new phase of training hosted at the College of Nursing in Peshawar and at the Midwifery School in Karimabad, Karachi. These workshops will help refresh their skills and prepare them to administer a standardized 18-month training program for community midwives. This "cascading training" approach will allow PAIMAN and the Ministry of Health to reach more midwives in more regions across the country. Already, the initiative has trained 44 midwife master trainers.

"We are working in partnership with the Government of Pakistan," explained Dr. Nabeela Ali, Chief of Party for PAIMAN. "This program will help meet the targets set by the Ministry of Health for the health of mothers and newborns. Workshops and other 'training of trainers' efforts will help reduce the shortage of skilled birth attendants in parts of the country where health facilities are non-existent."

Currently, over 80 percent of Pakistani women give birth in their homes; only 20 percent of these home deliveries are carried out by skilled and trained birth attendants. This leads to more deaths among mothers and newborns. The survivors of unskilled deliveries often develop complications later in life. By increasing the number and availability of midwives across the country, the Government of Pakistan and USAID's PAIMAN project hope to decrease these deaths and improve the health of mothers and children nationwide.

In partnership with the Ministry of Health and local leaders, USAID's five-year PAIMAN project helps improve mother, newborn, and child health in ten key districts throughout Pakistan. Initiatives provide training to healthcare providers, improve access

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to health services for mothers and children, and expand emergency transportation in rural areas – improving the quality of healthcare and helping save lives. PAIMAN is implemented by a consortium of international and Pakistani organizations lead by John Snow Inc.

The United States, through USAID, is providing more than \$1.5 billion in development assistance to Pakistan over the next five years to improve education, health, governance and economic growth. In addition, the United States has pledged a total of \$510 million in earthquake relief and reconstruction efforts to assist the people of Pakistan and to support Pakistani government efforts.