



News Release



Office of Public Affairs

U.S. Embassy

Ambassador Crocker Marks World AIDS Day

Islamabad, December 1, 2006 - In commemoration of World AIDS Day on Friday, U.S. Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker presided over the completion of a training program for 20 medical officers from across the country. The training program, provided through a new U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) initiative, helped give these medical professionals the skills to address health issues uniquely related to men with high risk behaviors, an issue often overlooked. The participants will return to their homes and clinics to apply these lessons and skills.

USAID's three-year, \$2.7 million HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care Project has already reached more than 120,000 high risk individuals, promoting awareness and good health behavior. The program is providing home-based care for 90 HIV positive individuals, and their 276 family members. Implemented by Family Health International, the program is also helping to meet physical, medical, and psychological needs of the people living with HIV/AIDS in Pakistan.

HIV/AIDS was first reported in Pakistan in 1987. Although Pakistan does not yet have a widespread epidemic, AIDS has become a serious problem for some sections of society and the general population is at risk. According to a recent UN report, 3,000 Pakistanis died of AIDS in 2005. As many as 85,000 Pakistanis are HIV positive, although only 3,200 are aware of it.

"HIV/AIDS is a serious and unique challenge for all Pakistanis," Ambassador Crocker noted. "This is an issue that cuts across religion, ethnicity, and social class. Programs focused on HIV/AIDS are not just dealing with a 'disease' or a 'public health problem.' They are about helping people in ways that are truly merciful and compassionate."

Since 1988, the international community has set aside December 1st each year as World AIDS Day to raising awareness of the global AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection. Globally, AIDS has killed more than 25 million people, making it one of the most destructive epidemics in recorded history. The theme for this year's commemoration is "Stop AIDS – Keep the Promise."

The U.S. Government and the American people are supporting programs to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS in nearly 100 countries worldwide. Since the founding of its international AIDS program in 1986, USAID has provided almost \$6 billion in funding, more than any other public or private organization. The United States is also the single

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largest donor to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, currently working in Pakistan. Since 2001, the U.S. has pledged nearly \$1.9 billion—providing a third of donations to the Global Fund’s efforts world wide.

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.

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