



# News Release



Office of Public Affairs

U.S. Embassy

## U.S. Ambassador Launches \$11.5 Million Health Program for Children in FATA

**Peshawar, December 18, 2006:** At the Governor's house today, U.S. Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker launched a \$11.5 million three-year program to improve child health care across FATA. Funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Save The Children, U.S., the new initiative will deliver a health package for children under the age of five, that will cover newborn care and nutrition, immunization, and treatment for lung infections and other diseases.

Speaking at the Governor's House in Peshawar, Ambassador Crocker noted that currently 135 out of every 1,000 children under the age of five died early, often due to chest infections, diarrhea, or other treatable ailments. For every 1,000 child births, six mothers died, often because quality medical assistance was not available.

"The current state of health care in the Tribal Areas, particularly the health of women and children, presents us all here today with a very serious challenge," he said. "This is truly a remarkable opportunity to help ensure that the children of FATA get a healthy start in life and that mothers get the support they need when they are most vulnerable."

The program will train healthcare providers and help improve access to quality health services across all seven Agencies. It will reach over 1.5 million adults and over 210,000 children under the age of five. By strengthening existing health facilities and services, the program will support positive, lasting change for children and mothers.

In partnership with the FATA Health Directorate, USAID advisors will help strengthen the Agency Headquarter Hospitals and Agency Health Management Teams to foster public support for further improvements in the region's health system.

Pointing to the "desperate" state of child health in FATA, Governor NWFP, Ali Muhammad Jan Orakzai, said that without the generous support of the American government, the three-year effort to improve the health status of FATA children would not be possible. "We are truly grateful to USAID and the American people," he said, "for recognizing the important link between the health of our children and the health of our society."

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In providing health care for children, FATA lags behind the rest of Pakistan. Almost one in ten children die as infants; 14 percent of children die before reaching their fifth birthday. According to UNDP Human Development Report 2006, Pakistan's Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is 80/1000 live births, while its Under Five Mortality Rate (U5MR) is 101/1000 live births. Comparatively, U.K.'s IMR is 5 and U5MR is 6. In the U.S., IMR is 7 and U5MR is 8.

Since 2003, USAID has partnered with national, local, and community leaders across Pakistan to improve health services for mothers and children. USAID has committed more than \$130 million to the health sector alone, also supporting tuberculosis, polio, and HIV prevention and control programs countrywide.

In addition to the new Child Health Program, the U.S. is funding in FATA a demographic and health survey that will help the FATA Health Directorate to plan better programs for improving the survival of women and children.

Ambassador Crocker said: "We regard ourselves as your partner in building a better future, and such a future must begin with good health. On behalf of the U.S. Government, I applaud your commitment in continuing the strenuous efforts to sustain and improve health care services for the children living in FATA. Working together, we can achieve great things on behalf of the most vulnerable people of this rugged region."

Through USAID, the American government is providing more than \$1.5 billion in development assistance to Pakistan over five years to improve education, health, governance and economic growth.

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