

FOLLOW-UP MEETING OF WATER WORKING GROUP
PAK-US STRATEGIC DIALOGUE: JULY 20, 2010, ISLAMABAD

1. After the 1st meeting of the Water Working Group, as a part of the PAK-US Strategic Dialogue, held on 17th June, 2010, a follow-up meeting was convened on 20th July, 2010, to agree upon the Next Steps, based on the Areas of Engagement put forward during the Strategic Dialogue. Secretary, Water and Power led the Pakistan side whereas Under Secretary Maria Otero headed the US side.
2. In his opening remarks, Secretary Water and Power pointed out deficiencies in conserving & managing the water sector and emphasized its importance in the context of growth in the national economy. He pointed out various aspects of water, including environmental, potable, industrial and agricultural use and the urgent requirement and Pakistan's commitment to improve the efficiency of this dwindling natural resource. He appreciated the role of the US Government in making it an integral part of the US Assistance to Pakistan. He also thanked Under Secretary Maria Otero for her support and commitment to help reform Pakistan's water sector.
3. Under Secretary Otero appreciated the participation of the provinces in this meeting and renewed her resolve to continue her support to this sector for the benefit of the people of Pakistan. She made a special mention to appreciate the Balochistan representative's 20-hour road journey, who just came to participate in this meeting. She further mentioned that availability and management of water is most important for economic development and quality of life of the people. Water is very top of the agenda of Strategic Dialogue also. We need to address policy issues for ensuring sustainability.
4. Chairman WAPDA highlighted main water issues; Record Note and then precise recommendations by WAPDA to the Ministry of Water and Power. Chairman WAPDA said that a Secretariat for Water Working Group had been set up in WAPDA and they were in the process of establishing a web site for this purpose. He underscored various challenges in this sector and reiterated that the provincial inputs were key to improving efficiency and water productivity, full cost recovery of irrigation & drinking water costs, infrastructure rehabilitation and stakeholder participation. He also appreciated the active role played by the provinces in the first meeting. He further said that he would contact each province and come up with a Water Management Review & Action Plan within 6 weeks.
5. The provinces were then given an opportunity to express their views and outline their priority needs for improvement of the sector. Sindh Irrigation Secretary said that his priorities were Redesigning and Rehabilitation of the 80 year old Sukkur Barrage, lining of canals and conversion of brackish water into usable water through solar system. KPK Secretary Irrigation pointed out that they were able to use only 67% of their allocated share and therefore, needed storages to use their balance share. He also desired that lining of canals be done in his province. Punjab Irrigation Secretary said that on-farm water management was primarily the mandate of the Agriculture departments as they were entrusted with the supply of agricultural water, flood control and drainage. He elaborated that a province-wide Rehabilitation

plan was prepared and the World Bank and ADB were providing financial assistance for rehabilitation of Taunsa, Jinnah, Balloki and Sulemanki barrages. He said that US assistance would be welcome in Khanki barrage rehabilitation, improvement of canal systems, strengthening of Provincial Irrigation Department which was still operating on 1906 structure, management of hill torrents in DG Khan and Rajanpur districts and water ponds for livestock and agriculture in southern Punjab. Advisor Water then highlighted Balochistan's needs and said that rainwater harvesting, management of hill torrents and efficient irrigation systems were direly required by the province. Balochistan province representative then said that small dams were also a priority and would welcome US engagement in this initiative.

6. Under Secretary Maria Otero then remarked that a real sense of a total strategy was needed to pave a way for a road map for this sector. She highlighted Sustainability (cost recovery/pricing to cover maintenance costs), Improved Efficiency (through better management, improved operation and maintenance and conservation) and need for storages. She recognized cost recovery as the biggest challenge and said that this was very important if water sector was to improve substantially. She said that benchmarks needed to be there for the completion of the National Water Policy with the inputs of all the stakeholders and appreciated that it was in process. She expressed her gratitude to Chairman WAPDA's initiative of contacting the provinces and formulating a plan for future engagement.
7. USAID's Carie Abendorth then spoke about various projects, including Gomal Zam, Balochistan water Management, High Efficiency Irrigation and Balochistan small dams, which were being co-financed by USAID.
8. Mary Beth Goodman suggested that the Record of Notes prepared by the Pakistan side and those drafted by the US side would be combined and an agreed draft would be made available for both sides' concurrence. She suggested that today's meeting discussions be annexed to these Notes so that it would become a comprehensive document.
9. The meeting ended with a note of thanks by Secretary Water and Power and Under Secretary Maria Otero to all the participants.