

Sub: **US - PAKISTAN JOINT COMMUNIQUE - WATER WORKING GROUP MEETS ON WATER**

The United States and Pakistan held the third Water Working Group dialogue on 02 November, 2011 at Islamabad to review progress and agree to steps to support Pakistan's efforts to achieve water security. The Water Working was established as part of the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue to ensure that U.S assistance responds directly to the needs of the Pakistani people. It follows a visit from Secretary Clinton last month who noted the import role that water plays in advancing our shared goals on health, economic growth, and food security, and that water remains a high priority. The meeting was chaired by Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs Maria Otero, Secretary of Water and Power Imitiaz Qazi and Chairman of the Water and Power Development Agency Shakil Durani and included representatives from each of the provinces, Lahore, and Karachi.

Pakistani federal and provincial representatives presented an overview of water challenges and outlined plans, progress made and critical needs to address water issues. Key issues raised included institutional strengthening (including the establishment of a National Water Commission), increasing cost recovery, improving performance of utilities, repairing and rehabilitating infrastructure, and understanding the impacts of climate change and glacial melt. Pakistan officials also underscored their commitment to strengthen the water sector governance and efficiency, pursue regulatory reforms, improve financial management, and create a climate that attracts and supports investment. The need for financing the Diamer Basha Dam and Kurram Tangi Dam for ensuring greater floods control, food security and generation of cheap renewable energy was underscored.

The U.S. Agency for International Development presented an overview of U.S. assistance programs related to water. USAID is working to strengthen municipal water services provision in Jacobabad and Peshawar and provide technical expertise across a broad range of water-related areas. USAID has also provided assistance for the Gomal Zam and Satapara dams which has significantly increased water storage and power production. Both programs will expand agricultural opportunities and strengthen food security.

While noting these successes, both parties acknowledged the need to expedite implementation of key programs and increase the breadth of technical exchanges between the two countries. It was noted that after the receipt of the request of the FODP/ADB regarding the Water Sector Task Force recommendation would be finalized for implementation by the Provinces & Government of Pakistan.

The Water Working Group is an example of how the United States and Pakistan can work together to improve water security for the benefit of the Pakistani people and contribute to a more stable and prosperous Pakistan. The next meeting would be held in Six months in Washington.