



# Media Update

1 April 2015

## FAO

PRESS RELEASE

### SBP- FAO Training of Trainers on agriculture value chain financing held for senior bankers

Karachi, 01 April 2015: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) in collaboration with Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has organized a five days Training of Trainers (ToT) on ‘Agricultural Value Chain Financing’ from 30 March to 3 April 2015 in Karachi. Two international Master Trainers, Mr. Calvin Miller from FAO, and Dr. Prasun Das from Asia-Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association (APRACA) will be presenting global best practices of various value chain financing models with the training participants.

The inaugural session was chaired by Mr. Syed Samar Hasnain, Executive Director, State Bank of Pakistan. The session was attended by around 100 participants largely including senior executives of commercial banks, officials of SBP and FAO. While addressing the audience, Mr. Hasnain highlighted SBP’s strategy of working closely with the banking and agriculture sectors for meeting the growing demand of agri-credit in the country. He appreciated the efforts of banks which have already achieved 58% of annual target of Rs. 500 billion for agri-credit disbursements in the first eight months of current fiscal year 2014-15.

Mr. Hasnain also stressed that the banks must explore financing to all sub-sectors of agriculture and use innovative credit methodologies such as value chain financing to reach out to smallholder farmers. Referring to the importance of value chain financing, he said that SBP has been working to create an ecosystem for supporting such innovative models. He mentioned about SBP’s support to pilots of few banks in financing to value chains of sugarcane, potato, and aqua-culture.



Mr. Nasar Hayat, Assistant Representative at FAO highlighted the efforts and assistance that FAO has been extending to the Government of Pakistan in building and strengthening national agriculture infrastructure in the country. He emphasized on the need of an inclusive and efficient agriculture and food systems. In particular, he shared FAO's initiatives to support smallholder farmers of Balochistan to improve their yield as well as market access. He also said that this training designed by FAO is an effective tool to improve financial services available to the agricultural value chains.

On this occasion, representatives of Habib Bank Limited (HBL), Khushhali Bank and Engro Foods also shared their experiences of working with the emerging value chains in Pakistan.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Saeed Ahmed, Director of the Agricultural Credit and Microfinance Department of SBP appreciated FAO collaboration with SBP for promoting agricultural value chain financing in Pakistan.

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## **United Nations**

### **MESSAGE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

## **World Autism Awareness Day**

2 April 2015

I am hugely encouraged by the growing public awareness of autism spectrum disorders and the increase of public services to many of those affected. World Autism Awareness Day not only fosters greater understanding, it empowers parents into seeking early intervention therapies and calls for the full integration of persons with autism into society. It also invites policy-makers to encourage schools to open their doors to students with autism.



With adequate support, they can -- and should -- be educated in the heart of their communities. Now is the time for even greater access and work opportunities for persons with autism.

This year, I am pleased to launch an employment “Call to Action”, inviting businesses to make concrete commitments to employ people on the autism spectrum. We encourage public offices, corporations, and small businesses to have a closer look at the way they perceive people with autism, to take the time to learn about the condition and to create life-changing opportunities.

People with autism have enormous potential. Most have remarkable visual, artistic or academic skills. Thanks to the use of assistive technologies, non-verbal persons with autism can communicate and share their hidden capabilities. Recognizing the talents of persons on the autism spectrum, rather than focusing on their weaknesses, is essential to creating a society that is truly inclusive.

Yet even where autism awareness is most advanced, more than 80 per cent of adults with autism are unemployed. That is why it is so important for employers to understand their unique and often exceptional skills, and to enable work environments where they can excel.

This important mission can only be achieved with appropriate vocational training and adequate support alongside a recruitment process that can allow people to successfully integrate into workforces around the world.

The United Nations General Assembly has called for greater access and opportunities for persons with autism. In declaring 2 April as World Autism Awareness Day, the Assembly also called for training for public administrators, service providers, care-givers, families and non-professionals to support the integration of persons with autism into society, so that they can realize their full potential.

On World Autism Awareness Day, let us join forces to create the best possible conditions for those with autism, so that they can make their own contribution to a future that is fair and sustainable for all.

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