



Pakistani American Association of San Diego (PAASAND)

Report on the Visit of Founder and the President PAASAND, Tasneem Farooq Rehmani to Pakistan

January 21st to February 6th, 2023

Lead: **Ms. Tasneem Farooq Rehmani**
Founder and CEO PAASAND

Accompanied by: **Dr. Rubina Feroze Bhatti**
Technical Advisor, PAASAND

Mr. Mohammad Naeem
Senior Volunteer



Introduction

Background

Pakistan is a large country with a current population of 225.2 million, currently facing many challenges such as high inflation, low growth and low levels of official foreign exchange reserves. Besides this, 33 Million people have been affected with over 1 Million homes destroyed or damaged by the summer's catastrophic floods. One third of the country is under water with 800,000 livestock lost, a critical source of sustenance for families; livelihoods have been significantly affected. UNDP has warned that 9 million more risk being pushed into poverty. Thee country has also been making significant efforts to mainstream Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in national policies and strategies and developing an institutional framework for SDGs implementation in Pakistan. Nevertheless, it has made very moderate progress on zero hunger, quality education, gender equality, clean energy, innovation, sustainable cities and communities. It is pertinent to mention that the entire Pakistani nation, civil society and humanitarian organizations as well as the overseas Pakistani stepped forward to assist in the rescue and relief efforts. However, the catastrophic floods have multiplied the challenges in achieving the SDGs goals.

Though the Pak-U.S. relations have been through many ups and downs throughout the history of Pakistan, Pakistani Americans always generously supported Pakistan in its hard times. For instance, PAASAND generously supported victims of earthquake in 2005 and currently has been sending the donations for the rehabilitation of flood affected people of Pakistan. Likewise, the CEO PAASAND visited Pakistan to extend the possible support when the economy is in crises due to backbreaking inflation and sharp decline in the rupee's value.

Purpose of the Visit

The purpose of the visit was to conduct face-to-face meetings to encourage dialogue for enhanced understanding, engagements and collaborations between the two countries around issues of mutual importance particularly for achieving the desired results of ensuring quality education, skill development and job creation to meet SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

The CEO also wished to engage with the Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to learn more about how the US based organizations can collaborate with PAASAND for eradication of poverty in Pakistan. The CEO visited the Capital-Islamabad, Lahore-Punjab and Karachi-Sindh. They met with the representative of both public and private sector.

Outcomes of the Meetings

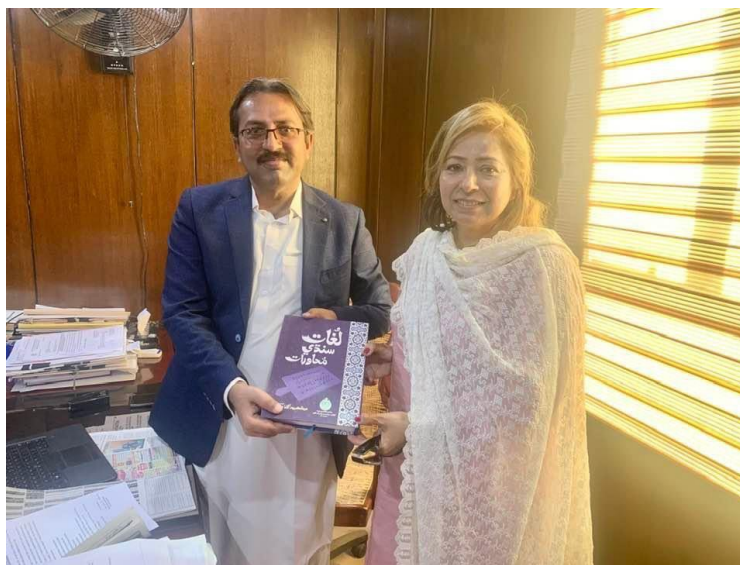
The CEO visited Karachi, Islamabad, and Lahore to share the positive initiatives taken by the PAASAND to help Pakistani community, particularly the people affected by catastrophic floods and earthquake.

Karachi- Sindh

On 20th January, 2023 Ms. Rehmani, CEO PAASAND and Mr. Muhhamd Naeem, senior volunteer PAASAND had a meeting with CEO of Captain Trana Trust. Ms. Rehmani said that I am honored to be signed as the Goodwill Ambassador for Tarana Trust that allows her to encourage the global community for supporting various projects of the Trust.



On 22nd January, 2023, CEO PAASAND and National Coordinator had a meeting with Azad Samejo who facilitated her in identification of government schools in Karachi as well as helped her throughout the process of adoption. Mr. Azad Samejo is an author of many books in Sindhi language. He works for the School Education and Literacy Department of Sindh. Mr. Azad presented his book to the CEO PAASAND.



Islamabad- The Capital

The meetings in the capital were quite diverse in nature.

Meeting at the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety (PASS)

On 31st January 2023, the CEO PAASAND Ms. Tasneem Rehmani was warmly welcomed by the federal parliamentary secretary Mr. Naveed Aamir Jeeva at the PASS secretariat.

The CEO was given a detailed briefing by the officials of the ministry that PASS envisions establishing an end-to-end system of social protection in the country by offering basic provisions of life and economic opportunities that will lift vulnerable groups out of poverty. PASS upholds the principles of transparent governance, equal opportunity and social welfare by leading initiatives and programmes providing protection against social and economic distress.



It was further shared that PAAS is also the governing Ministry for four organizations that have the mandate of providing relief to the poor.

These organizations are as under:

- Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP)
- Pakistan Bait-ul-Maal (PBM)
- Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF)
- Trust for Voluntary Organizations (TVO)

The secretary encouraged PAASAND to develop a partnership with PASS in any of the key areas including;

- Providing necessities i.e., food and shelter
- Providing secure livelihoods
- Investing in human capital
- Monitoring effective implementation of policies and strategies across federal and provincial institutions





Meeting at the Ministry of Climate Change

On 31st January 2023, Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change Ms. Naz Baloch informed the delegation that climate change has become a challenge for the survival of the whole world including Pakistan. She shared that the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan took place on January 9, 2023, in Geneva, in the backdrop of the devastating floods in 2022. The conference was co-hosted by the Government of Pakistan and the United Nations.

It brought together the international community to reaffirm solidarity with Pakistan, to review the recovery needs of the affected population, and to identify support required to reconstruct and rehabilitate the damaged infrastructure in a resilient manner. Delegations at the conference expressed their solidarity and announced commitments of financial support of more than USD 9 billion during the conference.

The secretary appreciated the vital role of overseas Pakistani in the country's development. She said that Pakistan welcomes any support from them for the rehabilitation of the flood affected people.



CEO PAASAND shared that the organization has been supporting some projects run by the local organizations. She further raised her concerns regarding the difficulties faced by NGOs to receive foreign funds. While responding to these concerns, the secretary ensured her possible support to eliminate the bottlenecks to get the support from overseas Pakistanis.



Other Meetings With

- CEO Pakistan Partnership Initiative (PPI), Mr. Ashraf Mall
- Chairperson at Diplomatic Insight Group Pakistan, Ms. Farhat Asif
- Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry Islamabad

These meetings focused on exploring some joint ventures for exchange visits of business women/entrepreneurs to economically empower the women. CEO PAASAND focused on the need of collaborations between the USA and Pakistani entrepreneurs. She urged the business women to become a solid bridge between the two countries through exchange of business opportunities and possibilities.



Meeting at the SDGs Secretariat

On 1st February, 2023, the delegation discussed the progress Pakistan has made in achieving the sustainable development goals. Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam, MNA/Convener National Parliamentary Taskforce on SDGs shared that Pakistan affirmed its commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by adopting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as its own national development agenda through a unanimous National Assembly Resolution in 2016. SDG support units have been established at federal and provincial levels with the planning institutions (Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives and Provincial Planning and Development Departments) to guide SDGs implementation and monitoring its progress.



She appreciated the work of PAASAND particularly its project of school adaptation. CEO PAASAND proposed a sustained partnership between PAASAND and SDGs Secretariat to meet SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG17 (Partnerships for the Goals) through;

- 1: Adoption of Schools in Punjab to bring drop-outs back to school
- 2: Skill Enhancement of youth through Computer Literacy for exploring job opportunities for the marginalized youth



Lahore- Punjab

On 3rd January, 2023, Cross Culture Asia hosted Get Together in honour of Ms. Tasneem Rehmani, CEO PAASAND and Director of CCA (Cross Cultural Association) from California, USA. The CEO attended to promote women empowerment projects they started few years ago.

Other Meetings With

- Ghazanfar Jamal-ud-Din, Assistant Director Information, Communication & Research at U.S. Consulate Genral Lahore

In the meeting, the CEO learned about the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) of the U.S. Department of State's. She was informed that through short-term visits to the United States, current and emerging foreign leaders in a variety of fields experience the United States firsthand and cultivates lasting relationships with their American counterparts. Professional meetings reflect the participants' professional interests and support the foreign policy goals of the United States. CEO PAASAND shared that she has hosted some IVLP participants and the love the home hospitality component of this program.