

Remarks of Ambassador Richard Olson
at the Dawn Agricultural Expo
April 4, 2013
U.S. Pavilion Exposition

As delivered

Assalam-u-alaikum.

It is an honor to participate in the Dawn Agricultural Expository and I'm grateful to have this opportunity to speak about the strong relationship the United States and Pakistan, which is especially manifest in the agricultural sector. Many countries' sustainable economic growth begins with a strong agricultural base.

The agricultural industry contributes over 20 percent of Pakistan's GDP and employs 46 percent of Pakistan's workforce. Pakistan has a long and distinguished history in progressive agricultural research and development dating back to the Green Revolution of the 1950s and 1960s when high-yielding grains were introduced.

Today at the Dawn Agri-Expo, we have an opportunity to see some of the new technologies and development projects that international donors, private-sector companies, and Pakistani government offices are implementing together. All of us are committed to creating jobs, increasing farmer incomes, and improving Pakistan's food security.

To accomplish these goals, the United States with the Pakistan government and private sector partners, has made available over \$230 million since 2009 to fund projects that support economic growth and agriculture, including the Government of Pakistan's efforts to reform and modernize the agricultural sector, its practices, and policies. We work through the Government of Pakistan and private sector partners.

U.S. programs are enhancing agricultural productivity, offering technical assistance to agriculture professionals, funding equipment and research, developing new disease-resistant and high-yielding seed varieties, working to control animal diseases, building roads and canals, funding irrigation and tube well replacement projects, and facilitating efforts to find better-paying markets for agricultural products – both domestically and abroad.

Our efforts have resulted in over 800,000 farmer families increasing their incomes since October 2009. Through other U.S.-funded efforts, 12,000 farmers in Balochistan have increased their incomes by 40 percent by upgrading their farming practices and increasing agricultural product sales. Additionally, 31,000 people in Punjab and Sindh have received training in dairy-related operations and about 120,000 cattle have been vaccinated for Foot and Mouth Disease.

New projects are addressing water conservation by identifying alternative irrigation practices to use water more effectively and efficiently. These programs will irrigate an additional one million acres that can be utilized to improve agricultural production. The U.S. government will also work with the Pakistan government and private sector to implement dairy programs that will double milk production per cow by 2017.

In addition, value-chain improvement projects will significantly reduce post-harvest losses, increase farmer incomes, and create more jobs. Agribusiness projects will provide funding and training to empower more people to create new businesses.

The U.S. government believes that Pakistan's long-term and sustainable agricultural development depends on a vibrant private sector. This in turn will require energy, where the U.S. has been an important partner for Pakistan. At the same time, Pakistan can address its water use policies to encourage more efficient irrigation systems and watershed conservation. The U.S. government will continue to work with other donors to support power sector reforms and adopt new irrigation alternatives for Pakistan to realize a more productive economy.

In the United States we have found it useful to expand our agricultural export base. Over 66% of Pakistan's agricultural export value comes from exports of only two products: rice and raw cotton. There are great opportunities for Pakistan to diversify its agricultural export base. Both USAID and the U.S. Department of Agriculture are working with fishery, livestock, and horticulture companies to reduce production costs, increase productivity, and eliminate post harvest losses.

Additionally, one of the greatest benefits of our assistance programs over the past 30 years has been the linkages created among our countries' institutions. U.S. and Pakistani agricultural scientists have a long history of collaboration in research and information exchanges.

Pakistan is the largest recipient of Fulbright Fellowships in the world, and we strongly encourage applications in agricultural disciplines. In 2013, the United States will sponsor over 900 academic program fellows and over 530 professional program participants in various exchange programs. We are working to further those linkages through USAID's Centers for Advanced Studies program that will specifically connect the University of Agriculture Faisalabad with the finest agricultural research in the United States.

Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. agricultural universities specializing in agricultural research have worked closely with Pakistani universities and government research scientists to introduce better-yielding crop varieties. Through these exchanges, we build lasting relationships that benefit both countries.

One key element of our assistance effort is to encourage greater private-sector involvement. USAID's "Entrepreneurs Program" focuses on raising incomes of women in small and medium size businesses. Our Dairy Project is working closely with Nestle Pakistan to support small dairy producers in southern Punjab. USAID's Agribusiness Project is supporting horticulture and livestock businesses to increase incomes and employment. When I was here on November 27, I had the privilege to meet some of the ladies whose lives have been transformed by this project.

This summer, we also plan to launch private equity funds which will draw on contributions from USAID. These funds will increase Pakistani businesses' access to financing that will help them expand their businesses. Agribusiness figures prominently in the list of investment sectors.

I want to thank Dawn once again for this opportunity to exchange ideas and information that will support Pakistan's agricultural growth and U.S.-Pakistan economic ties. I encourage all of you to stop by the booths of our implementing partners and talk with our Embassy staff about U.S. agricultural assistance programs in Pakistan.

Thank you. Khuda hafez.