



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION ISLAMABAD

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Press Release

Creating more jobs and a better working environment for Pakistani women

AUSTRALIA LAUNCHES WOMEN'S-ONLY FOOTWEAR PRODUCTION LINE IN LAHORE

The Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Margaret Adamson today inaugurated a dedicated footwear production line for women at Footlib, a local manufacturer in Lahore.

The initiative, funded by the Australian Government through its Market Development Facility (MDF), aims to increase women's workforce participation and support an internationally competitive footwear sector in Pakistan.

Inaugurating the stitching line High Commissioner Adamson said, "I congratulate Pakistan footwear manufacturers in pioneering improved productivity in the industry by empowering women, and encourage other industries to follow this example. Currently only 25 percent of women are employed in Pakistan."

Footlib CEO and Pakistan Footwear Manufacturers Association's (PFMA) Chairman Waseem Zakaria thanked the Australian Government for its support saying, "We believe employing women is good for business. A dedicated production line helps women learn from their peers, and offers them a comfortable environment. This initiative is bringing value to our business and contributes towards making Pakistan a more internationally competitive footwear making destination."

The MDF is the Australian Government's AU\$9.8 million flagship private sector investment program in Pakistan. Since 2014, Australia has partnered with 28 Pakistani businesses in the leather, horticulture and dairy sectors. MDF currently has partnerships with 27 businesses in Pakistan and is aiming to expand to 42 partnerships by the middle of 2017.

The MDF has so far improved lives of 2300 women and increased women's income collectively by an estimated PKR 55 million.

Further information on Footlib's partnerships can be found here: XXX

For more information please contact:

Hira Nafees Shah, Market Development Facility

Telephone: 0346 8558080; E-mail: Hira.Shah@CardnoMDF.org

Australian High Commission Media and Public Diplomacy Officer

Telephone: 051 8355422; E-mail: media.islm@dfat.gov.au