



## AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION ISLAMABAD

20 October 2015

### Press Release

#### **Enhanced Nutrition for Mothers and Children in Balochistan**

Australian High Commissioner, Margaret Adamson and the Government of Balochistan today launched the Balochistan Nutrition Program for Mothers and Children at a ceremony in Quetta.

The Program will focus on improving nutrition for children, pregnant and lactating women and will be implemented in seven districts of the province over three years at a cost of approximately PKR 1.5 billion. The Balochistan Government will co-finance the program with a commitment of PKR 298.2 million.

Pakistan has one of the highest rates of maternal child mortality. One in 11 children die before their fifth birthday. Nearly half of all children under five in Pakistan are chronically undernourished. Under nutrition is estimated to decrease Pakistan's GDP by 2-3 per cent and equates to billions of lost rupees every year.

The Balochistan Nutrition Program for Mothers and Children is funded through Australia's AUD39 million partnership with the World Bank Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Nutrition, which aims to reduce malnutrition during the first thousand days of life with a particular focus on women, girls and the poorest families across Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Ms Adamson said the Australian Government was also investing in Pakistan's human development to improve education and health, particularly for women and girls, including school feeding programs, and adapting Australia's agriculture investments to improve nutrition and water and sanitation.

"Australia's strong commitment to improving nutritional services across Pakistan was further heightened during Foreign Minister Julie Bishop's recent visit to Pakistan where she announced AUD1 million for additional technical assistance to strengthen Pakistan's capacity to improve nutrition," Ms Adamson said.

The Australian Government partnered with the World Bank to establish the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Nutrition in June 2013. The UK Department for International Development has also recently joined the Trust Fund.

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