



Australian High Commission
Pakistan



Press Release

AUSTRALIA ANNOUNCES FUNDING TO IMPROVE NUTRITION IN PAKISTAN

The Australian Government today announced additional support worth one million dollars to the Government of Pakistan and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) Pakistan to improve nutrition, eliminate hunger and attain food security by fortifying food.

The announcement followed the official launch of a strategy, which has support from the WFP Pakistan, the National Fortification Alliance (NFA) and the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (MNHSRC) and aims to layout key actions for overcoming the micronutrient deficiencies in Pakistan known as “hidden hunger”. The strategy states that the addition of vitamins and minerals to common foods is an effective, affordable and safe measure to lower the burden of micronutrient deficiencies.

According to the National Nutrition Survey of 2011, more than half of women and two thirds of children in Pakistan are suffering from micronutrient deficiencies. This is a serious public health problem, and it results in slow physical and cognitive development in children, inferior school performance and decreased productivity in adults. The problem imposes on Pakistan an annual economic burden of around 3.5 billion dollars, equivalent to around 2% of Pakistan’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The Honourable Minister of State for National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination, Mrs. Saira Afzal Tarar, endorsed the National Fortification Strategy, acknowledging the efforts of the Government of Australia, the NFA and the WFP Pakistan. Tarar said that the “interventions proposed in the Food Fortification Strategy are in line with the Government’s priorities to improve status of nutrition for its people. The Ministry of Nutrition Health Services, Regulations and Coordination is working in close liaison with its valued partners to eliminate hunger, attain food security and improved nutrition by achieving the goals of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2.”

Mr. Jurek Juszcyk, the Acting High Commissioner to Pakistan, said “the Australian Government has supported the National and Provincial Fortification Alliances of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh since June 2015. Today I am proud to announce that we are extending our support for another year”.

WFP Pakistan Country Director and Representative, Mr. Finbarr Curran said, “the Government of Australia has been a proactive partner in working with us and the Government in addressing food security and nutrition in Pakistan. We are very confident that this wide-ranging food fortification strategy will have a positive and long term impact on the economic development of Pakistan”.

For more information, please contact:

Mahira Afzal, WFP Islamabad: +92 345 855 9333, mahira.afzal@wfp.org; - Bushra Naz, Australian High Commission Islamabad: +92 51 8355422, bushra.naz@dfat.gov.au