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Media Release

AUSTRALIA'S AMBASSADOR FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS VISITS PAKISTAN

Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls, Dr Sharman Stone, arrived in Pakistan today for a three-day visit to exchange views on gender equality and the rights of women and girls.

"Australia has made gender equality a key objective of our foreign policy because we recognise the benefits that flow to whole communities from women's full and equal participation," Dr Stone said.

"Gender equality is not only a basic human right, but also a fundamental basis for a peaceful, innovative, prosperous and inclusive world. It drives growth and creates jobs everywhere."

"I am excited to be here talking about such important issues with Pakistani friends at a time when both Australia and Pakistan are serving on the United Nations Human Rights Council, and flowing from Sustainable Development Goal no. 5 and our two countries' commitments under the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women" Dr Stone said.

During her visit, Dr Stone will launch a A\$6 million sexual and reproductive health program bringing family planning services to thousands of women living in areas bordering Afghanistan.

"These services are critical to empowering women and reducing maternal and child mortality. By helping women stay healthy, we help them participate equally in society, education and the economy," Dr Stone said.

Welcoming Dr Stone's visit, the Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Margaret Adamson, stressed Australia's long-term and high-level commitment to gender goals.

"In Pakistan, we are actively supporting gender equality, including efforts to end violence against women and girls," Ms Adamson said.

During her visit, Dr Stone will also launch a gender strategy for the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) in Pakistan. She will meet with senior officials, including the Minister for Human Rights and the Foreign Secretary.

As Ambassador for Women and Girls, Dr Stone promotes gender equality in Australia and internationally. Prior to her appointment as Ambassador in 2017, she had a distinguished 20-year career in the Australian Parliament.

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