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Report – Web-Talk

“Pakistan- Tanzania Ties”

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The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized a Web Talk on “Pak-Tanzania Ties’ under ISSI’s Distinguished Lecture Series today, which was delivered by H.E Muhammad Saleem High Commissioner of Pakistan to Tanzania. Ms. Tanzeela Qambrani, Member Provincial Assembly Sindh also took part. Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General ISSI was also present on the occasion. The talk is first in the series of talks the Centre will be having under its “Engage Africa Series”.

During her opening remarks, Ms. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA said that during the last two decades, Africa has made remarkable progress, as African economies are amongst the fastest-growing economies in the world. Hence, Africa has rightly earned the title of the “Continent of the Future.” Realizing Africa's immense potential, the government of Pakistan has been focusing on establishing a sustainable partnership with the African continent through economic diplomacy under its “Engage Africa ” policy. She went on to say that one of the fundamental objectives of establishing CAMEA at the ISSI was to focus on identifying areas of mutual interest between Pakistan and Africa in keeping with Pakistan’s Engage Africa policy.

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, said that the Government of Pakistan is committed to working and promoting ties with Africa. He said one of the high priority areas for Pakistan’s Foreign Office is engaging with the African continent. In this regard a number of events on Pakistan-Africa ties have been held at ISSI. He also stated that Tanzania - an important country, with almost 30% more area than Pakistan and a population which is a third of Pakistan’s population – has considerable potential. There is a genuine feeling of goodwill between Pakistan and Tanzania, he added.

Ambassador Muhammad Saleem said that Tanzania is an important country and the most populous country in South-east Africa with a consumer market of 60 million offering transit trade route to its six landlocked neighbours. He mentioned that the headquarters of the East African Community (EAC), along with the EAC Legislative Assembly, the EAC Court and EAC Business Council are all based in Tanzania. He mentioned that Pakistan shares close ties with Tanzania which can be evidenced in how it established its High Commission in Tanzania in 1967, soon after Tanzania’s independence.

He commended the ISSI for arranging such events and playing an effective role in creating greater awareness and information sharing. He urged the ISSI to consider contributing to the capacity building of the EAC Secretariat. He remarked that the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AFCFTA) is a substantial opportunity for Pakistan to tap into the African markets. He called Tanzania and EAC Custom Union as gateways to exploit the business, trade and investment opportunities in Africa.

Ms. Tanzeela Qambrani started her remarks by describing her current designation and appreciated the Pakistani community which she said had given her an opportunity to be part of the provincial legislative assembly without any discrimination which Black people face all over the world. expressed happiness that Pakistan has started connecting with the African continent and said that it is surprising that there has not been much focus on Africa in the past in Pakistan even though the former holds great opportunities. While talking about Pak-Africa relations she said that Engage Africa is a great initiative by the Government of Pakistan. She said Pakistan has very close bonds with Africa, especially with Tanzania and was hopeful that this connection would be fruitful for both countries.

The remarks were followed by a discussion. Regarding how Pakistan and Tanzania can bolster their ties, Ambassador Saleem highlighted the enormous scope in trade and investment for Pakistan in Tanzania. While talking about the US\$160 million annual bilateral trade, he said that Pakistan's exports mainly included cement, textiles, rice, consumer products, heavy machinery, tractors and farming equipment. He said that Pakistan's imports from Tanzania mainly included tea, raw cotton, tobacco, edible oils and tanning materials but with a lot of potential to expand the volume of two-way trade.