



Press Release

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Zardari-Frattini meeting: Evk2Cnr example of cooperation between Italy and Pakistan

ROME -- "Italy and Pakistan have a special relationship that arises from K2, the mountain of Italians, and ranges over culture, science, sustainable development and environment. A very good example of this relationship is the work of EvK2Cnr Committee that has been operating for years in the Karakorum valleys with important and multidisciplinary cooperation projects". These were the words of Minister Franco Frattini who welcomed yesterday the President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari at the Farnesina palace. They visited a photographic exhibition dedicated to the historical collaboration between Italy and Pakistan with Agostino Da Polenza, EvK2Cnr president, before attending a meeting with the main stakeholders of the Italian industry interested in an economic-commercial collaboration with Pakistan, in particular in the fields of energy, agriculture, textiles, agribusiness and marble.

Minister Frattini opened the meeting bringing the activity of the EvK2Cnr Committee as an example. EvK2Cnr, founded by the legendary conqueror of Mt. K2 Ardito Desio, is recognized as one of the main actors of the cooperation between Italy and Pakistan and today is the promoter of one of the most important and holistic development projects in the Pakistan Northern Areas: the Seed project.

The meeting in Rome, hosted by Minister Frattini, was attended by a Pakistani delegation led by Zardari with the Minister for Investment Saleem H. Mandiwalla; an Italian delegation with the Ambassador of Italy in Pakistan, Vincenzo Prati, and Da Polenza; and an industry delegation led by Paolo Zegna, vice-president of Confindustria for Internationalisation. Also the Group Sace, one of the main actors of the credit management in Italy, and Simest, controlled by the Ministry of Economic Development and participated by the most important Italian banks and private companies, attended the meeting aiming at promoting the development of the Italian business abroad.

Before the meeting, held in the International Conference Room, Zardari, Frattini and Da Polenza, accompanied by Adolfo Urso, vice-minister of Economic Development, and Valerio Pietrangelo, expert of Pakistani culture and EvK2Cnr collaborator, visited the photographic exhibition organized by the EvK2Cnr Committee in the near Room of Mosaics. The exhibition is a preview of a wider exhibition which will be inaugurated next December in Islamabad.

The exhibition resumed 100 years of collaboration and friendship between Italy and Pakistan. It included two big wide-angle photographs realized by Vittorio Sella during the Duke of Abruzzi's expedition to Karakorum in 1909. A third panel illustrates the activities and the projects carried out over the years by EvK2Cnr in these mountain regions, visited by many pioneering explorations realized by the Duke and his team.

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This collaboration between Italy and Pakistan challenges every day the prejudice but also the difficulties of working in a region which is politically difficult but offers also great opportunities. For this reason the collaboration is supposed to continue and to become even more intense thanks to the new EvK2Cnr's project: Seed (Social Economic and Environmental Development), signed on September 18th, 2009 in front of the press by Dr. Marco Marchetti, the Italian representative of the PIDSA technical support unit, at the premises of the Economic Affairs Division of the Government of Pakistan.

For years to come, Seed will contribute to the economic, social and environmental development in the Northern Areas. This by the implementation of the Central Karakorum National Park, an area of 10.000 square kilometres with a buffer zone of the same extension where one million people of Islam religion, Shiites, Sunnites and Ishmaelites live together. The project will be funded with a part of the ex debt of Pakistan towards Italy, swapped and by consent finalized to useful projects for the socio-economic and cultural development of the region, as well as initiatives against the poverty. These actions will also enhance information and experience exchanges among Italian and Pakistani schools, universities, juridical and territorial management systems.

This is the most important long-term and comprehensive initiative in this region. Within a year, 36 projects will start, integrating each other in the framework of a systemic action. Scientific, cultural, industrial and environmental projects which range from gemstones manufacturing, to high altitude atmospheric monitoring stations, from transformation plants of the fruit to cultivation of local products with sustainable technologies, from enterprise development, for example in the tourism sector, to environmental protection, ending with education. A few days ago the first entrepreneurial joint venture between Pakistani and western entrepreneurs was registered at the premises of Gilgit, capital of the region: it was born thanks to the Seed Project.

"Mt. K2, symbol of Pakistan, is certainly the most beautiful and difficult 8000 of the Earth. But the challenge of the development, welfare and peace in the Karakorum region is not less fascinating and difficult than climbing Mt. K2" said Da Polenza who knows very well the "mountain of Italians" because he climbed it personally and led three successfully expeditions on its slopes.

DOWNLOAD PHOTOS

Signing Seed agreement 1 (from the left: Italian Ambassador in Pakistan Vincenzo Prati, Bastian Flury, Project director of the SEED Project, the Vice Chancellor of the KIU Najma Najam, the EvK2Cnr representative in Pakistan Riaz Ul Hassan)

http://www.montagna.org/montagnaftp/evk2cnr/Firma_Seed_1.jpg

Signing Seed agreement 2 (from the left: Bastian Flury, Project director of the SEED Project, the Vice Chancellor of the KIU Najma Najam, the co-director of the TSU for the Debt Marco Marchetti, the EvK2Cnr representative in Pakistan Riaz Ul Hassan)

http://www.montagna.org/montagnaftp/evk2cnr/Firma_Seed_2.jpg

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