



## Press Release

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### **A special event in the shade of Karakorum to mark Pakistan - Italy friendship and collaboration**

**ISLAMABAD, Pakistan – The Islamabad National Art Gallery hosted yesterday evening the official opening of the three-day event celebrating the century-long friendship between Italy and Pakistan, held before a large audience in the shade of the magnificent Karakorum mountains.**

The EvK2Cnr Committee and the Embassy of Italy, in collaboration with the Karakorum International University and the Alpine Club of Pakistan, inaugurated yesterday the photo exhibit: "100 years after: on the route of Duke of Abruzzi expedition to Karakorum" to commemorate one hundred years of friendship and collaboration between Pakistan and Italy, and to pay a tribute to the epic story of the first Italian mountaineering expedition organized by Duke of Abruzzi in 1909.

Agostino Da Polenza, EvK2Cnr Committee President, Vincenzo Prati, H.E. Ambassador of Italy, Nazir Sabir, President of Alpine Club of Pakistan and the Senator Nayyar Hussein Bukhari, Chief Guest of the event, cut the ribbon and officially opened the exhibition to the public. Senator Bukhari, Leader of the House, while addressing the inaugural ceremony, said that Italy and Pakistan have a special relationship, extended beyond continents and identified by the symbol of mount K2.

Taqueer Nasir, General director of the Pakistan National Council of Arts, welcomed the audience praising all the Italian activities in the field of culture, environment management, scientific research and sustainable development. He also appreciated the efforts made by EvK2Cnr Committee and Italian Embassy for organizing the exhibition and the other events.

Ambassador Prati, during his speech, said: "We are proudly celebrating a new beginning of the century-old friendship with Pakistan in the shade of mountains. Italy is starting a number of important projects to promote the Gilgit-Baltistan region, under the coordination of EvK2Cnr, on economic, environmental, educational and cultural fronts that would open a new chapter, for another hundred years of Pakistan-Italy friendship".

The Ambassador underlined that the friendship between Italy and Pakistan has been continuously growing, with a closer and closer scientific collaboration that extends to social and socio-economics issues, now aiming also to a greater sustainable environmental cooperation.

The exhibition went on with the screening of the film-documentary entitled "Challenge to K2 - The Italian's

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Mountain”, produced by the Italian National Television, that shows EvK2Cnr activities in the Northern Areas of Pakistan.

The five-year project Seed (Social Economic, Environment Development of the Central Karakorum National Park), was also presented by its project director Mr. Bastian Flury together with Dr. Ahsanullah Mir, registrar of the Karakorum International University in Gilgit, the main partner of the project. The Seed Project aims at an integrative development of the region through supporting the implementation of and management of Cknp and improving local wellbeing and livelihood options.

“For more than twenty years – Agostino Da Polenza said -, the EvK2Cnr Committee has been furthering this exploratory, mountaineering and scientific tradition in Karakorum, through its collaboration initiatives and, in more recent years, a series of development cooperation projects. Seed is the most important international cooperation project devoted to the safeguard and development of the Karakorum region. It is an experience that has astounded both myself and my co-workers. Pakistan is a difficult and mostly poor country, but it's strong, like its land and its people. I will continue to admire and promote Pakistan, which is visibly marching towards the future”.

Among its many activities, EvK2Cnr Committee has also been committed in protecting mountain environment and promoting this idea among a large public. It's also keen on spreading the importance of cultural heritage along with scientific research and development, by the means of highly communicative programmes, collaborations and interactions.

The three-days Italian gala also includes a film festival to be held today and tomorrow, December 15 and 16, with the screening of six documentaries dedicated to Pakistan mountains. These films include Nazir Sabir's 'To the ends of Himalayas', Donagh Coleman's 'Stone pastures', Manzoor Hussain's 'Meeting the Paiju challenge', Carlo Rossi's 'Quei momenti così intensi', Guido Perrini's 'Ten - A Cameraman's Tale', and another of Nazir Sabir's docu-films: 'Everest - men against nature'.

“This mountain film festival has been our dream for many years – said Nazir Sabir -. Pakistan, and especially Islamabad, deserves this type of international events. Alpine Club has sought to promote mountaineering and respect for the mountain environment since its foundation. Collaboration between Italy and Pakistan was born on the mountains 100 years ago and today Italy makes a major contribution to Karakorum, for example by assisting us in formulating new policies, for example, the Central Karakorum National Park, in training new climbers and implementing environmental projects like “Keep Baltoro Clean”.

Besides the film festival, another exhibition entitled “Valleys of Memory; Ancient People, Sites and Images of Swat” will be held within this event. This exhibition is the result of an Italian archaeological mission in and around the Swat valley, organised by the Italian Institute of African & Oriental Studies (Isiao) in collaboration with Department of Archaeology & Museums, a part of Pakistan's Ministry of Culture.

The exhibitions, both hosted by the National Art Gallery, will be open from December 15th 2009 to January 31st 2010.

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**More photos on:** <http://www.montagna.org/it/content/100-years-after-italia-e-pakistan-uniti-allombra-del-karakorum>

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