



European Union



For Immediate Release

Appreciation Ceremony for European Union funded Young Parliamentary Associates

23rd October 2014

Islamabad: The project "Improving Parliamentary Performance in Pakistan" (IP3) funded by the European Union held an Appreciation Ceremony in Islamabad today to recognize the work of its 27 Young Parliamentary Associates (YPAs) in support to Pakistan Federal Parliament.

After rigorous recruitment and training, the YPAs have been deployed to committees, departments and wings of the National Assembly and Senate, including the Speaker's office and the office of the Leader of the Opposition for a period of 15 months, providing support and research assistance to the committees of both Houses and individual parliamentarians.

The YPA initiative aims to engage young professionals with a suitable academic background and strong interest in parliamentary business to work within the political system of Pakistan and contribute to the functioning of its legislative institutions. From 2013 to 2016, a total of 100 talented youth will be deployed in the Federal Parliament.

The initiative paves the way not only for opening the Parliament to the Pakistani youth and enhancing the public perception of the institution, but also for developing a group of young professionals with specific skills useful to the different parliamentary support institutions.

At the occasion, the IP3 team leader Ms. Niamh O'Connor thanked the National Assembly and the Senate as well as the YPA's for making the YPA programme a huge success. She further stated that **"The YPAs have been an enormous assistance to the Parliament of Pakistan and have represented IP3 excellently in their efficient manner of working. The first group broke the glass ceiling for the 2nd group of YPAs and have been superb mentors and advocates to them as they began their work"**.

During the Ceremony, the hard work and commitment of the YPAs was lauded. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to the YPAs by Honorable Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker, National Assembly of Pakistan and H.E. Lars-Gunnar Wigemark, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan.

In his opening remarks, Senator Farhatullah Babar commented **"The work of the YPAs in assisting the Senate is much appreciated. The EU funded YPA initiative is also a reflection of our joint belief, purpose and commitment to strengthening parliamentary democracy in Pakistan"**

Sharing his views, H.E. Lars-Gunnar Wigemark said **"The Parliament is the foundation of every democracy. If it is transparent, responsible and accountable this institution will**

enable the people to realize their potential and fulfil their aspirations. The EU strongly commends the Pakistan Parliament for its openness to the bright youth and future of Pakistan. Our partnership with the Pakistan Parliament grows stronger as we believe that Pakistan's democratic development and progress lies in the strength of this essential institution”.

During his keynote address, the **Honourable Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq** praised the efforts of the YPA's and noted that the YPA programme provided a great opportunity for the fresh graduates recruited under this initiative to contribute to the country especially vis-à-vis the strengthening of democratic processes. He also commended the efforts of the EU-funded IP3 programme in providing this important human resource to the Parliament. He wished the outgoing YPAs the very best for the future.

The Ceremony was well attended by Parliamentarians from the National Assembly and Senate, Ambassadors of EU Member States and EU Dignitaries, Members of Pakistan's Secretariats and family member of the YPAs. The media and other stakeholders also participated in the event.

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About IP3

The Improving Parliamentary Performance in Pakistan (IP3) project is funded by the European Union (EU) and is being delivered by a group of international and local partners led by the British Council. Other partners in the project include Democracy Reporting International (DRI); Westminster Foundation for Democracy; Pakistan Institute of legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) and Research Society of International Law, Pakistan (RSIL).

The main objective of IP3 is to strengthen the parliament as an institution and to support both committees and individual parliamentarians in the three main areas of their work: legislation, oversight and representation. The project also aims to build the capacity of parliamentary secretariats so that they are able to provide better support for committee work.

IP3 is a non-partisan entity and works with parliamentarians without regard for their political affiliations or whether they are on Treasury or Opposition benches.

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