

PPAF confers Amtul Raqeeb Award on International Women's Day



H.E. Mr. Stefano Pontecorvo, Ambassador, Embassy of Italy, Ms. Roshan Khursheed Bharucha- Chairperson PPAF, Qazi Azmat Isa, CEO PPAF conferred the award on seven PPAF-supported community members from across Pakistan at a ceremony held in Islamabad on International Women's Day.

Islamabad, March 6, 2017 – Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), organized Amtul Raqeeb Award ceremony for the female community members engaged in PPAF supported community development initiatives across the country in Islamabad to mark International Women's Day 2017. This year the award was conferred upon seven deserving recipients, whose contribution to PPAF-supported communities in self-advancement and socio-economic development of the area they inhabit is invaluable.

Mr. Stefano Pontecorvo, the Ambassador of Italy in Pakistan was the chief guest at the occasion. He said, "I am glad that the money is going to people and initiatives that actually make a noticeable profound difference. And for this I am very grateful to PPAF. I am overwhelmed by the examples that these women are setting. I have an unshakeable belief that women are a lot better than men. Its women that change the status quo and if they don't, then the men are going nowhere."

Ms. Roshan Khursheed Bharucha, Chairperson PPAF, said “It’s an honor to be a part of what PPAF is doing for Pakistan, specially the women of Pakistan. It is these women, and women like them, who through their strength, courage, compassions and capabilities have made, and are making a difference, not only in their lives, but the lives of so many others.”

PPAF held the 1st Amtul Raqeeb Award ceremony on March 8, 2012. So far 33 women and 2 men have been conferred with Amtul Raqeeb award during the last five years. Hailing from different regions of the country, this year’s Amtul Raqeeb Award recipients included Bibi Toseera (Killa Saifullah), Zahida Bibi (Lasbela), and Saleema Bibi (Panjgur) in Balochistan.

Shamshera Afzal (Chitral) and Sabeeha Naz (Nowshera) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Zulekhan Bibi (Tharparkar) in Sindh and Saira Tasleem (RajanPur) in Punjab. These women belonging to far flung areas of the country were acknowledged for their courage in the face of adversity and becoming role models in their respective communities.

The selection criteria for this year’s event brought into focus women from the PPAF supported community institutions with a poverty score card between 0-23 performing outstandingly in any one of the four main areas/sectors comprising Primary Health Care, Girls education, livelihood and entrepreneurship, CPI (water /energy).

Speaking on the occasion, Qazi Azmat Isa, CEO of PPAF, said, “Women are the backbone of any nation. And the women here today are great examples of self-awareness and empowerment, to drive themselves and their surroundings towards a better standard of living. PPAF has vowed to sustain this initiative of uplifting Pakistani communities.”

Samia Liaquat Ali Khan, Group Head Compliance & Quality Assurance PPAF said, “PPAF is focusing on those Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that directly impact health, wellbeing and prosperity of our communities. These include maternal and child health, girl education, women empowerment and equality amongst others. The importance of these SDGs is conveyed by the Community Resource Persons (CRPs) who are our activists for supporting the community to develop and implement solutions to their problems.”

PPAF instituted the award in recognition of courage of Amtul Raqeeb, a program officer at Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP), Quetta. Amtul was killed along with two other colleagues on the way back to Quetta after performing her duties in Mastung on January 24, 2011. Her immense contribution in capacity building of local traditional birth attendants resulted in a significant reduction of the mother-child mortality rate in the inaccessible regions of Balochistan. PPAF’s approach is to develop representative, inclusive, transparent and accountable institutions of the poor. The catalytic role of women in program design, delivery and impact is at the core of all interventions. Access and opportunities for women are enabled through microloans, asset transfer and livelihoods development.