



GLOBAL COMMUNITY URGED TO HELP END TERRORISM IN ALL ITS FORMS

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Islamabad: Global community was urged to join hands for elimination of terrorism in all its forms at a luncheon organised in honour of France-Pakistan Parliamentary Friendship Group on Wednesday.

France-Pakistan Parliamentary Friendship Group was established with a view to strengthen the inter-parliamentary links and promote parliamentary cooperation. Chairman France Pakistan Friendship Group Senator Pascal Allizard, Vice President of French Senate Senator Francois Carton, Senator Patricia Morhet-Richard, French Ambassador Martine Dorance, Nathalie Dupont represented the French side. Pakistani side included Minister of State and Chairperson BISP MNA Marvi Memon, Lt Gen (r) Abdul Qayyum, Senator Nuzhat Sadiq and Senator Khalida Parveen.

Speaking on this occasion, Marvi Memon said that Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with France. "Pakistan believes that peace and stability is essential for global prosperity. Terrorism and extremism, the biggest of all threats to global peace can only be countered by closer cooperation amongst stakeholders," she said.

She highlighted that poverty anywhere is threat to peace. She introduced the initiatives taken by the BISP and said that E-Commerce is an initiative of BISP that aims to take the poor out

of financial crisis by providing them access to national and international market. "The products of these marginalised women are now available online. Global community can lend hand towards poverty reduction by supporting these poor women artisans." The Chairperson BISP sought cooperation of French companies through Corporate Social Responsibility.

Senator Pascal Allizard stated that it's time to reinvigorate bilateral relations. He pledged French cooperation in education, health, economy and terrorism. He added that it is high time to remove all the loopholes and move together towards a better safe future.

Senator Francoise Cartron stated that lack of education is the core reason behind terrorism and both the sides need to put in serious efforts in education to get rid of extremist mind set. The French ambassador highlighted the bilateral cooperation and emphasised the importance of friendship group in the promotion of bilateral relations.

Parliamentarians from Pakistan appreciated French partnership in defence and commerce and highlighted that Pakistan is keen to take the relationship with France to the next level of long-term institutional cooperation. Parliamentarians acknowledged the French contributions towards global peace.

The delegation of French Senators also visited Higher Education Commission (HEC) Secretariat. Briefing the visitors, HEC Chairman Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed said that Pakistan has a large population of which a big percentage comprise youth which is a great asset for the nation. He also informed the



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delegation about the role and responsibilities of HEC.

Appreciating the French Government, people and higher education institutions for their academic collaboration with Pakistan in the shape of doctoral and post-doctoral opportunities, he said that France is providing a number of opportunities to Pakistani scholars and students. "France is one of the prime countries where Pakistani scholars are sent for PhD," he added.

The chairman said that Pakistan and France have agreements for collaboration in higher education sector, adding that the French Embassy has been helping HEC in Need-based Scholarship Programme. He said Pakistan has 178 public and private sector universities, but a lot needs to be done to further improve quality of education for country's youth.

Referring to the plan of setting up a French university in Pakistan, he said the two sides have agreed to initiate work on it. He expressed a desire to develop university level collaboration between the two countries alongside exchange of students and faculty under joint programmes. "France has remarkable achievement in industrial growth and HEC would like to launch industrial-based research projects with France so that Pakistan could also efficiently cope with its industrial challenges," Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed stressed.

The French delegates said that the purpose of their visit was to discuss issues related to bilateral cooperation in higher education. They said it is good sign that Pakistan and France have a strong basis of collaboration which can be further expanded. Appreciating Pakistani

students studying in France, they said that those students were recently invited to visit the French Senate. They also met many Pakistanis in various fields and gained a useful understanding of the country.

They said the French Senate has a Pak-French Friendship Group which remains active to find new areas of bilateral relations. "When we discussed the relations between the two countries, the topic of education occupied first place," a Senator said. The Senators informed the gathering of an upcoming exhibition in France, in which a group of Pakistani students will showcase Pakistan at the event.