

## Launching Ceremony of Research Study on "Assessment of Malnutrition (Stunting) in District Tharparkar"

### IOI President's Address

Banquet Hall, Chief Minister House, Karachi, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

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#### Introduction

As-salāmu ‘alaykum.

It is a great honour to join you in Karachi, Pakistan, for the Launching Ceremony of the Research Study on "Assessment of Malnutrition (Stunting) in District Tharparkar". It is a particular honour to be here in Karachi, because it is my first visit to Pakistan as President of the International Ombudsman Institute, or IOI, and indeed, I am the first President of the IOI to visit Pakistan.

I warmly acknowledge the presence here today of the Chief Minister Sindh; the Minister of Health & Population Welfare; Chief Secretary Sindh; Chairman, Planning and Development Board Sindh; and the Honorable Federal Ombudsman of Pakistan and President of the Asian Ombudsman Association.

I take this opportunity to pay particular thanks to the Honorable Provincial Ombudsman Sindh and fellow member of the Global Board of Directors of the IOI, for so graciously welcoming me to your country; your province and your city. It is a great privilege and pleasure for me to be in Pakistan, a country of extraordinary culture and achievement.

#### The Research Study

In his work for the most fundamental of human rights for people most in need, Ombudsman Khan initiated a research study on "Assessment of Malnutrition (Stunting) in District Tharparkar".

The Research Study that is being launched today makes several important recommendations to improve outcomes for the people of Tharparkar. The Research Study has been undertaken in the context that access to food and nutrition is a fundamental right for the citizens of Pakistan as enshrined in the Constitution. The Research Study is, therefore, very obviously

an important example of the modern Ombudsman institution working for the most fundamental of human rights for people of the greatest need.

Ombudsman Khan, you are my valued colleague. But you are also my friend. Thank you for the deeply important work you have undertaken in the Research Study. The United Nations Resolution on Ombudsman and Mediator Institutions very specifically guarantees the role of Ombudsman to protect and promote human rights. I say to you that there could be no more obvious way for an Ombudsman anywhere in the world to put this role into practice, than to seek to remedy malnutrition and its harmful results. This is what the Research Study that is being launched today does – it seeks to make the lives of the people of Tharparkar better now and better for the future of their children. This surely is the Ombudsman institution at its finest.

### **The Regional Subsidy Program**

The IOI represents over two hundred Ombudsman, Mediator, Public Defender and National Human Rights Institutions from more than 100 countries worldwide across six global regions - Africa, Asia, the Australasian and Pacific, Europe, the Caribbean and Latin America and North America. The IOI undertakes a yearly Regional Subvention Program to support Ombudsman from every region of the world to undertake projects of special significance to the citizens that they serve. I could not be more pleased to observe that the Research Study that is being launched today was supported with a regional subvention payment.

### **IOI and Pakistan and Asian Region**

Upon being elected President of the IOI, I made a very specific commitment that I would promote the importance and significance of Asian Region Ombudsman, and I would do so in part by coming to the great countries of the Asian Region whenever I was honoured with an invitation to do so. In this context, I could not be more delighted to thank the President of the Asian Ombudsman Association and Federal Ombudsman, for his leadership in this enormously populous, deeply historic and culturally rich part of our world. Asian Ombudsman are especially important to me and I will serve you over the term of my Presidency.

### **Australian and Pakistan Relationship**

Before concluding, I want to recognize, as Western Australian Ombudsman, that Australia and Pakistan maintain very positive bilateral relations, including two-way trade in goods and services worth \$1.81 billion in 2021. Australia enjoys long-standing and growing ties with Pakistan, underpinned by deepening people-to-people links. Australia has maintained a resident mission in Pakistan since 1948.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, this report is a remarkable and landmark work, and a great testament to the work of the Provincial Ombudsman Sindh for the Province's vulnerable citizens. This report is not just relevant to Pakistan, but provides other Ombudsman around the world encouragement that their role in fundamental human rights is central to their work. For this leadership I thank Ombudsman Khan. I thank our other highly distinguished speakers for their commitment to this launching ceremony. Chief Minister, I thank you; you have invited us to your House for the launch of this report.

At the commencement of my address, I indicated to you that this is my first visit to Pakistan and the first visit of an IOI President to Pakistan. My friends, it will not be my last. I am deeply honoured that you have invited me to Karachi to join you in launching this vital report, and for your very kind invitation to join you today, I simply say this,

Bahut Shukriya.