

PRESS RELEASE



DATE: 25 June 2015

For immediate release

Vulnerable people should not be punished in government transition of NGO registration

The Pakistan Humanitarian Forum comprised of 57 leading international NGOs providing humanitarian and development assistance in Pakistan expresses their concern at the impact caused by the shift of NGO registration from Ministry of Finance Economic Affairs Division (EAD) to Ministry of Interior (MOI).

While welcoming any change that will provide legitimate status to INGOs in Pakistan and assurance to the government about their activities, PHF is concerned that no official directive formalising the change has been issued nor have they been given any guidance or indication on how to comply.

All PHF Members complied with the government's 2013 directive to register with EAD but only a few have received MOUs or interim permissions and most PHF members have had applications pending for nearly two and half years. They are concerned that their ability to continue providing social welfare to some of Pakistan's most needy people is being compromised.

"Our biggest concern is the impact this will have on nearly 19 million people with whom we work," said Khobaib Vahedy Director of Muslim Aid and acting Chair of the Forum. *"These are children whose families receive extra support during Ramadan, or food for malnourished children and mothers. These are displaced people living in camps and they should not be the ones who suffer because of a transition in governmental policy."*

PHF members are looking forward to working in cooperation with the government to quickly implement a new process.

"We recognise the responsibility of the government to oversee NGOs working in Pakistan and we support their determination to ensure there are no illegitimate

activities,” Vahedy said. “However, INGOs have over 12,000 Pakistani staff working to provide support to some of the poorest in our society. In this context, the activities of INGOs should be facilitated for the benefit of these vulnerable people in the country.”

PHF members hope that the government will clarify the situation, prioritise operations reaching vulnerable people, issue guidance on the status of current permissions, and consult with them on any new process being created.

Notes for Editors

About PHF

The Pakistan Humanitarian Forum (PHF) represents 57 International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) delivering humanitarian assistance and development projects in Pakistan.

The PHF was formed in June 2003 as a coordination forum, after needs for increased partnerships and information sharing between NGOs was identified during the earthquake in the northern areas in 2002. All the leading INGOs working in disaster management signed on to an informal membership.

Today the PHF is an informal coordinating forum that supports and facilitates the work of INGOs to effectively address the humanitarian and development needs across Pakistan. All PHF members are required to sign and adhere to the PHF code of conduct and in doing so commit to providing humanitarian and/or development assistance to the people of Pakistan based on need alone regardless of nationality, gender, background, political affiliations, or religious beliefs. Member organisations operate independently from political, economic, military or other objectives and will never knowingly – or through negligence – act as instruments of foreign policy of donor governments. PHF operates in a spirit of transparency, impartiality and cooperation, as defined by its vision, mission and mandate.

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