

**Note for Record**  
**May 1-8, 2014**

**By: Shoaib Sultan Khan**  
**May 21, 2014**

After visit to Harvard Kennedy School of Government at Cambridge, we boarded the train visiting New York and Washington DC to fulfill following engagements:

- May 1, 2014 0800 Breakfast Meeting at Acumen Fund at New York  
1230 Luncheon Meeting at Open Society Foundations at  
New York
- May 2, 2014 1400 Meeting with Vice President, World Bank South Asia Region  
Washington DC
- May 3, 2014 1700 Fund raising dinner at MCC Medical Clinic
- May 6, 2014 1230 Talk at IFPRI  
1700 Meeting with Azmat Isa at Starbuck  
1900 Dinner with Steve Rasmussen CGAP  
2200 Coffee with Prof. Akbar Ahmed
- May 7, 2014 1200 Talk at IFC  
1400 Luncheon Meeting at IFC
- May 8, 2014 1730 Tea with Pakistan Ambassador HE Jalil Abbas Jilani  
2000 Call on Ziad Allahdad, former Director of Operations,  
World Bank

The Acumen breakfast session with the headquarters staff generated a lively discussion on my talk. Director Batool Hassan who had organized the meeting on behalf of Jacqueline Novogratz, as she was abroad, wrote to me the following about the interaction I had at Acumen:

“It was a true pleasure having you in the office for breakfast. Afterward, many of our team members came up to comment how much they enjoyed hearing your speech and the depth of your comparative knowledge across the region. AKRSP, NRSP and RSPs are real examples of grassroots organisations that are reaching scale and sustaining. I personally found your stories of working with government and lessons from Dr. Akhter Hameed Khan fascinating and telling. It was a joy seeing you in person and I hope we see you again soon”.

I have written and circulated a separate note on my meeting with the Vice President of the Bank which was organized by Country Director Rachid Benmessaoud.

The IFPRI session attended by the Director and the staff where I met Dr. Sohail Malik who had moderated my talk at the Brown University 21 years ago which was organized by Iqbal Noorali, Chief Executive Officer of Aga Khan Foundation, USA. I remembered the same day Audrey Hepburn was speaking at the University, attended by nearly 2000 people. This was her last public appearance according to Sohail. Sohail also assured me that in my presentation also, people were standing in the room. The other old acquaintance I met was David Spielman who had worked at AKRSP. Director Paul Dorosh stayed on throughout the session and introduced me and invited David to give a full introduction of my work which he did with such affection and zeal that it left me totally overwhelmed with humility. Sohail sent the following email about the session:

“I want to thank you and Bajwa Sahib for the visit to IFPRI. Paul Dorosh joins me in extending the thanks of the entire DSG and Pakistan Program group. Your talk left my colleagues with a much better context of the poor and of the complexities of rural development. With your permission we would like to publish your talk as an IFPRI Pakistan Strategy Support Program Discussion Paper and disseminate it widely ”. (Attached).

In the coffee session with Azmat, I briefed him about my meeting with the Vice President and his willingness to support the RSP UC plan through PPAF. I requested him to ask US\$ 300 million a year for the next five years to implement the poverty reduction programme countrywide – the real mandate and mission of PPAF.

The dinner kindly arranged by Steve was a very pleasant affair enabling me to meet not only Greg Chen, Kabir from CGAP but also Zeba. Steve has always been most hospitable on my visits to DC.

Prof. Akbar Ahmed insisted on my visiting him even if it was late at night. So I took him on his words and rang his bell at 10.00 pm but Zeenat seemed to have been fully prepared for my nocturnal visit and produced coffee along with kesh and a delicious fruit cake. Akbar is on the eve of his journey to Europe and briefed us on his forthcoming visit and extended me and the family in London a warm invitation to attend his talk at the House of Lords on May 14. Akbar was also happy to meet my cousin Dr. Azad Ejaz and his wife Lubna, both are computer and IT professionals and Azad is also managing the Muslim Community Centre (MCC) Medical Clinic of Montgomery County and Lubna is President of the MCC Mosque Board of Directors.

At IFC, I gave a talk and Rashid gave a powerpoint presentation on the transformation of NRSP credit and savings activities into a bank in the Bahawalpur Region, where IFC has 16% share in NRSP Bank equity. Rashid

gave a very comprehensive and objective account of the challenges involved, including shareholders demands and the achievements despite these challenges.

I was pleased to hear Martin Altman, Head Microfinance at IFC, pick up the references I made to Raiffeissen and related it to his childhood experience where a Raiffeissen bank existed. In Q&A session, questions were asked and observations made about capacity building of individuals and institutional and at policy level, lack of support for microfinance in Pakistan branchless banking, Islamic banking, reasons of low PAR in NRSP Bank, competitions in deposit mobilisation, role of women as lenders etc. Rashid gave answers to the satisfaction of the participants and I added my bit wherever necessary.

At lunch hosted by IFC, we were joined by Mingister Akmaychu, Global Head of Financial Markets Department who urged in the strongest terms, expansion of NRSP Bank promising that availability of capital for the Bank would be no problem. He referred to Khushhali Bank and a Bandan Bank in India. When I commented this would only be possible if the Bank delinks itself from NRSP, as in the examples he was giving, there was no social mobilisation. To which he strongly reacted saying it is because of NRSP that he is confident that the Bank can reach millions and millions of poor clients. I suggested to him that on his next visit to Pakistan, we will arrange his meeting with the NRSP Board of Directors. He seemed very confident that he would win over the Board to his point of view.

We had a most enjoyable evening with the Ambassador Jalil Abbas Jilani and his charming wife Shaista, she was the one who initiated the process of getting the plot back from NRSP, as Chairperson of the Foreign Service Wives Association which her predecessor had given. She was happy to hear that NRSP has not only returned the plot but also donated the money NRSP had spent in getting the transfer deed from CDA. So Rashid and Shaista were again on good terms.

Jalil as usual was most appreciative of what RSPN/NRSP have achieved which was widely being acclaimed even in DC. He very kindly offered his full support to me even in Pakistan if I needed anything to be done at the Islamabad Foreign Office. My cousin Dr. Azad Ejaz and his wife Lubna had also accompanied me. Besides their professional work in the field of computer science, both of them are deeply involved in the Montgomery County Muslim Community Centre (MCC) in Maryland State. Lubna being President of MCC and Azad as CEO of the MCC Medical Centre which offers treatment to non insured patients, 50% of whom are non-muslims. The County also supports the Medical Centre which has become some kind of a model being emulated by other counties. Jalil evinced keen interest in MCC and promised to visit it.

Finally I called on the son of my friend Air Commodore Allahdad from the days of my DCship in Kohat in 1963. Ziad Allahdad who was a school boy, has now retired as Director Operations, World Bank. His wife Zeenat and he warmly welcomed us at their home, despite late hour of the evening. Ziad as an energy expert was bubbling with ideas to help Pakistan. I suggested him meeting Shahbaz Sharif if he wanted anyone in Pakistan to listen and act on his ideas.