

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**Indus River System Authority (IRSA)**  
**Ministry of Water Resources**

**Visit of IRSA HQs by the Honourable Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan**

**Islamabad, the 9<sup>th</sup> of June, 2023**

His Excellency Mr. Neil Hawkins, Australian Commissioner to Pakistan visited IRSA headquarters on 09.06.2023 along with Ms. Danielle Cashen, 1<sup>st</sup> Secretary Australian High Commission Islamabad and Mr. Munawar Kazmi, Country Representative Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). Chairman IRSA, Mr Asjad Imtiaz Ali, along with Members IRSA Balochistan and Sindh, Mr Abdul Hammed Mengel and Zahid Hussain Junejo and Secretary IRSA, Mr Muhammad Khalid Rana welcomed the distinguished guests. Senior technical officers of IRSA were also present on the occasion.

2. Chairman IRSA speaking on the occasion said that IRSA was indeed honoured and privileged to receive the esteemed High Commissioner and his team. He informed that the Pakistan-Australian partnership on bilateral matters, especially the Water Sector, had strengthened manifold over the past 4-5 years, by programmes and technical assistance offered by Australia. He expressed his utmost thanks for the technical and financial assistance to develop the Water Apportionment Accord (WAA) Tool of IRSA. The project had full backing and support of Ministry of Water Resources, IRSA, WAPDA, Provincial Irrigation Departments of the Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa & Balochistan. ACIAR and Commonwealth Scientific & Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) from the Australian side were the main agencies involved in developing the WAA Tool. It was now the Tool of choice of Pakistani water agencies and was being actively employed to aid in informed decision making for advance Kharif & Rabi seasonal planning, operation of reservoir and river network and distribution of the water resources of the Indus River System between the provinces as per policies of WAA 1991. The Chairman stressed the importance of training for IRSA's technical personnel through programmes of water and conflict management, etc. and requested the High Commissioner to provide support in getting technical courses offered by Australian institutes.

3. Secretary IRSA briefed Australian High Commissioner on the working and operations of IRSA in managing the water resources of Indus River System as per policies of the WAA. He also informed about the joint collaborative project of WAA Tool development and the next step of mid-seasonal planning required to make it more effective and robust.

4. Speaking on the occasion, Australian High Commissioner said that he was very happy to learn about the success story of the collaborative project between the two countries and the way technical know-how was exchanged between the experts to make the software project practical and implementable as much as possible. The overall effect of the Tool had originated in the form of inter-provincial trust, where all the stakeholders had agreed on one analytical platform / tool to plan their operations. He said that his government and ACIAR were preparing a proposal for the further development of the WAA Tool as requested by IRSA. Referring to his meeting with other high officials of Pakistan Government, he expressed his apprehensions over the

dire and alarming situation of the water sector and reiterated his country's desire and will to support Pakistan to tackle and manage the looming water crisis, by drawing from their experience and lessons learnt. He acknowledged that training was very important for IRSA personnel, which could be achieved, besides taking technical courses, by participating in regional conferences and seminars. He assured full support of Australian Government in managing the water resource of Pakistan more efficiently.

5. At the end of the meeting, the Chair presented a memento to the honoured guest for the continuous support of Australian Government to Pakistan in water sector, and in return, Australian High Commissioner gave to the Chairman IRSA, a book showcasing the natural beauty of Australia in pictorial format.

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