# TALKING POINTS FOR MEETINGS WITH SAUDI ARABIA

# Pakistan’s candidature for WHO DG

* Pakistan has launched its candidature for WHO Director General.
* The election will be in held in two phases. In January 2017, the 34-member Executive Board of WHO will elect up to three candidates and in May 2017, the 196-member World Health Assembly will elect one.
* Pakistan has adopted a merit based approach to its candidature. Our Candidate, Dr. Sania Nishtar has wide experience. She served as a federal minister, has strong civil society credentials and is experienced in the multilateral system as chair of a WHO commission. She is a Royal College of Physicians qualified physician, a researcher with a Ph.D, and a widely published author and thought leader in global health.
* The Candidature has been welcomed by the OIC during its 13th Summit in Istanbul in April this year
* After the Ebola epidemic, WHO needs a merit based candidate, one with a combination of technical competencies, leadership and accountability credentials. Our candidate’s diverse technical and leadership attributes can be crucial for leading WHO. Her accountability credentials are evidenced by her recent selection by UNSG to chair the UN’s Independent Accountability Panel on Women and Children’s health.
* Geographic considerations favor Pakistan’s candidature as there has never been a WHO DG from the Eastern Mediterranean region. According to the new rules of election, regions which have ever had a DG would be given preference. Dr. Sania Nishtar would be the first Muslim to head WHO, if selected, and could play a major role in portraying a positive and progressive image of the Muslim world
* Two out of the three health agencies in the UN system (UNFPA, and UNAIDS) are already headed by Africans.
* Our candidate has engaged with experts and government officials from Saudi Arabia in her work in the multilateral system, notably, WHO.
* As a thought leader in global health, she has been invited to speak at the High Level Conference on Non-Communicable Diseases organized by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Health and the WHO East Mediterranean Regional Office
* In 2012, she co-authored an [influential paper on Polio eradication](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(13)60764-3/abstract) with the Vice Minister of Health of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Ziad Memish. The paper drew inspiration from Saudi Arabia’s partnership model between the medial academe and religious leaders, which has enabled a smooth introduction of advances in every aspect of healthcare into Saudi Arabia’s medical system. The paper made a strong case for using the same model for the then, imperiled polio program in Pakistan.
* Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoy close relations which are marked by common perceptions on all issues of mutual interests. Both countries have sought to develop extensive commercial, cultural, religious and strategic relations. More than 1.5 million Pakistanis are working in Saudi Arabia. There is a large number of Pakistani doctors including General Practitioners, Specialists and Dentists serving in Saudi Arabia. A sizable number of laboratory scientists including microbiologists alongside Laboratory Technologists and Technicians from Pakistan are working all over Saudi Arabia in different health facilities and Medical Institutions.
* Humanitarian assistance has been one of the key pillars of Saudi Arabia’s foreign policy. Saudi Arabia extended its humanitarian assistance on many times of natural calamities in the country including earthquakes and floods.
* Saudi Arabia provided support worth 2 Million USD through UNICEF in the wake of 2005 earthquake for construction of 8 health facilities for children and women affected by the earthquake.
* Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia has signed an Executive Program for cooperation in the field of health with College of Physicians and Surgeons. Under the Program highly qualified specialist doctors associated with CPSPO are rendering services in Saudi Arabia.

* Pakistan gratefully acknowledges Saudi Arabia’s help in many sectors; your support for the candidature will further foster that support.