



Press Release

**PITB AUTOMATES DIRECT SUBSIDIES ON FERTILIZERS & WHEAT
PROCUREMENT IN PUNJAB-Dr. Umar Saif**

Lahore, January 5, 2018

The Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) and the Agriculture Department have jointly launched a direct subsidy on fertilizers program, replacing the earlier indirect system used to provide subsidy to farmers by cutting down the price of fertilizers to ensure maximum transparency and evaluation mechanism, said Dr. Umar Saif founding Vice Chancellor of Information Technology University (ITU) the Punjab, Chairman PITB and Advisor to the CM Punjab during an informal talk with a group of media persons here today.

Dr. Saif informed that the PITB has developed a web portal for this purpose, enabling fertilizer marketing companies to generate unique codes for their products (MOP, SOP and DAP). The codes are printed and pasted inside fertilizer bags. The registered farmer after purchase of bag, scratch the coupon and send an SMS to the designated number and the system recognizes the detail and sends a confirmation. Then the registered farmer can go to an agent with the SMS and original CNIC to encash the subsidy money.

The developed system updates in real-time every successive transaction, location and usage details resulting more transparency and accuracy in delivering cash subsidies to registered farmers. It also provides a vast database of registered farmers and statistics regarding geographical use of certain fertilizers.

He added that the Punjab Government buys 40% of the wheat produced in the province every year to stabilize market price of this staple crop. The PITB has also developed a centralized system based on an android application to verify and record data of farmers from whom wheat is purchased by the government. The centralized system provides real-time reports of wheat procurement process from each Centre. The application has an inbuilt feedback system that sends SMS and makes automated calls to farmers to gather their feedback on the procurement process. The Punjab Province has established 382 online procurement Centres in 36 districts and 144 Tehsils, benefiting more than 300,000 farmers every year, he stated.