

D-8 Central Banks Experts Meeting

SBP working on making financial markets more inclusive: Wathra

Acting Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan Mr. Ashraf Mahmood Wathra has said that SBP has been working on making financial markets more inclusive. Inaugurating the D-8 Countries' Central Banks Experts Meeting in Islamabad, Mr. Wathra stressed the need for continued collaboration amongst D-8 central banks for inclusive economic growth. The meeting was held as part of the D-8 organization for economic cooperation on promoting inclusive financial services and Islamic banking. Mr. Wathra informed the audience that the SBP like many of the D-8 central banks has been working on making financial markets more inclusive; "however, financial exclusion remains an impediment in achieving inclusive growth."

Mr. Wathra told the audience that financial inclusion was SBP's top priority and one of the pillars of its financial sector development strategy. "So far SBP has been pursuing financial inclusion through various policy and market interventions to promote technology based financial innovations and address market imperfections. However, going forward, SBP is developing a holistic National Financial Inclusion Strategy in collaboration with the World Bank. The national strategy will be developed through consultative process."

Mr. Wathra highlighted the fact that Pakistan had made significant progress in introducing Islamic banking system in the country. "Islamic banks hold a market share of 9.6 percent and 10.4 percent of the total banking sector assets and liabilities respectively, with a healthy asset quality and double digit return on equity. Accordingly, SBP has recently adopted a holistic approach through a Strategic Plan for the industry for next five years (2014-18), which sets the future direction of the industry and gives a consensus strategy to take the industry to the next phase of growth and development."

The D-8 Countries' Central Banks Experts Meeting was held at the National Institute of Banking and Finance (NIBAF), Islamabad. The meeting was attended by experts from D-8 central banks, members of private sector industry and other officials. The experts shared experience of member countries and deliberated on further cooperation in promoting financial inclusion, branchless banking and Islamic finance in D-8 countries.

D-8 is an organization for cooperation among 8 developing countries namely; Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey. The objectives of D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation include improving all member states' position in the global economy, diversifying and creating new opportunities in trade relations, enhancing participation in decision-making at international level, and improving standards of living.
