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PESHAWAR: Mr. James Fluker, Commercial Counselor at the US Embassy in Islamabad, held a session at the KP Chamber of Commerce and Industry to help local businesses understand how to be competitive in US markets.

Mr. Fluker's visit to Peshawar was a part of a US initiative to help Pakistani executives take advantage of these opportunities to grow their business. The United States is the largest and most open economy to trade and investment in the world, said Mr. Fluker. In fact, the United States government allows Pakistani businesses to export more than 3,500 items to the US without paying any duties on them, including jewelry, most manufactured items, and many types of carpets, agricultural products, minerals, and marble. It is clear to us that trade, investment, and private sector growth are key to the future of the US-Pakistan relationship. The US Commercial Service is the trade promotion office of the US government. It connects US exporters with international buyers through a network of 100 offices in the United States, and in over 70 cities around the world, including offices in Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore. It also helps Pakistani buyers locate US products, services, and business partners; meet suppliers and partners face-to-face; and participate in trade shows that feature thousands of US companies. In June 2013, an official US government -led delegation of Pakistani business executives will travel to the International Franchise Expo in New York City. We are grateful to the US government for their financial and technical support in numerous development plans, said Chamber President Dr. M. Yousaf Sarwar. American support will play a vital role in reviving the business activities in the province and bringing economic prosperity to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Two-way trade between Pakistan and the United States was more than \$5 billion in 2012. Pakistan exports more products to the United States than to any other country in the world. In fact, American consumers purchased almost 20 per cent of Pakistan's exports last year. The United States also consistently ranks among the top sources of foreign direct investment in Pakistan. This initiative was just one part of a comprehensive US economic growth assistance program which includes expanding irrigation by more than 200,000 acres near the Gomal Zam and Satpara dams; constructing more than 1,000 km of roads to connect communities and facilitate trade; modernising dairy farms in Punjab; and launching private equity investment funds to help small and medium businesses grow.

Courtesy: Dawn