



**Government of Pakistan**  
Cabinet Division  
Special Technology Zones Authority



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **STZA TO ENABLE TECHNOLOGY ECOSYSTEM FOR PAKISTANI FREELANCERS**

**May 30, 2022**

According to the World Labor Organization (WLO), Pakistan is rapidly emerging as a major source of digital labour for the global freelancing market. The country ranks as the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest source of digital labour globally, a trend made possible by the burgeoning freelancing community in Pakistan. While speaking at the Freelance Fest 2022 held in Karachi, Dr Arif Alvi, the honourable President of Pakistan stated that the Pakistani youth had the potential to charter a new path for the country's economy by learning billable digital skills like artificial intelligence, machine learning and other emerging technologies.

To support the Pakistani freelancing community, a high-level delegation of the Special Technology Zones Authority – STZA, visited the Freelance Fest 2022 in Karachi. While speaking at the conference, Mr. Amer Hashmi, the Chairman of the STZA gave a strategic overview of the global innovation and technology ecosystem. He went on to highlight how the Special Technology Zones - STZs are building the technology ecosystem in Pakistan, to enable the small, medium as well as large scale tech organizations. He encouraged the young Pakistani freelancers to accelerate their efforts and pledged STZA's resolute support to enable and empower the freelancing community across the country – with a special focus on women freelancers. He also thanked the Pakistan Freelancers Association – PAFLA for organizing such a wonderful event and for bringing industry leaders and young freelancers on one platform.

Mr. Javaid Iqbal, the Chief Commercial Officer of STZA while speaking at the forum stated that the freelancers were a critical part of the innovation and technology ecosystem in Pakistan. He went on to say that the freelancers were not only increasing Pakistan's brand capital but also bringing foreign exchange to the country and transforming the gig economy by identifying global market requirements. He called on the young freelancers to challenge barriers and accelerate their efforts, stating that they were living in a transformational era of a globally connected marketplace with infinite possibilities.

While speaking at the forum, Mr. Abdul Rahim Ahmad, the Chief Information Officer of STZA called for the development of a centralized, verified repository of freelancers in Pakistan. He also stated that the regulatory support for the freelancers from the government and financial sector was necessary. Acknowledging the challenges faced by the Pakistani freelancers, Mr. Rahim went on to call for developing mechanisms for making it easy to open bank accounts, increase



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high-speed internet coverage and availability of training and mentorship for the freelancers in Pakistan.

The STZA delegation met with leaders from the financial industry, academia, PAFLA, state regulators and renowned freelancers at the event, and agreed to develop close cooperation and synergies, with a mission to remove barriers and enable the Pakistani freelancers to become globally competitive. These linkages are likely to open new doors of cooperation between the government, private sector, and freelancing community in the near future.