PRESS RELEASE

SMEDA Signs MOU with PSW and Hosts Panel on 'Digital Trade Facilitation for SMEs'

Lahore, February 21, 2025 — The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) brought together industry leaders, policymakers, and experts for a pivotal **panel discussion on "Digital Trade Facilitation for SMEs"** in Lahore. The event explored ways to strengthen digital trade capabilities for Pakistan's SMEs, identifying key challenges and opportunities in an evolving digital economy.

The panel featured distinguished speakers, including Mr. Aftab Haider, CEO of Pakistan Single Window (PSW); Ms. Gulalai Khan, Faculty at LUMS/Internet Governance and Technology Policy Expert; Mr. Faizan Siddiqui, Digital Business Automation Expert/ COO of Fauji Fertilizer Company; and Mr. Usman Sheikh, Founder & CEO OZI Group/ Jolta Batteries. The discussion focused on the barriers SMEs face in accessing global markets and how digital solutions can ease trade processes, reduce costs, and enhance competitiveness.

A key highlight of the event was the signing of a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SMEDA and PSW**, marking a strategic collaboration to integrate SMEs into the global trade ecosystem. The MOU aims to simplify trade procedures through digital solutions, offering SMEs and women entrepreneurs access to market intelligence, data analytics, and resources tailored to their export needs. By promoting e-commerce adoption, this partnership seeks to empower SMEs to tap into international markets and bolster Pakistan's export performance.

Speaking on the occasion, **Mr. Socrat Aman Rana, CEO SMEDA**, emphasized the importance of trade facilitation for SME growth. He stated that trade facilitation is a cornerstone for SME growth. By simplifying procedures and reducing barriers, SMEs are enabled to compete more effectively on the global stage, driving economic prosperity and innovation. The collaboration will provide SMEs with the necessary tools to navigate international trade more efficiently.

Reaffirming PSW's commitment to digital trade, **Mr. Aftab Haider, CEO of PSW**, stated that the partnership with SMEDA is a vital step in simplifying and digitizing trade processes, particularly for SMEs. By leveraging PSW's digital platform, the initiative will foster greater inclusivity and transparency, reduce trade barriers, and enhance the contribution of SMEs to national economic growth.

Ms. Nadia Jahangir Seth, GM Policy & Planning, SMEDA, highlighted the MOU's role in supporting women entrepreneurs. The collaboration prioritizes women-led businesses, ensuring they have access to digital trade tools that enhance their market competitiveness. By addressing traditional trade barriers, SMEs—particularly women entrepreneurs—will be seamlessly integrated into the global marketplace.

The event attracted a diverse audience, including policymakers, researchers, entrepreneurs, and industry representatives, all committed to advancing SME digitalization. Insights from the panel will contribute to future policies and programs aimed at strengthening Pakistan's SME sector and boosting economic growth.

This strategic partnership between SMEDA and PSW is set to transform Pakistan's trade facilitation landscape. By reducing the cost of doing business, simplifying regulatory procedures, and enhancing digital access to global markets, the collaboration will create a more inclusive, transparent, and efficient trade ecosystem. Ultimately, this initiative will reinforce the role of SMEs in national economic development and position Pakistan as a stronger player in the global trading arena.