



PRESS RELEASE

CARE PAKISTAN AND MASTERCARD CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH PARTNER WITH PSW TO GROW WOMEN-LED SMALL BUSINESS IN PAKISTAN

Partnership will focus on women-led small businesses, supporting them to grow

ISLAMABAD, April 30th, 2025 – Pakistan Single Window (PSW), CARE Pakistan, and Mastercard have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to empower women entrepreneurs in Pakistan through digital skill-building and network strengthening. This initiative will help women-led small businesses grow and access cross-border trade opportunities.

The Strive Women program, led by CARE and supported by the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, aims to strengthen the financial resilience of women-led businesses in Pakistan, Peru, and Vietnam. It is part of Mastercard Strive, a philanthropic program that helps small businesses thrive in the digital economy. The program focuses on providing women-led MSMEs with tools and resources for sustainable growth.

PSW's digital platform simplifies cross-border trade, reducing time and costs and promoting trade facilitation and economic inclusion, especially for women entrepreneurs. PSW's Khadijah Program, winner of the WTO's International Prize for Gender Equality in Trade, supports women entrepreneurs by offering digital tools, trade knowledge, and capacity-building.

"Empowering women entrepreneurs is a key priority for Pakistan Single Window. This partnership with CARE Pakistan aligns perfectly with our mission to enhance trade facilitation and promote inclusive economic growth. Through the Khadijah Program, we are committed to providing women entrepreneurs with the digital tools and resources they need to thrive in the global marketplace, creating new opportunities for them to grow their businesses and contribute to Pakistan's economic development," said **Syed Aftab Haider, CEO, Pakistan Single Window**.

"We are thrilled to sign a memorandum of understanding with PSW to grow women-led small business in Pakistan. The Strive Women program underscores our commitment to fostering a robust ecosystem that nurtures the growth of women-led businesses. Women entrepreneurs play a pivotal role in driving economic progress, and by collectively addressing the barriers they face, we can unlock their full potential for exponential impact on our economy. As we sign this MOU, we, in collaboration with PSW and the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, reaffirm our dedication to creating pathways for women to thrive in the business landscape. Together with our partners, we aspire to cultivate an environment where women entrepreneurs can flourish, innovate, and contribute meaningfully to our society," said **Adil Sheraz, Country Director, CARE International in Pakistan**.

"At Mastercard, we committed to connecting 50 million MSMEs to the digital economy by 2025, focusing on 25 million women entrepreneurs, and achieved this milestone early. Through our partnership with CARE and Strive Women, we aim to empower women-led MSMEs in Pakistan, fostering sustainable growth that benefits businesses and communities," said **Arslan Khan, Country Manager, Pakistan and Afghanistan, Mastercard**.

"Women entrepreneurs are the backbone of global economies, with 8 to 10 million SMEs in the developing world having at least one female owner. By providing them with financial tools, we create a future where women-led businesses thrive. We are proud to partner with Ubank and CARE to advance financial inclusion," said **Subhashini Chandran, Senior VP of Social Impact, Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth**.

The partnership will facilitate women entrepreneurs to access non-financial services to help grow their businesses. This includes collaboration under PSW's Women Entrepreneurship Program (WEP) named 'Khadijah'. Key areas of collaboration are:



- Entrepreneurship Development programs to help women start and scale their businesses.
- Capacity Building initiatives focused on business management, leadership, and digital skills.
- Networking and Mentorship opportunities, connecting women with experienced professionals and peers.
- Advocacy and Policy Support to promote an enabling environment for women-led enterprises.
- Research and Data Sharing to inform inclusive policymaking and program design.
- Active Participation in joint events, campaigns, and workshops to amplify women's voices in business.

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