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U.S. Mountain Climber Highlights Important Role of Sports and Active Lifestyle for Women and Girls

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Islamabad, August 12, 2015 – The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad and the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN) sponsored “Empowering Women through Sports” at the Ibex Club climbing wall in Islamabad’s Lake View Park. The day-long event allowed girls to practice wall climbing and archery, while discussing how to use sports as a way to build confidence and develop leadership skills. The event featured world record-holder, American mountain climber and explorer Vanessa O’Brien, and a mix of more than 50 youths, including team members of five-time national champion women’s club soccer team, the Young Rising Stars. Alumni of the U.S. sponsored English Access Microscholarship Program, as well as members of community groups from throughout the region also participated in the event.

“I’ve had a wonderful experience in Pakistan,” Ms. O’Brien said. “It’s a wonderful opportunity to use this climbing wall activity to help women explore the concept of team-building and develop trust in their own skills and abilities.” She encouraged all the participants in the special women’s empowerment event to apply the skills they practiced learning to climb in all aspects of their lives.

The U.S. government invests approximately \$40 million on academic and professional exchange programs, sending more than 1,300 Pakistanis to the United States each year. PUAN is among the largest U.S. alumni networks in the world. Its mission is to encourage people-to-people relationships between Pakistanis and Americans.

Consisting of more than 15,000 students and professionals who have participated in U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs, PUAN organizes events across Pakistan, including community service projects, leadership training, roundtable discussions, and community engagement activities. The organization has 12 regional chapters nationwide in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Bahawalpur, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Gwadar, Islamabad, Jamshoro, Karachi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Lahore, Multan, and Sukkur. Find out more about PUAN and the conference at <http://www.facebook.com/pakalumni>.

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