



# SECURITIES & EXCHANGE COMMISSION OF PAKISTAN

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **SECP Inaugurates Pakistan's First-Ever Start-up Summit in Karachi to Empower Innovation and Economic Growth**

**Karachi, November 11** – The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) successfully inaugurated its first-ever Pakistan Start-up Summit at the Pearl Continental Hotel, Karachi. The first day of the event, received overwhelming participation from policymakers, start-up founders, international speakers, and stakeholders who shared insights on fostering a robust and resilient start-up ecosystem in Pakistan.

The summit featured a video address from Pakistan's Honorable Finance Minister, emphasizing the government's commitment to fostering innovation as a crucial driver of economic growth. He praised SECP's proactive regulatory measures, including the Regulatory Sandbox and simplified incorporation processes, which enhance financial inclusion and support start-ups growth across fintech, digital finance, and other high-impact sectors.

SECP Commissioner Mujtaba Ahmad Lodhi delivered the welcome address, emphasizing the importance of collaboration in building an inclusive ecosystem for entrepreneurs. Mr. Lodhi also highlighted SECP's commitment to creating a space for strategic discussions that would strengthen the foundation for innovation in Pakistan.

In his keynote, SECP Chairman addressed the unique crossroads faced by Pakistan's start-up ecosystem, acknowledging both challenges and unprecedented opportunities. "Our goal at SECP is not merely to adapt to change but to drive it," he stated, "to build systems that empower our innovators, ensuring a stable yet dynamic environment for growth." The Chairman highlighted key SECP initiatives such as the Regulatory Sandbox and LEAP, which aim to transform Pakistan into a regional innovation hub by unlocking potential in sectors like fintech and embedded finance.

The Deputy High Commissioner of the UK, Ms. Sara Mooney, also graced the event on its opening day, adding to the summit's international reach.

The summit's first day featured six pivotal panel discussions, each addressing crucial areas for strengthening Pakistan's start-up landscape. The Fireside Chat: Founders' Perspectives on Building Start-ups in Pakistan saw leading founders sharing their entrepreneurial journeys, underscoring the role of innovation, local market insights, and ecosystem support in achieving success. In the panel on Strategies for Building a Resilient Start-up Ecosystem, panellists explored key pillars—capital access, digital innovation, and regulatory reform—needed for sustainable growth. The Empowering Female Entrepreneurs session addressed unique challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and examined how public and private sectors can better support women-led start-ups and foster inclusivity. During Creating a Conducive Ecosystem for Start-ups, policymakers, regulatory bodies, and funding agencies discussed how collaborative efforts can bridge regulatory and funding gaps to support growth. The panel on

Navigating Pakistan's Start-up Ecosystem provided insights on overcoming challenges related to capital, talent, and market access, highlighting the critical role of stakeholders in fostering an entrepreneurial environment. Finally, Unlocking Start-up Growth through Capital Markets explored how Pakistan's capital markets can provide essential funding and the regulatory reforms needed to create a more favorable climate for investment.

The first day concluded with closing remarks by Syed Asad Ali Shah, Chairman of Befiler, who applauded SECP's efforts in driving Pakistan's start-up ecosystem forward.

SECP's Pakistan Start-up Summit represents a major milestone in building an inclusive and sustainable ecosystem for innovation, positioning Pakistan as a competitive player in the global start-up landscape. The summit has laid the groundwork for ongoing collaboration and set a dynamic stage for the future of entrepreneurship in Pakistan.