DATE: April 8, 2015

TO: American Institute of Pakistan Studies

FROM: Elena Bashir

SUBJECT: Narrative report on travel grant for the International Conference on Brahui language and culture

With the help of the AIPS travel grant, I traveled to Islamabad to participate in the second International Conference on Brahui Language and Culture http://www.brahuiconference.org/. I was one of the four non-Pakistani participants, and my presence there was much appreciated by the conference organizers and other participants. (Others who had planned to come could not come for visa and/or security reasons.) I had attended the first such conference, which was held in Quetta in 1991, and some people remembered me. A large number of papers on various aspects of Brahui history and culture were presented. See the photocopy of the conference program as it evolved which is included with this report.   In addition to presenting my paper, on "The Brahui language: Recovering the past, documenting the present, and pondering the future", I chaired a session of the conference and engaged in many discussions with various participants, and have offered to help with editing of the proceedings volume when it is published. My paper, which I presented in Urdu, was intended to inform the participants about major new developments in Brahui research and suggest ways in which they can contribute to research on the Brahui language.

The conference itself was immensely successful. The organizers collected and transported about 100 people from various parts of Balochistan to Islamabad. These participants came in two hired buses, and some of them traveled 40 hours by bus to attend. The audience was enthusiastic and uniformly positive. I feel confident that the aims of the conference organizers—to raise awareness about the value of preserving and promoting the Brahui language and culture—will have been advanced by the conference. When the proceedings are published, there will be additional incentive for the participants to continue their work.