****

**Serena Hotels**

**Corporate Press Release:**

**10th July 2023**

**Serena Hotels hosts RAABTA**

 **A panel discussion on**

**Bridging the Divide: Ensuring Access to Higher Education**

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels under its Public Diplomacy initiative *Raabta* hosted a panel discussion on the challenges and opportunities surrounding access to higher education in Pakistan. Due to limited access, and or lack of awareness amongst the talented students it hinders social mobility, perpetuates inequality, and constrains the country's progress. The panel discussion brought together experts, policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to explore the barriers, discuss effective strategies and propose actionable recommendations to enhance access to higher education in Pakistan.

 The moderator of *Raabta*, Sidra Iqbal, a vocal advocate of social issues related to gender inclusion and diversity, curated the event. The event was attended by members of academia, non-profits’ representatives working for education outreach, members of diplomatic missions, government officials and students from various colleges and universities. The panel comprised of eminent educators, policymakers; Dr. Osman Hasan, Pro-rector Academics NUST, Mr. Saleem Abdul Razaque, Programme Director USEFP, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Chairman Higher Education Commission Pakistan and Ms. Sarah Pervez, Head of Education, British Council. The discussion revolved around the work of various frameworks & institutions in providing education on all levels, including the role of the higher education commission in creating opportunities which are inclusive for all genders.

A Q & A session followed the discussion that engaged the audience, comprising of students from various educational institutions, were responded with by the panel of experts and were informed about various outreach programmes that are available, for future leaders of tomorrow. The discussion was broadcast live for those who were unable to attend in person to ensure access to the discourse for all wishing to participate.