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**HOUSTON KARACHI SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION WINS SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL'S INNOVATION AWARD  
FOR ARTS AND CULTURE**

WASHINGTON, DC – Houston Karachi Sister City Association (HKSCA) has won the Sister Cities International (SCI) 2017 Innovation Award for Arts and Culture for a city with a population over 500,001. The Sister Cities International Innovation Award for Arts and Culture recognizes the accomplishments of outstanding community and individual sister city programs that promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation.

HKSCA pays great respect to the cultures of their sister cities through various events. In 2016, HKSCA and the Mayor's Office of Trade and International Affairs hosted two famous folk artists from Pakistan, who were in the United States after attending the South by South West International Conference & Festival, for a memorable cultural concert in September to celebrate Pakistan's rich folk culture and to spread a message of love and humanity through music and history. In addition, the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Houston Iftar Dinner, which promotes peace and unity among Houston's multicultural community, celebrated the culture of eight countries around the world. The free event drew over 1,500 people and guests included elected officials, community leaders, and diplomats, with many attending dressed in traditional outfits from their countries of origin. HKSCA coordinated the event along with Houston-Abu Dhabi Sister City Association, Houston-Baku Sister City Association, the Houston-Basrah Sister City Committee, and the Houston-Istanbul Sister City Association. This event and has successfully raised awareness and understanding of the many cultures that make up the Houston community over the past 16 years.

SCI's Annual Awards are awarded in several categories including Best Overall, Innovation (Arts and Culture, Economic Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and Youth and Education), and Volunteer of the Year. Award winners will be honored at the Lou Wozar Diplomatic Awards Dinner on Saturday, July 15 during SCI's 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference in Virginia Beach, VA.

SCI's 61<sup>st</sup> [Annual Conference](#) events, which include a [Youth Leadership Summit](#) and a [U.S.-Russia Mayors' Summit](#), will take place in Virginia Beach, VA from July 12-16, 2017. The events will bring together hundreds of the most influential global leaders in diplomacy, foreign affairs, policy, business, and innovation. Elected and municipal officials, business leaders, youth delegates, and citizen diplomats will discuss this year's theme "Global Communities for World Peace," building on President Eisenhower's initial vision of creating a more peaceful world by building global relationships.

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**About Sister Cities International**

Founded as a Presidential Initiative by Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956, Sister Cities International serves as the national membership organization for 500 member communities with over 2,000 partnerships in 145 countries on six continents. The sister city network unites tens of thousands of citizen diplomats and volunteers who work tirelessly to promote the organizations' mission of creating world peace and understanding through economic development, youth and education, arts and culture, and humanitarian assistance.

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