

# January 2018

*NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 8TH TO JANUARY 14TH 2018*

## ***CONTINUITY OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESS TO HELP ACHIEVE SDGS GOALS: MARRIYUM***

Business Recorder, January 13th, 2018

The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is only possible through the continuity of the democratic process and strong system of governance and every Pakistan will have to contribute his share in the development of the country by rising above political affiliations. This was stated by Minister of State for Information, Broadcasting, National History and Literary Heritage

Mariyum Aurangzeb while addressing the concluding ceremony of the three-day workshop and conference on the SDGs for the members of the Gilgit-Baltistan assembly including its speaker as well as interacting with the delegation students of Aitchison College at the SDGs Secretariat here Friday. She said that the voice of the people did not reach the parliament under the dictatorial regimes and the failure of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was also because of the dictatorship in the country. The minister said that the Plan of SDGs did not belong to any political party but was a national undertaking.

She said that it was a collective responsibility to use parliamentary resources for the achievement of SDGS and the federal and provincial governments should strive to accomplish the targets of the SDGs. She said that through the holding of the workshop and conference the narrative of the SDGs looked gaining real shape. The minister said that the members of the parliament should root their proposals for development in their constituencies through the SDGs secretariat.

Mariyum revealed that the government was contemplating to hold a parliamentary conference on population for the first time, which would deliberate on all issues confronting Pakistan. She said that resolving the issues related to health would lead to reduction in the level of poverty in the country, adding that it was also essential to focus on the health of the mother and child.

Mariyum said that in the 2018 elections people would vote for the parties which had delivered and the PML (N) would seek the mandate of the people on the basis of its performance. Referring to the Kasur episode the minister said that there was an urgent need to review the laws at the federal and provincial levels, besides including the subject on awareness in the curricula of the schools. She said that the parents and teachers should also help in creating awareness among the children at the primary level.

The minister said that awareness programmes on the issue would also be broadcast on TV and Radio respectively. The minister strongly condemned the Kasur episode and said that it was the collective responsibility to take steps to prevent the recurrence of such happenings and enact such laws which were implementable at all levels. She said that the Punjab government was engaged in the process of bringing stringent laws that would prescribe exemplary punishments for such crimes.

Later the minister also had an interaction with the students from Aitchison College who were on a visit to the SDGs secretariat and Assembly. She thoroughly briefed them on the steps to achieve targets of the SDGs. She said that Pakistan was a signatory to the 17-point SDGs drawn up by the UN. She said

that the targets of the MDGs could not be achieved as there was dictatorship in the country and there was also disconnect with the parliament.

The minister told the students that the SDGs secretariat was providing research based data to the parliamentarians on the implementation of the SDGs. She said that Pakistan was the first country which had established a secretariat on SDGs in the parliament and similar arrangements also existed in the provincial assemblies. She said that the SDGs were a national commitment which required continuity of the democratic process and a strong system.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2018/01/20180113335188/>

## March 2018

### *NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 19TH TO MARCH 25TH 2018*

#### ***MAKING TAXES AN INTEGRAL PART OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS***

Business Recorder, 20 March 2018

Khalid Mahmood

“Sustainable development is the greatest, most complicated challenge that humanity has ever faced.”  
– Jeffery D. Sachs

The enormous sweep of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) embraces all aspects of nature’s ecosystem, economic and social life and envisions sharing of responsibilities by countries, civil society, academicians, individuals, families, communities, businesses international agencies on an unprecedented scale to build a future of shared prosperity all inhabiting this planet.

Such broad engagement of stakeholders and society as part of institutional building through medium- and long-term strategies can help shape close relationship between citizens and governments for a values-embedded common pursuit.

The SDGs include no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, gender equality, clean water and sanitary, affordable and clean energy, decent work, economic growth and social justice. To sum up, it has to be ensured that ‘no one is left behind.’

While recognizing the sustainable development as the ‘central challenge of our times’, the international community is confident that it has ‘the technology and the knowhow to succeed’. Economic literature is producing works that would provide theoretical guide for achieving the SDGs. Worth mentioning is Nobel Prize winner Jean Tirole’s book ‘Economics for Common Good’ with a chapter on ‘The moral limits of the market’. Development economists have started advising market players to have a fresh look at Adam Smith’s ‘Theory of Moral Sentiments’ explained in his renowned book ‘The Wealth of Nations’.

However, there is a view that such a gigantic task cannot be accomplished without a strong political will. Political parties need to embrace SDGs as a part of their party manifestos, raise the popular awareness and encourage electorates’ participation.

The planners and executioners are conscious of the fact that achieving SDGs will require ‘enormous financial resources’. The 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda recognized that much of the increased public financing will have to be ‘generated domestically’. Tax compliance will be encouraged as public/common goods are widely shared.

A statement by the First Global Conference on Taxation and SDGs issued on February 16, 2018 affirms that ‘Taxation has a key role to play in financing the SDGs. The conference was organised by the Platform for Collaboration on Tax which has been earlier formed by four leading international organisations – the UN, the World Bank, OECD and the IMF – for developing strategies, evolving action plans and helping stakeholders worldwide to formulate and implement tax policies that can help meet the objectives enshrined by the Platform.

The two major issues that continue to haunt tax authorities in Pakistan are non-compliance by the informal sector and lack of its effective presence in the international taxation area. The Platform promises ‘to scale up our joint efforts to support developing countries to address tax transparency, base erosion and profit shifting including on treaties.

Together with other stakeholders, the Platform action agenda seeks to work for coherent and consistent international tax policy. It expects that partner organisations will bring together their own mandates and expertise, furthering debate and action on the broad role of taxation in achieving the SDGs. Taxation, in the renewed global debate, is now a part of SDGs.

The Platform statement recognizes that ‘informality’ (in the context of various forms of tax non-compliance) is a major concern for all countries though the extent and nature of the issues differ from state-to-state.

Public spending has a vital role in the economic growth of developing nations. Domestic taxes are expected to contribute to the economic growth more significantly now, reducing, if not eliminating, developing countries’ excessive reliance on borrowing and loans. The key to success would be the change in reality and people’s perception as to the fiscal equation: revenue and expenditure. Clarity in perception will lead to greater compliance and responsible behaviour. The Platform, with the feedback and guidance of the developing countries is likely to help design tax policies, and put in place mechanism to ‘maximize impacts with minimum costs’, that can help achieve the goals and correlate the objectives that SDGs cherish.

The Platform is a forum where all nations pool their wisdom and efforts for a common cause to build a more equitable global economic environment that ends widening economic and social disparities amongst and within nations.

(The writer is Chairman of Sindh Revenue Board)

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/03/20/22-page/705985-news.html>

### ***NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 12TH TO MARCH 18 TH 2018***

#### ***LASBELA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TO HELP ACHIEVE SDGS***

Mohammad Zafar

The Express Tribune, March 17, 2018

Lasbela University Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Ghulam Jilani has said that the varsity has 2,000 highly-qualified students and a faculty of 50 PhDs in different fields.

“I am proud of the fact that the university has achieved new heights in such a short time,” said Prof Jilani while addressing the ninth seminar on ‘Engaging Youth for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)’ at Lasbela University on Friday.

The seminar was organised by Bargad, a national-level organisation working on youth development, in collaboration with Lasbela University and Oxfam Pakistan. Three hundred students were in attendance.

The seminar was organised to provide orientation and awareness to youth about the SDGs on climate change, gender equality, peace building, and institutional development with Pakistan’s Vision 2025.

The seminar was a part of Bargad and Oxfam’s nationwide campaign on SDGs which involves a series of similar seminars and mainstream and social media campaigns in 12 universities across Pakistan.

The panellists of the seminar included Prof Jilani, Faculty of Social Sciences Dean Dr Syed Manzoor Ahmad, Faculty of Language and Literature Assistant Professor Dr Dolat Khan, Faculty of Water Resource Management dean Dr Nadeem Nawaz, while the moderator was Salma Butt.

The panellists shed light on specific SDGs relevant to their work in context of Pakistan and made presentations, followed by discussion with the students.

Prof Jilani welcomed Bargad and Oxfam for choosing Lasbela University from among the 12 selected universities.

Lasbela University students Zara Qayum and Muhammad Masood gave their presentations on the background of SDGs and focused on SDGs five, six, 11 and 16 and talked about how important it was for the youth to be engaged in order to meet the challenges.

Human rights expert Saima Jasam gave a briefing on the overall background of SDGs and reflected on the performance of Pakistan in achieving SDGs.

She said that Pakistan was ranked at 122 among the SDGs index in 2017.

She said, “SDGs are a universal set of 17 goals with 169 targets which all UN member states, including Pakistan, are expected to use in framing their national development agenda.”

The Federal Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform and the Punjab Planning and Development Department had established special units to align national and provincial development processes with the SDGs supported by task forces formed by the members of national and provincial assemblies, she added.

Dr Syed Manzoor Ahmad briefed on SDG eight – Economic Growth and Decent Work – and shared a few suggestions for Pakistan’s progress.

Dr Nadeem Nawaz spoke on SDG six – Ensure Access to Water and Sanitation for All. He shared various statistics on water issues around the world and also talked about the present situation in Pakistan in relation to clean water and sanitation.

Dr Dolat Khan spoke on SDG five – Gender Equality.

Taking over the podium, Bargad Executive Director Sabiha Shaheen expressed her happiness to see many young women sitting in the university.

“They can become role models for many others who do not have opportunities,” she added.

The framework of SDGs provides an avenue to the youth to be part of the development process. It calls for Pakistani youth to participate in achieving the SDGs, she added.

Qaisar Roonjah shared his experiences with students that how he had been groomed by youth organisations, including Bargad, and now he was so confident that he was invited to national and international level seminars to speak on developmental issues.

Oxfam Pakistan’s Imran said students should engage research work and take the initiatives themselves.

Bargad was not only involved in conducting such seminars but also was very active on social media. Bargad social media team successfully made the Twitter trend #youthforSDGs in Pakistan.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1662298/1-lasbela-university-students-help-achieve-sdgs/>

The Express Tribune, March 17th, 2018.

Corruption is defined as an abuse of official power by elected politicians or civil servants for private gain. The Urdu word for corruption is badunwani — and the word corruption has roots in Latin and French whose meanings are ‘to destroy’, ‘to contaminate’ and ‘to seduce’. Corruption does all that. Hence, it is likely to be the root cause of most evils.

The construction industry contributed 2.7% to the country’s GDP and the sector grew by 9.1% in the financial year 2017. Projects such as roads and bridges as well as metros and motorways have roughly consumed half a trillion rupees between 2013 and 2017. By the year 2030, global construction output is expected to jump from \$8 trillion to \$17.5 trillion per annum and it is estimated that between 10% and 30% of that amount may be lost due to corruption. In Pakistan, too, the volume of corruption in the construction sector is believed to be around 30%. No wonder politicians and bureaucrats love infrastructural projects but not educational ones.

The 2005 earthquake offers a concrete example. Due to massive corruption in public-sector construction, almost all government buildings collapsed as opposed to self-built houses and structures particularly in the urban areas of Mansehra and Muzaffarabad. According to official data, 19,000 children died due to the collapse of 10,000 school buildings. Experts estimated that about ‘40-50% of funds for government buildings were siphoned off by corrupt officials.’ Twelve years on, despite the availability of funds, the government could reconstruct only 60% of the damaged schools. Also, the rate of fund utilisation in the education sector has always been extremely low in Pakistan.

Both empirical and theoretical studies find a strong correlation between corruption and economic performance. I must cite here findings of a fascinating study of Mohamed Dridi (2014) of the University of Sousses, Tunisia. It finds that a ‘one point increase in the corruption index decreases 10% in the secondary school enrolment rates.’ It also states that ‘corruption yields weaker results, ie,

performance and internal efficiency.’ Scholars also find ‘evidence in many countries that improved control of corruption leads to better adult literacy rates’. Moreover, some studies reveal adverse ‘effects of corruption on the provision of social services.’

Not surprisingly, Pakistan is now called the ‘sick man of South Asia’ as it stands at the bottom of most global and regional rankings, including gender equality, food security, mother and child mortality, human development, literacy, quality education, voter turnout and resilience to disasters. Shamelessly only Yemen or Nigeria are below a nuclear power. Thanks to the corrupt ruling elites.

Consider this: since 1988, the Pakistan People’s Party and the Pakistan Muslim League-N ruled the country for more than 15 years each at the centre and in the provinces. And a military dictator ruled for nine years. All seemingly failed us. In the 1990s, the Social Action Plan was introduced amid fanfare, and until 2015 we implemented the MDGs. We failed miserably to achieve most targets.

Our parliament has adopted the SDGs (2015-30) as a national agenda. This must be appreciated but strangely three parallel structures have been created at the federal level. One each under the prime minister, the speaker of the National Assembly and the Planning Commission with no interface with each other. This development regime provides yet another golden opportunity to transform our society. Sadly, early signs are extremely worrisome. A large chunk of funds for the SDGs are given only to the ruling party MPs. Sadly, local councils have been denied access to SDGs’ funds. Scanning of SDGs meetings’ minutes and participation in a few meetings reveal the same old mindset of bureaucracy and elected officials — lots of talk and meetings, many committees but little or no output.

This leads us to the accountability drive against and the debate around corruption in Pakistan. It is primarily based on these points. First, it is a conspiracy of the ‘miltablishment’ against democracy. Second, historical — the establishment has always conspired against politicians. Nawaz Sharif is not the first elected prime minister who has faced this fate, 17 PMs were overthrown in a similar fashion. Third, peoples’ mandate versus the rule of law — the judiciary can’t punish a politician who has the electoral mandate of millions of voters. Fourth, inclusive accountability — why nab only politicians like Nawaz? What about other members of the corrupt elite?

Politicians all over the world tend to politicise corruption if graft cases are initiated against them. Benjamin Netanyahu — a four-time elected prime minister of Israel — is facing corruption charges. Like Nawaz, he has also been diverting the public attention away from his corruption. The only difference is that he is accusing the media of ‘leading a witch-hunt campaign against him’ while Nawaz is blaming judges and generals. In the recent past rulers of South Korea, South Africa, Brazil, Zimbabwe, Ecuador, Thailand and many others were either imprisoned or removed from power due to corruption. However, unlike the PML-N, the ruling parties in those countries didn’t support their corrupt leaders. Here on the contrary, many Pakistanis perceive the PML-N’s unity and loyalty for Nawaz Sharif as a strength. I don’t because this will damage the PML-N in the long run and the country.

Simply the political leaders who amassed assets beyond their known means of earning deprive themselves of the moral high ground, and therefore must leave politics and return the money to nations they plundered.

Therefore, ending corruption and the rule of the corrupt is extremely essential for achieving the goals of SDGs. Just consider this. For the implementation of the SDGs, the sources of funds, the advice and the consultation are the same old ones. The technocrats, the lawmakers, the political dynasties, the

policymakers, the implementers, the ruling parties, the premiers and the cabinets are the same, with the same old decadent, inept and corrupt attitudes. And they are stubbornly sticking to their corrupt ways.

For example, on February 28th the Punjab Assembly voted against the National Accountability Bureau for arresting allegedly a corrupt bureaucrat. With the same vigour, the National Assembly amended the Elections Act of 2017 in order to clear the path for a disqualified person to head a political party. This must have eroded the trust of many Pakistanis in elected institutions.

Facts speak louder than official claims. Pakistan ranked at 122nd position on the SDG index, while Bangladesh and India are at 120 and 116 positions, respectively.

For such a situation Albert Einstein had said “we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.” Based on the above discussion, two conclusions could be drawn. First, the corrupt are united for self-perpetuation and second the political elites have failed to produce reform-minded leadership. Therefore, we must change the leaders, the managers, the mindset and the strategy, if we want to implement SDGs successfully. We must end corruption and remove the corrupt. We must shift our bias away from infrastructural projects and focus on human development.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1662057/6-corruption-and-sdgs/>

## April 2018

### *NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 9TH TO APRIL 15TH 2018*

#### ***MUTUAL COOPERATION AMONG GOVTS VITAL TO ACHIEVE SDGS: SARTAJ***

Business Recorder, 12 April 2018

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Sartaj Aziz Wednesday said achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is possible only through mutual cooperation among the federal, provincial and local governments as well as community organisations.

He expressed these views while speaking at a three-day international conference organised by the United Cities and Local Government Asia Pacific (UCLG ASPAC) in collaboration with the local council associations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. The conference is supported by the German Development Cooperation and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The deputy chairman said a parliamentary committee has been constituted to implement SDGs. “The federal government is striving to achieve all 17 SDGs, some of which would be implemented soon,” said Aziz, adding that approval to achieve Sustainable Development Goals was acquired by the National Economic Council two months back. Mutual cooperation is more important than money. The provinces have also set up designated units for SDGs’ implementation. Achieving economic goals is part of the federal government’s SDGs’ implementation initiatives, he added.

Out of 17 targets, 10 including availability of drinking water, education and health would be possible through local governments. He further said the children of the poor should be given education to eradicate poverty.

For the resolution of many problems, cooperation matters more as compared to money.

Punjab Finance Minister Aisha Ghaus Pasha said the provincial governments are earmarking Rs 361 billion for local governments annually. The provincial governments are allocating 42 percent of their resources for the local governments. All will have to work for achieving sustainable development. She said that the local governments should utilize allocated money judiciously; otherwise, it will be of no use. She further said that allocations for local governments have been increased but results are not satisfactory.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Minister Inayatullah Khan said war on terror contributed to urbanization and by 2030 fifty percent area will be urbanized. Urbanization is a challenge as well as opportunity if tapped. He said that the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has released Rs50 billion during two years to local governments and by end-June it would be around Rs70 billion against Rs9 billion during 2001 to 2014.

The minister further said the challenge of urbanization should be responded by providing funds to local government system. There is a need to focus on the capacity building of local governments.

“We shall accelerate this journey and reach the destination by synergizing our role as public representatives with our responsibilities to our voters as enshrined in the SDGs,” said a joint statement issued by mayors, chairmen, chairpersons and nazims of different cities throughout the country on the second day of international conference ‘Think Globally, Act Locally – SDGs’ Implementation through Local Governments.’

“The path to a true people-centric, environment-friendly and participatory national life lies through the local governments...” said the joint statement read out by Chairman District Council Sheikhpura and Member Local Councils Associations of Punjab (LCAP) Rana Ahmad Atteeq Anwer.

President Local Councils Associations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (LCAKP) and District Nazim Mardan Himayatullah Mayar said the local governments in Pakistan are still in their infancy and therefore “we can learn significantly from international experiences.”

“Together we can carve out a strategy for us to accelerate SDGs’ implementation at the local level.

We hope that by the end of this conference, we will collectively be able to contribute effectively to 2030 Agenda and forge partnerships and cooperation to achieve our future vision.”

Dr Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi Secretary General UCLG ASPAC, said the current development challenges facing the countries in the region include inequality, unemployment, poverty, climate change and rapid urbanization, and these require the local governments to play a more developmental role for policymaking, she said.

Country Director UNDP Ignacio Irtaza said the global mandate of local governments, irrespective of region and country, is to serve the people locally.

But this cannot be done unless the local governments are provided with the necessary financial and human resources as well as the instruments and capacities to discharge their duty effectively.

Later the delegates submitted their related recommendations to Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi who chaired the closing session.

On the sidelines, sessions were held to discuss the importance of SDGs implementation through local governments and map out ways and means accordingly, separately chaired by Punjab Finance Minister Ayesha Ghaus Pasha, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Local Government Minister Inayatullah Khan among other figures.

More than 60 delegates from over a dozen countries worldwide including mayors of the cities of England, Russia, Turkey, China, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia, Nepal and Afghanistan, directors of United Nations agencies, envoys of European Union and other regional and international cooperation agencies attended the conference.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/04/12/2-page/710116-news.html>

## **GOVT COMMITTED TO ACHIEVING SDGS: PM**

Business Recorder, 12 April 2018

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has stated that Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are very important for development and the government has taken concrete measures in this regard.

While speaking at closing session on 'Think Globally, Act Locally, SDGs Implementation through Local Governments' on Wednesday, he said all the four provinces have developed their local governments system.

Prime Minister said politicians and parliamentarians cannot ignore development activities and there is a need to strike a balance between development work to be undertaken by the local governments and parliamentarians. He said local governments are nurseries for the politicians and added that he wants local government to deliver on SDGs.

The prime minister further stated that experts participating in the conference can take benefit from one another's experience.

There is also need to find solution to the issues associated with the SDGs as problems vary from area to area. Abbasi said the world is shrinking physically and use of coal in one country impacts other country with its impacts on climate change.

PM Abbasi said the government's targets are to provide electricity, road and health facilities and stated that his constituency despite being a remote and difficult area has achieved SDGs.

He stressed upon enhanced cooperation between the parliamentarians and locally elected governments to further accelerate pace of SDGs. The prime minister stressed upon maintaining a balance between resources and priorities of the parliamentarians and the locally elected representatives. "The intent and purpose of the public representation at the Parliament or at the local government is to achieve the development targets," he added.

The prime minister said politics is also based upon local issues and referred to a recent survey in which 42 per cent views attributed to the development projects as one of the main factors to attract voters.

The PM said with collective efforts and cooperation among the public representatives whether in Parliament, provincial assemblies or local governments, it would result in the high level of development.

**The Globalization Bulletin**  
**Agenda 2030**

Abbasi stressed that intent of system must always be optimal utilization of resources. Public representatives had compulsions and pressures and if they agree among themselves, the basic facilities to the public would be provided irrespective of the party, which is in the government. He also emphasized upon finding solution to the issues associated with SDGs.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/04/12/21-page/710289-news.html>