



Viewing Biofuel (Ethanol) Prospects in Pakistan Through a Sustainable Development Prism

Shaheen Rafi Khan
shaheen@sdpi.org

The *Climate Change 2007 Fourth Assessment Report (FAR)* has muffled the sceptics. The current findings replace speculation with scientific certainty -- in fact, the reality has overtaken modelled forecasts. Planet Earth is heating up faster than predicted, with extreme events in their several manifestations spiralling out of control. Glacier retreat, polar ice meltdowns, rises in sea levels, tropical cyclones, storms and hurricanes have triggered natural and human calamities on an unprecedented scale. There is a corresponding urgency to address both the causes of climate change (mitigation) and its effects (adaptation).

Renewable energy in general, and biofuels in particular, have begun to look like an increasingly viable mitigation option. The "bio" in biofuels refers to crop and wood-based raw materials such as molasses, rice husks, corn and wood waste, which are processed into fuel. For developed countries, biofuels offer prospects for meeting their emission reduction commitments under the Kyoto Protocol. For developing countries, biofuels present a means to both reduce energy import bills as well as earn precious foreign exchange. However, reconfiguring the fuel economy to renewable sources is not without risks. Global environmental benefits can also generate adverse local environmental impacts. Similarly, multinational corporations giving price incentives to farmers, to switch from growing food crops to biofuel crops, can threaten food security.

The rapid uptake of biofuels reflects the ease with which they can replace or be blended with fossil fuels, such as petrol and diesel. The technology is simple, cost effective and environmentally friendly. The blended fuels provide a higher octane content, improving vehicle efficiency while reducing carbon emissions. Developing countries also enjoy a cost advantage; they experience year around growing seasons, can access cheap farm labor, and use crop by-products to fertilize fields and fire up distilleries. For instance, Brazil is able to sell ethanol at the equivalent of US\$ 25 a barrel,

compared to US \$50 and US \$70 for the US and Europe, respectively.

Not surprisingly, many countries have adopted biofuels as a way to reduce their oil bills and/or to earn foreign exchange. Thailand is building over a dozen ethanol plants using sugar cane and rice husks as fuel sources. China has constructed the world's largest fuel ethanol facility at Jilin. Beijing is reportedly planning to import Brazilian ethanol as well. Japan has already gone that route; it signed its first 15 million-litre deal with Brazil in May 2006 preparatory to replacing up to 3 percent of Japan's gasoline.

Yet this emerging global market in biofuels is not clear of the political thicket. Developed-country farm lobbies lend momentum to biofuels market development, but they also demand protectionist barriers. "Everyone pretends [their enthusiasm] is for the environment, but it's all about agricultural subsidies," biofuels expert Christian Delahouliere warns. To encourage biofuels, the EU pays

Planet Earth is heating up faster than predicted, with extreme events in their several manifestations spiralling out of control. There is a corresponding urgency to address both the causes of climate change (mitigation) and its effects (adaptation). Renewable energy in general, and biofuels in particular, have begun to look like an increasingly viable mitigation option.

farmers 45 euros for each hectare of "energy crops" they grow. That provides them a powerful incentive to produce, effectively barring cheap foreign bioethanol from entering their market. When Pakistan gained special access to EU markets in 2002 and began shipping bioethanol, local farm lobbies persuaded Brussels to change course and re-establish tariffs. The United States also imposes a 50-cent-a-gallon import duty on Brazilian ethanol. In addition, almost every country has its own biofuel standard, with different specifications that may be manipu-

CONTENTS

Features

Viewing Biofuel (Ethanol) Prospects in Pakistan Through a Sustainable Development Prism 1

Bitter Harvest 5

Jinnah's Vision and the Reality: Revisiting 60 Years of Freedom 7

Women's Land Right Issues in District Swabi: A Brief Sketch 9

In Retrospect

SDPI Center for Capacity Building 10

Campaigns and Talks 12

The purpose of the *SDPI Research & News Bulletin* is to communicate to the development community, private sector, government agencies and concerned citizens, SDPI's research and other activities in the area of sustainable development. It also provides information on major national and international events and issues relating to the environment and development.

The *SDPI Research & News Bulletin* is published quarterly by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute: PO Box 2342; #3, UN Boulevard, Diplomatic Enclave 1, G-5, Islamabad.

Tel:++(92-51) 2270674-6,
2277146, 2278134
Fax:++(92-51) 2278135

Printing: Word Mate

lated to hinder market access.

In this article, we evaluate the biofuel prospects in Pakistan in a sustainable development context. The specific biofuel is ethanol extracted from molasses, a by-product of sugar. The potential for producing biofuels from corn, rice husks and wood waste exists but has not been tapped yet. We also examine the external and internal policy constraints which have prevented domestic ethanol production from taking off.

Production trends in Pakistan

The sugar industry in Pakistan is the second largest after textiles. Currently, 76 sugar mills produce at or below capacity. From a production level of 2.89 million tons in 1991-92, production reached 4 million tons in 2003-04. Yet the production potential is not realized because sugarcane yields remains well below the global average. Also, despite sugar prices doubling since 1992, Pakistan continues to remain globally uncompetitive. The emerging markets in industrial alcohol and fuel ethanol offer prospects of making sugarcane production economically viable.

About 80-85 percent of the total sugarcane production goes towards the production of sugar. The remaining 15-20 percent is converted into *gur*, a local variant of sugar, which is largely produced and consumed in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). Cane crushing produces sugar and molasses as a by-product. The molasses-to-bioethanol conversion process is conducted in distilleries. Currently, 21 distilleries produce industrial alcohol in the country.

The majority of the distilleries are a part of the sugar mills and are situated on-site, making the production cycle an integrated one. The mills receive the cane, crush for sugar, store the molasses in storage tanks on-site, and then pass it on to the distilleries for industrial alcohol production. Industrial alcohol can be converted into fuel alcohol in a simple process by using molecular sieve technology, which requires a capital expenditure of about USD 1.5 million and can be completed in 5 to 6 months. As many as 8 distilleries have installed the sieve technology to process industrial ethanol into fuel ethanol.

Export trends

Until recently, the bulk of the raw molasses was exported, with exports ranging between 0.70 million to 1.75 million tonnes. Only minor quantities were converted to industrial alcohol for domestic use and export. However, over the past five years, a substantial proportion of these molasses was converted into alcohol. Fuel-grade ethanol, which is blended in petroleum products, fetches the highest price in the world market.

Distilleries in Pakistan have three major buyers. Domestic industry purchases industrial alcohol for various purposes. Fuel ethanol is currently only being sold domestically in small quantities to Pakistan State Oil (PSO) as part of a pilot project that blends ethanol with gasoline in a 10 percent ratio. The third and predominant outlet is exports. The bulk of the industrial and fuel ethanol produced is exported through international trade houses. The fuels are brought from distilleries throughout the country to the Karachi port for onward shipping to different parts of the world.

Industrial alcohol exports have increased rapidly over the past five years, reaching 167,600 tons in fiscal year 2006. The average export price for different grades of alcohol ranged from USD 560 to USD 680 per ton. Total earnings amounted to USD 100.6 million in 2006.

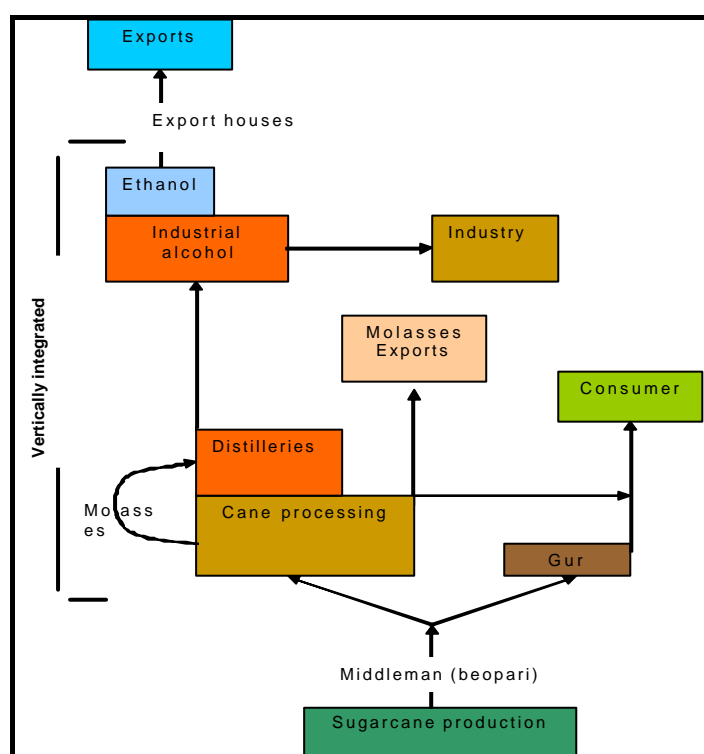
The value-addition in molasses through its conversion into alcohol has enabled exporters to earn eight to ten times more foreign exchange. The bulk of exports went to Japan and the EU, with Italy being the single largest recipient within EU. However, exports to the EU as a whole declined in the wake of Pakistan's removal from the GSP (General System of Preferences) scheme.

Sustainable development (SD) implications

Bioethanol is produced entirely from molasses, a direct by-product of sugar production. While other indigenous raw materials, such as maize, rice, wood pulp and other forest residues are available in large quantities, they do not offer the same scope for value addition that sugarcane does. In other words, the opportunity cost of producing bioethanol is substantially lower than for other available sources. The SD implications are,

therefore, positive. Bioethanol production is not likely to displace food crops or cause deforestation. This is because there is a large untapped potential to convert raw molasses to bioethanol, provided the right kind of policy incentives are in place. However, in the long term, the SD concerns may materialize if biofuels production in Pakistan takes off. In view of the increasing scarcity of water and land, land-use conversions (deforestation) and crop-switching (threatening food security) would then become legitimate concerns. The “wriggle-room” here would be provided by sugarcane yield increases and the introduction of sugar beet on a larger scale. Sugar beet can be intercropped with sugarcane, and it has relatively higher yield as well as a higher molasses-to-ethanol conversion ratio.

Biofuel sector flowchart



Another environmental concern relates to industrial effluents. Wastewater flowing out of distilleries is highly contaminated; if left untreated it can pollute fertile land and harm aquatic life in rivers and lakes. However, despite the general lack of effluent treatment by industries in Pakistan, most distilleries have installed treatment plants, albeit with varying efficiencies. Cost savings associated with waste treatment are the main incentive for distilleries to be environmentally conscious. Distillery wastewater treatment is an anaerobic process through which the organic components of the wastewater are converted to bio-gas, with negligible excess sludge production. The two major products of the treatment process are methane gas and CO₂. Methane gas is recycled as an energy source in the distilleries, meeting as much as 70-90% of the total energy requirement. In effect, then, distilleries

have a ‘closed carbon cycle’. The final discharge, when diluted with subsoil saline water, has BOD and COD concentrations reduced by as much as 97 percent and can be used for land irrigation. The environmental gains from wastewater treatment are thus obvious, while the cost-savings incentives to distilleries are built in.

In relation to end-use, the consumption of fuel ethanol in automobiles leads to a substantial reduction in GHG emissions. The blended fuel provides a higher-octane content without any presence of lead (traditionally used in gasoline as a booster), thus enhancing car performance and at the same time reducing disease-causing emissions from car exhausts. Although no Pakistan-specific estimates are available, the general norm is that for blended gasoline carrying 22-24 percent fuel ethanol, reduction of fossil CO₂ from the tailpipe could be as high as 80 percent.

However, the clearly demonstrated economic and environmental benefits associated with bioethanol production have failed to induce adequate policy responses – either domestic (i.e. import substitution and export promotion) or external.

Import substitution: Pakistan imported petroleum products worth USD 3.1 billion in fiscal year 2006. This accounted for 85 percent of total oil consumption, and also constituted a large proportion of the country’s trade deficit. Clearly, a switch to fuel ethanol would save the country considerable foreign exchange. A 10 percent blend represents a foreign exchange saving of USD 300 million, which doubles at a 20 percent blend.

As a sop to the technology, Pakistan State Oil (PSO) and the Hydro Carbon Development Institute of Pakistan (HDIP) have launched a pilot project to introduce blended fuel within the country aimed at meeting the energy shortfall. In three PSO petrol pumps (one each in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad), fuel ethanol is being blended with gasoline in a 1:9 ratio (E10). However, there is a cosmetic aspect to this initiative and it is almost self-evident that the oil lobby will stall further initiatives.

The private sector informants highlighted certain policy proposals repeatedly during our interviews for the study from which this article is extracted. These included a ceiling on molasses exports and a subsidy on bioethanol production to compensate for the fluctuation in molasses prices. To date, there has been no real government response. In fact, the government has allowed a state-owned oil company, Pakistan State Oil, to conduct a background study on the feasibility of bioethanol use, which clearly illustrates the clout of the oil mafia. Another move which caused concern was the situating of the bioethanol promotion mandate within the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources rather than the Ministry of Industries or the Ministry of Environment. Clearly, the policy provenance must shift if any pro-ethanol initiative is to succeed.

Export promotion: As long as the current policy on fuel ethanol is dictated by the oil sector, import substitution

Features

will remain a slow process. The immediate prospects for improvement lie in export promotion. As indicated, Pakistan presently exports over 160,000 tons of industrial alcohol and bioethanol, earning a little over USD 100 million in foreign exchange, which is well below potential earnings. While industrial alcohol and fuel ethanol have a higher value-added component, and fetch a substantially higher price, molasses continues to be exported in bulk, notwithstanding the recent increase in fuel alcohol exports. A perverse domestic policy contributes to this sub-optimal performance in the shape of a high central excise duty and sales tax on fuel alcohol. This needs to be removed to increase price competitiveness both abroad and domestically. Also, Pakistan would do well to follow India's lead in imposing a ceiling on molasses exports.

Discriminatory external policies

Tariff restrictions: Until recently, under the General System of Preferences (GSP), Pakistan was the second largest industrial alcohol exporter to the EU after Brazil. Initially, Pakistan and six other countries exported industrial alcohol to the EU under a no-tax regime following a dispensation given in the EU anti-narcotics policy. In May 2005, the Commission of Industrial Ethanol Producers of the EU (CIEP) accused Pakistan and Guatemala (the largest duty free exporters for the period 2002-2004) of dumping ethyl alcohol in the EU market, causing material harm to domestic producers. A year later the EU imposed tariffs on imports from Pakistan. In particular, differentiated tariffs on bioethanol and feedstock (raw molasses in Pakistan's case) point to tariff escalation, which discriminates against the final product.

Presently, there is no unique customs classification for bioethanol. Industrial alcohol is traded under the code 22 07 which covers both denatured (HS 22 07 20) and undenatured alcohol (HS 22 07 10). Both types of alcohol can be used for biofuel production. Despite this lack of specific customs classification, the use of tariffs is common practice in countries aiming to protect their domestic agriculture and biofuel industries from external competition. Moreover, the tariffs vary. For instance, the EU and the US have trade agreements that grant differentiated market access conditions to various countries.

The local distilleries have consequently begun to suffer losses and some have ceased operations. After 2002-03, the number of distilleries in the country had increased from 6 to 21. However, given a rise in molasses exports post-2003-04, and the more stringent EU tariff measures, the distilleries were soon idle. Currently, at least 2 distilleries have shut down, with another 5 contemplating that option.

Technical, Environmental and Social Standards: Environmental and social standards are now part of the global trading regime. There is little dispute on whether such sustainable development issues should be linked to trade. The question now is how it should be done. While the North continues to insist upon the stringent implementation of such standards, the South is becoming in-

creasingly wary of the use of standards as hidden tariffs. Moreover, since standards do not tend to be uniform, it becomes virtually impossible for resource-constrained producers in the South to develop variants of their products to conform with standards specific to a particular destination. For instance, the EU's "Biomass Action Plan" is contemplating certification to ensure that biofuel imported is produced from crops grown in an environmentally sustainable manner. Individual EU members such as the Netherlands and UK are already implementing certification schemes. A number of additional voluntary measures to ensure the import of 'sustainable' biofuel are also underway. The varying standards requirements across the North present additional compliance problems for a technically and institutionally unprepared South.

However, the clearly demonstrated economic and environmental benefits associated with bioethanol production have failed to induce adequate policy responses – either domestic (i.e. import substitution and export promotion) or external.

Pakistan has, in principle, supported standards in the global trading regime. But, as a member of the Southern block, it has concurrently and repeatedly opposed any measures that may allow the North to use standards as 'protective' devices against free trade. Its stance on the EU agricultural support, which includes energy crops, echoes that of the G-20 block within the WTO: Pakistan seeks an end to EU subsidies to its farmers, especially 'Amber Box' subsidies¹ Negotiations on EU's agricultural support, however, continue with no end in sight.

Institutional ambivalence: Biofuels and bioethanol continue to remain unresolved issues in the World Trade Organization (WTO), complicating trade in the products. Experts claim that the WTO has never really probed energy issues because few energy producing countries have been members of the Organization; biofuels have warranted even less attention as they constitute a small percentage of the world's energy supply. The WTO classifies bioethanol as an agricultural product, making no distinction between its use as fuel and for other purposes; yet bio-diesel is classified as an industrial product. Thus we have "two competing fuels with different rules". The discussion around biofuels is likely to become more complicated as the range of materials used to make biofuels expands.

Continued on page 6

¹ http://wto.org/english/tratop_e/agric_e/agboxes_e.htm

Bitter Harvest

Karin Astrid Siegmann
karin@sdpi.org

In Pakistan, cotton provides livelihoods to millions of people involved in its cultivation, industrial use and trade. Cotton-picking, although a seasonal activity, represents by far the largest share of employment in the sector -- in three to five waves, from August to February, an estimated two million cotton-pickers harvest the fuel for Pakistan's export engine.

Most of these cotton-pickers are women, despite the fact that acknowledging that women work is seen as a threat to family honour in most parts of Pakistan -- yet another indication of the extent of poverty prevalent in the cotton-growing belt, outlined in detail in an earlier article in this series. Another major reason for the prevalence of women workers is that the men hailing from the cotton-growing belt have more choices in the labour market and migrate for industrial or construction employment to urban areas.



The extreme poverty in which women cotton-pickers live compels them to sell their labour as the only productive asset they possess. The lack of alternative employment opportunities in the rural economy also leads to an oversupply of women labourers during the cotton-harvesting season. Coupled with their poverty, this significantly reduces the bargaining power of women cotton-pickers in negotiations with cotton growers. Moreover, women cotton-pickers are paid by the weight of their harvest. In such a piece-rate system, wages are paid per unit of output rather than per unit of time, as in the case of daily wage labourers.

Traditionally, payment to cotton-pickers used to be in kind. In recent years, however, a vast majority of growers have moved to payment in cash. On the whole, women cotton-pickers' earnings are lower than

those of the male agricultural labourers like sprayers and tractor drivers. This gender-based gap is legitimised by the societal perception of men as the household's main breadwinners and women as its supplementary income-earners.

On average, a fast picker can harvest one *maund* (40 kilograms) of cotton in a day. The cotton-picking rate in Southern Punjab in 1996/97 was reported to be Rs 40 per *maund*, which increased to Rs 50-80 by 2005/06. This increase contrasts sharply with a 42 per cent increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) between 2000/01 and 2005/06 only. The piece-rate system of payment for cotton harvesting translates into meagre daily earnings. For example, a picker who spends four to five hours in the field and gets Rs 80 for harvesting one *maund* of cotton would report daily earnings of just Rs 40-60. Additionally, cotton-pickers are unable to verify whether their harvest has been weighed honestly or not. Even if it has not been, they have no forum to register their protest against those in charge of weighing.

Besides poor remuneration for hard work, cotton-pickers are also exposed to serious health hazards. It is estimated that almost 80 per cent of the total pesticides consumed in Pakistan are applied on the cotton crop, so the most significant health risk cotton-pickers face is their chronic exposure to pesticide spray residuals in their working environment. The cuts and skin rashes of cotton-pickers further expose them to the hazards of pesticides. Picking cotton is also common during pregnancy and breastfeeding, which poses additional risks to the health of women labourers and their children.

Also, cotton-pickers and their family members consume water that is contaminated with pesticides. In addition, pesticides enter the food chain because of their exposure to the soil and livestock and to the cotton seeds that are pressed to produce edible oil. Cotton stalks are often used as fuel-wood in cotton-growing areas. Residuals are thus inhaled by cotton-pickers and their communities. Equally hazardous effects of pesticide exposure have been found among farmers as well as non-farmers during research in Southern Punjab. This comes as no surprise as all people living in a village use the same drinking water from wells situated nearby fields.

The necessity of using more and more pesticides due to the resistance developed in pests, as well as the fact that prices of pesticides have dropped considerably since the adoption of an import liberalisation policy in 1995, has increased their consumption considerably in the last few years. During the same period,

Features

however, the cotton yield has not increased significantly, thus raising serious questions about the effectiveness of increased pesticide consumption.

As most cotton-pickers are illiterate, they are unaware of the hazards they are exposed to. Moreover, on account of their poverty, they are vulnerable to greater health risks. These factors prevent investment in simple protective measures and make recovery from pesticide-related ailments very costly. The bargaining power of cotton-pickers *vis-a-vis* their employer is too weak to negotiate for protective gear. The close association between their domestic responsibilities and paid work exposes not only them but also their children, who are attended to while harvesting, to serious health hazards.

The result is chronic pesticide poisoning, with its symptoms ranging from mild headache to skin allergies to cancer of internal organs. One of the few studies conducted in Pakistan on the issue showed chronic pesticide poisoning among cotton-pickers, especially in the post-harvest period. According to the study, blood samples of only 10 per cent of the female cotton-pickers were in the normal range after the harvesting season. In contrast, the blood samples of 42 per cent of female cotton-pickers exceeded the normal range of pesticides after the harvesting season.

Cotton-pickers are trapped in a vicious cycle of

poverty, which is fuelled by the low pay they receive and the health hazards they are exposed to.

The low piece rates they earn do not allow them to use equipment that can protect them from the harmful effects of pesticides: they also believe that protective gear will slow down their speed. With their low earnings they cannot afford a balanced diet, which in turn weakens their immune system and makes them vulnerable to pesticides' hazardous impacts. Once ill, they do not have the means to get proper treatment.

As a first step towards ensuring decent working conditions in the cotton fields, the role of agricultural workers, especially women, as crucial economic stakeholders needs to be acknowledged. Women workers, who represent more than one-third of the agricultural labour force, are not even mentioned separately in the National Agricultural Policy.

As extension services are provided mostly by men, they hardly reach women agricultural workers. In this scenario, existing legislation for the protection of their lives and livelihoods -- such as the 1973 Agricultural Pesticide Rules, the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation's International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, and the 2005 National Environment Policy that promotes integrated pest management and discourages the use of agrochemicals -- needs to be implemented forcefully.

Continued from page 4

Viewing Biofuel (Ethanol) Prospects in Pakistan Through a Sustainable Development Prism

Given the optimistic forecasts for biofuel growth, the World Trade Organization and others must act now to regulate rules and standards that are all over the map. According to the International Food and Agricultural Trade Policy Council, which released the report on WTO rules on fuels like fuel ethanol, developing countries are 'wildly producing biofuels'. The report recommends a unified classification for biofuels. With rules for measures such as import standards varying from country to country, the WTO, the World Customs Organization and national governments must coordinate to make sure that the future biofuel trade runs smoothly.

Recap

The promotion of bioethanol presents a win-win for Pakistan. With an annual oil import bill of \$3.1 billion, substituting gasoline with bioethanol could generate considerable foreign exchange savings. Moreover, there is no trade-off between bioethanol and food production. The environmental benefits of

using biofuel have been globally documented. Environmentally, the bioethanol production process in distilleries exhibits a closed carbon cycle. Moreover, bioethanol substantially reduces CHG emissions from automobiles, while also increasing vehicle efficiency.

Despite the potential advantages, progress in promoting bioethanol lacks policy impetus. The oil refining companies, in collusion with the petroleum Ministry, have managed to keep a lid on private sector involvement. Rather than enjoying incentives, the private sector is burdened with domestic taxes on industrial alcohol sales. Such domestic policy biases have been compounded by import restrictions abroad which have compromised the country's export potential. EU-imposed tariffs under the revised GSP have led to the closure of distilleries. Further, institutional uncertainties and unresolved issues pertaining to bioethanol classification may complicate the development and global growth of the industry. The domestic policy biases, export barriers, and institutional ambivalence lead to a poor prognosis for future development of bioethanol as a renewable energy source. While the potential for both domestic use as well as exports remains high, key fiscal, policy and external constraints will have to be addressed if positive outcomes are to accrue.

Jinnah's Vision and the Reality: Revisiting 60 Years of Freedom

Abid Qaiyum Suleri
suleri@sdpi.org

The year 2007 is quite significant in the Subcontinent's history. It is 150th anniversary of the 'War of Independence 1857', the centenary of prominent freedom fighter Bhagat Singh, and the sixtieth anniversary of the colonisers' departing the Subcontinent. One might have assumed that the partition of India and the departure of the British Raj in 1947 would have been a happy ending for the War of Independence. However 60 years down the road it seems that things have not changed much.

Very often freedom implies geographical freedom with no attention to its other manifestations such as freedom from hunger, want, disease, poverty, undemocratic rule, neo-colonialism and conflict.

Revisiting 60 years of freedom raises the question whether the colonisers really left us free? The connotation of 'freedom' needs to be discussed. Very often freedom implies geographical freedom with no attention to its other manifestations such as freedom from hunger, want, disease, poverty, undemocratic rule, neo-colonialism and conflict *etc.* Freedom of expression, of belief, a free media, judiciary, and fundamental human rights are also considered a "wish list" that has nothing to do with creation of a sovereign state.

All of us would have our own version of freedom. However, it would be appropriate to revisit the type of freedom that the Founder of Pakistan, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, had envisaged. Addressing the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 11th August 1947, Jinnah forwarded the idea of a state where the government would maintain law and order and where the life, property and religious beliefs of its subjects would be fully protected, *i.e.*, freedom from fear, threats, and the right to life, to own property and to practice religion.

The second assurance that Jinnah provided was freedom from exploitation through bribery; he envis-

aged a country free from nepotism and jobbery; and floated the idea of freedom from poverty.

He was also of the view that the majority and minority communities would have equal rights and that people would be free to go to their temples, their mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. His vision was that the religion, caste or creed of an individual would have nothing to do with the business of the State and that there would be no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another, and no discrimination between one caste or creed and another.

Assuring the religious and political freedom, Jinnah presented the idea of a Pakistan where Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State.

Now let us assess the last sixty years of our freedom in the light of what M.A. Jinnah has envisioned.

- He had assured the writ of law, and the right to life, property and religious belief. One finds states within state in Pakistan, where the ruling class hides from its citizens due to security reasons; where violence and lawlessness prevail; where people go missing in the name of national security interest; where the Chief Justice had to seek justice; where human life is much cheaper than a glass of water; where the establishment facilitates the militant elements to occupy places of worship and hold their parallel courts; where the fear of suicide bombers forces the rulers to celebrate independence by hoisting the flag indoors in a closed hall.
- Jinnah had dreamed of a state free of bribery and corruption: we witnessed that people with a history of corruption were appointed as Ministers when they supported the rulers of the time.
- He declared the black-marketers to be monsters: we found all such monsters in our Cabinets (existing and previous cabinets), hoarding sugar and other commodities essential for life.
- To him freedom meant freedom from nepotism. We have observed inherited lifetime leaders. We see the rule of a handful of families and a Parliament held hostage by Chaudhries, Khars, Legharis, Ja-

Features

malis, Maliks, Khans, Rinds, and Qazis. We also observed that merit policies have succumbed to a caste system; so much so that in research institutes and universities the appointments and promotions are based on caste.

- Jinnah's idea of freedom was freedom from poverty. We found 80 per cent of our rural population food-insecure and poor; almost 3/4th of our population living below the US\$ 2 a day poverty line and poverty related suicides to be at an all time high.
- He had assured us that no power would be able to enslave this nation. We witnessed complaints of various provinces against the unjust distribution of resources and politico-economic slavery. We also saw the state handing over its citizens to foreign countries without any trial or opportunity of defense.
- He thought of a state that may guarantee political freedom. We saw colonialism turning into "colonelism" in this country, where the military has been ruling for 32 years of the past 60 years.
- He thought the state would have nothing to do with an individual's religious belief. We have observed religious minorities being portrayed as enemies in our text books, so much so that a Minister for State for Religious Affairs was inviting scholars of different sects and promoting sectarianism through his

TV talk show. Jinnah founded Pakistan. We turned it to Islamic Republic of Pakistan, where 'Islamic militants' are now perceived to be the biggest threat for global peace.

Living in 2007, one needs to reassess how free and sovereign we are. Our economic policies are being dictated by international financial institutes, our foreign policy is being dictated by the 'White House'. A simple phone call can force our President to attend the Pak-Afghan Peace Jirga, and half a phone call from Condoleezza Rice can determine whether constitution may be suspended and a state of emergency should be imposed.

This may sound very pessimistic. However, I have seen a ray of hope in 2007. Pakistanis were inspired by the people's movement against the monarch in Nepal and became united to save the supremacy of the judiciary in this country. This was the first mass movement in Pakistan that was not based on religious grounds. To me this movement filled in the gap from 1947 to 2006. Having said that, it must be emphasised that this movement is just a humble beginning and much needs to be done to realise the real freedom from the legacy of colonisers, exploiters, black-marketers, and social injustice. Many sacrificed for a century and a half to realise this freedom in the Sub-continent and now is our turn to prove that we are freedom lovers.

SDPI's Tenth Sustainable Development Conference Sustainable Solutions: A Spotlight on South Asian Research

Dates: 10—12 December 2007

Venue: Best Western Hotel, Club Road, Islamabad, Pakistan

Tentative Conference Program

DAY ONE: 10 Dec. 2007

Welcome Address and Introduction (9:00—10:30 am)

Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director (Interim), SDPI, Pakistan

Remarks and book launch by the Chief Guest

Title of the Book: *Missing Links in Sustainable Development: South Asian Perspectives*

Keynote Plenary: Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan, Chairman, National Rural Support Program, Pakistan

Plenary Title: *Poverty Reduction through Social Mobilization: Strategy and Challenges*

PANELS (11:00 am—5:00 pm)

- Development Interventions and the Poverty-Environment Nexus (Session: I)
- Bridging the Subcontinent's Gender Digital Divide
- Common History in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh
- ABS: Addressing the Livelihood Concerns of the Farming Communities?

DAY TWO: 11 Dec. 2007: PANELS (9:00 am—5:00 pm)

- Whose Right to Land?
- Disaster Management in the South Asian Context: Impact Lessons and Institutional Dynamics

For latest Conference program, please visit www.sdpi.org/10thsdci/index.html

Open for all. No registration needed. Audience is welcome to attend the Conference. Students are especially encouraged to attend.

- Reducing or Inducing Risk: Gender and Migration in South Asia
- Rewriting History
- Domestic Preparedness: The Challenges of Trade Liberalization and Globalization

DAY THREE: 12 Dec. 2007

Keynote Plenary (9:00—10:30 am): Dr. Vandana Shiva, Physicist, Ecological Campaigner, Women's Rights Activist and Writer, India

Plenary Title: *Soil not Oil*

PANELS (11:00 am—5:00 pm)

- Sustainable Solutions in the Health Sector (Session I)
- Ignored Producers: Women's Role in South Asian Agriculture
- Regoverning Markets: Sharing Innovative Practices and Policy Lessons
- Development Interventions and the Poverty-Environment Nexus (Session: II)
- Sustainable Solutions in Health Sector (Session: II)

Concluding Keynote Plenary (5:15—6:30 pm): Mr. Syed Babar Ali, Vice President Emeritus, World Wide Fund

Plenary Title: *Business, CSR and the Environment*

Women's Land Right Issues in District Swabi: A Brief Sketch

Saleem Shah
saleemshah@sdpi.org

It is clear that significant gender disparities exist in Pakistan. Women's status is lower than that of men in all spheres of life. Women are underprivileged in getting education, food, health care, freedom of choice and other basic rights. One of the most important aspects of these disparities and discrimination is that of women's land rights. In January 2007, SDPI sent a team of male and female field researchers to District Swabi, in NWFP, to research the issue in depth.

District Swabi, which covers an area of 1,543 square kilometers, lies between the Indus and Kabul rivers. According to the Census of 1998, the total population of the district was 1,026,804 (Male 516,540 and Female 510,264), making Swabi the fourth most populous district of the NWFP. The overall literacy ratio of the District is 36%, with a 30.6% enrolment ratio. District Swabi is mainly inhabited by the *Mandanr*, a sub-tribe of the Yousafzai Pashtoons, who historically have been the landholders. In addition, the *Khattak* and *Tahir Kheli* are landowners in some parts of the District. Geographically and historically, the area constituting Swabi District is a part of the Peshawar valley, and a famous center of Buddhism and the Gandhara civilization.

Like Swat, Swabi is strictly a traditional Pashtun society, particularly in dealing with women. Women land rights are still a taboo subject in the District and even the men who are working in civil society organizations have little or no knowledge of the issue. This is despite the fact that the majority of the male members of local civil society organizations are educated and belong to rich families: their exposure to human rights and women's rights issues appears to have had little influence on their mindset, at least when they think or decide about women land rights.

The basic reasons for there being fewer claims on marital property are: restrictions on free movement and the weak position of women, especially childless widows who could even be murdered if they claim land.

Historically, Swabi is an old settled District like Peshawar and Mardan and one would expect that women's

rights would be more protected but our findings show that this is not the case. It is interesting to note that Swabi is considered one of the most educated Districts, including female education, and people generally believe that the residents of Swabi are very "advanced" and progressive but we found that ground realities are very different. Their attitude towards women's land rights is worse than that of people in Swat. It is worth mentioning that the ratio of women's claims on land at the courts is lower in Swabi

Women land rights are still a taboo subject in the District and even the men who are working in civil society organizations have little or no knowledge of the issue.

than in Swat. In Swat everyone the researchers spoke to, whether religiously-minded or otherwise, was in favor of granting land rights to women, at least theoretically, but the situation in Swabi was quite different.

The basic reason is that women fear breaking up from their natal family, particularly from their brothers, who are considered the custodians of sisters in case they need their help and protection. As in other parts of Pakistan, in most cases, husbands and sons force their wives and mothers to claim land, which the men then control. The basic reasons for there being fewer claims on marital property are: restrictions on free movement and the weak position of women, especially childless widows who could even be murdered if they claim land. There are also some taboos that impede women's ability to claim their rights to land. According to many of the women interviewed, those women who claim land, particularly from the natal family, are cursed by the divine powers and the money would have to be spent on major diseases, enmities, the sudden deaths of children or that the claimant women could even end up with a disgraceful death.

According to lawyers who were interviewed cases related to women's land rights are generally reported in civil courts. People seldom wish to register cases at police stations as this is considered as disgrace for the family. Although the scope of land rights cases is very limited,

Continued on page 11

In Retrospect

Campaigns and Talks



SDPI Center for Capacity Building

Activities: July – September 2007

The SDPI Center for Capacity Building (CCB) provides high quality training to the public, private and NGO sector organizations and individuals to strengthen institutions and build capacities for sustainable development. During the period July to September, CCB conducted the following trainings:

1. Training Workshop on Financial Management for Non – Financial Managers (24 – 26 July 2007)

In business the saying that “knowledge is power” is true. Those who have it hold a competitive advantage over those who don’t. Those who understand the business information at hand, and know how to interpret and use it, make the best business decisions.

To be an effective and diversified professional, knowledge of finance is a must. Financial and management accounting techniques will enhance your depth in business activities and will take you a step ahead to participate assertively in achieving your organizational goals.

The specific objectives were to enable the participants to:

- Understand basic accounting concepts;
- Read and interpret key financial statements;
- Use key financial ratios and indicators to assess and plan performance;
- Understand budgetary techniques and select the most appropriate approach;
- Monitor performance and make recommendations to enhance value;
- Monitor the performance of responsibility centers against budgets and
- Master key financial indicators and tools.

2. Training Workshop on Developing Project Proposals (31 July – 02 August 2007)

Organisations that depend on external funding to achieve their objectives have to apply to various sources to obtain project funding. However, many organisations are unaware of the basic requirements of a project proposal. As a result, a project proposal may be rejected or unnecessarily delayed because it does not meet the required criteria. This workshop was designed to help participants to

understand the basic principles and formats of writing an effective project proposal. It provided them with the opportunity to prepare, present and defend a project proposal.

The workshop objectives were to enable participants to:

- Achieve a common understanding about projects and their nature;
- Understand the components of a project proposal;
- Define the objectives of their projects;
- Justify the need for the project;
- Develop a proposal according to required formats;
- Utilize basic business writing skills needed for enhancing proposal quality; and
- Present and defend their proposals.

3. Training Workshop on Project Management (21 – 23 August 2007)

Managing a project is both an art and science. It involves



a balanced combination of critical skills and mastery of the principles and techniques of management. A major part of time and cost over-runs is attributed to delays in project implementation. Good project management ensures effective implementation and timely completion of projects. Good management enables managers to make optimal use of human and material resources. Contemporary project management techniques require a departure from traditional approaches as they involve improved methodologies of project selection, planning, implementation, controlling, evaluation and termination.

At the end of this three day workshop the participants were expected to:

- Improve their skills in planning, managing and monitoring projects;
- Improve their skills in recruiting;
- Better organize and manage project teams and
- Use the Ten-Step Management Process to manage their projects.

4. Training workshop on Creative Thinking and Sound Decision Making (04 – 06 September 2007)

Often, when we approach any thinking situation like problem solving, making a decision and answering questions, we face confusion. The main problems are: where do I start? How do I know if I have looked objectively at the subject? Are there important factors I have omitted? Are my conclusions accurate? Have I covered all the necessary points? Are my priorities correct? Have I been biased in my thinking? Have I been creative enough? And have I looked at all of the necessary alternatives?

This workshop was based on research and application of two of Edward de Bono's world famous thinking courses – *CoRT* (Cognitive Research Trust) *Thinking* and *Six Thinking Hats*.

By the end of the workshop the participants were expected to:

- Identify opportunities and risks appropriate to situa-

tions;

- Improve their planning and decision making skills;
- Learn tools of creative and lateral thinking;
- Learn to use de Bono's methodology for creative thinking.

5. Training Workshop on Taking Minutes and Writing Committee Reports (11 – 12 September 2007)

On a request from Strengthening Democracy Through Parliamentary Development (SDPD), the Sustainable Development Policy Institute's Center for Capacity Building (SDPI CCB) designed and conducted a two-day training workshop for Staff officers of Parliamentary Secretariats.

The main contents were:

- Thought processes
- Note taking
- Overcoming writing problems
- Interactive discussion on writing processes
- Vocabulary building
- What is good writing
- Sentence-construction skills
- Writing reports
- Writing letters
- Agenda formulation for meetings
- Tools and formats used for targeted writing in the office environment

Continued from page 9

Women's Land Right Issues in District Swabi: A Brief Sketch

the courts, when approached, grant land rights to women in the majority of cases.

The culture of illegal means of transferring land in the name of male members of the family prevails in the whole District. The men cheat the government officials by bringing another woman (not the legal claimant) to the courts. They present her as the real claimant, get her signature or thumb impression on the documents, and transfer the land to the men's names. Corrupt government officials, particularly *patwaris*, play an important role in depriving women of their land. A small amount of money and influence is enough to convince them to transfer the land in the name of male members of a family.

In fact, girls are groomed and trained in a way that leaves them ignorant of their rights. Restrictions on their freedom of movement, which is an indispensable

part of the culture, is another hurdle in claiming lands and going to courts. It is considered a shameful act if a girl claims land or property under any circumstances. In most cases, the basic reasons of such claims (*i.e.* land claims) in the courts are family matters arising from failed marriages, enmities and family clashes.

However, according to the intellectuals and lawyers interviewed in Swabi, violence against women is gradually decreasing. In the past it was unthinkable that a woman would approach the court to claim her land rights but now there are many cases in the courts, which would seem to demonstrate that awareness in this regard is improving. The most important factor in Swabi, as compare to Swat, is that the ratio of school going girls is very high and young women are enrolled in every University of the Province. Similarly, women now join the government and non-government services and are able to find paid employment outside their homes.

According to the local intellectuals, education and awareness both are playing a pivotal role in bringing up this change and breaking the centuries old taboos.

Seminar Reports

Civil Services Reforms

July 05, 2007

The speakers highlighted several structural, procedural and motivational deficiencies in the existing structure of the civil bureaucracy and maintained that a comprehensive reforms package, with the active involvement of stakeholders - especially informed citizens - can only help in the implementation of important initiative of civil services reforms in Pakistan.

The Chairman of the National Commission for Government Reforms (NCGR), Dr Ishrat Husain, said that the roles of the state, market and nation were equally critical for any country to become a prosperous, efficient and developed country in the era of globalization. He said that in addition to the international scenario, a number of internal factors over the last few years have also underlined the need for reforms in the structure, processes and human resource management policies and practices of the dysfunctional public sector. He began by noting "the unequal distribution of the benefits of economic growth and the fact that the global phenomenon of privatization has long roots. He went on to add: the devolution plan by which the devolution of administrative, operational and financial powers has been transferred to local governments, the unbundling of the policy, regulatory and operational responsibilities of the federal ministries, the satisfactory successes of private-public partnerships especially in the fields of infrastructure, education and health, uncertainty and anxiety among the members of the civil services about their future prospects and moving towards the concept of "e-government" by switching from manual to automated processes" as the key internal reasons for the reforms in the public sector. He said that due to the increased role of the media and the technological revolution, the expectations-delivery gap has been widened among the governments and the people, especially in South Asia, thus creating more pressure for governments to meet the expectations of the overwhelming majority of their masses, to avoid to be voted out of office at the time of elections. He said that his organization was working on three principles, which include: restructuring of the civil services, reorganizing the federal, provincial and district levels and re-engineering business processes. He informed those present that merit-based, optimal regional representation, career-based promotions, equal opportunities for progress, decent living wage and compensation packages, the stature of the local civil service and the creation of national executive service with special cadres will be the key considerations in the civil services reforms process. He stressed, however, the need to make this reforms process consultative and urged the inclusion of recommendations from informed citizens. He added that these reforms were being initiated to make the public sector efficient and vibrant for the benefit of citizens.

Giving the historical background on the situation of the civil services of Pakistan, Mosharraf Zaidi, the Governance Advisor for the UK Department for International Development (DFID) said there were 101 Muslim officers out of 1,400 in the Indian Civil Service at the time of partition and only 83 opted

for Pakistan.

He lamented that although Pakistan's is the world's 20th largest economy and has impressive economic growth, its civil service has failed to promote federalism, gender and regional parities. "Promotions must be based on performance - not on the duration of service or age. The system of lateral entry in the civil services has not only encouraged short cuts through means other than competitive exams but has also caused serious discontent among officers of different services groups" he maintained. Exploring the gender and regional imbalances and the domination of elitist groups in the civil service, he recommended increases in quotas for women and more inductions in the civil services from backward areas such as Balochistan, N.W.F.P and other neglected areas such as Southern Punjab. He also advocated decentralization, and the provision of more powers and functions for the Provinces as well as for local governments.

Musharraf R. Cyan of the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, Atlanta USA, advocated a comprehensive reforms package to bring a real change in the governance structure of the country. He underlined the need to consider the historical context in ongoing reforms process, without which the process would be meaningless. "Mere reformist and managerial change would not bring any results, as there exists an institutional dualism in the present civil service system involving competition between the formal mandate of the civil servants and powerful informal rules - this is causing real problems" he added. He noted that informal rules are often in conflict with formal ones and that often the informal directives to the officers by their "high-ups" are greater in number than the formal ones. Discussing the devolution plan of 2001, he argued that the mere re-labeling of the offices has also not brought enough change in the performance and accountability of the government departments

The Chairman of the Board of Governors of SDPI, Shams ul Mulk, in his opening remarks, maintained that countries can only make progress and become prosperous if they have strong and effective institutional arrangements. He remarked that institutions are instrument for development and growth, adding that the failures and successes of countries can be judged by the failures and success of their institutions.

Lal Mosque Episode: Lessons and Repercussions

July 09, 2007

The speakers and participants, while supporting actions against extremist religious forces in the country, unanimously declared the Lal Masjid standoff to be the government's calculated and manipulated attempt to divert public attention from other important political and social issues to achieve domestic and international political advantages.

Former Senator of the PPP, Farhatullah Babar, while questioning the timing and manner of the operation and the rapidly changing stance of the government, maintained that the issue of Lal Masjid was staged and re-engineered by the military government of General

Musharraf to overshadow other important political, social and economic issues and to regain fading international support for his government. "On the domestic front, it is a skillful effort to divert public attention from the All Parties Conference (APC), the recent landmark ruling of the Supreme Court during the hearing of the Chief Justice case, the government's failure in the handling of flood-related devastation in Balochistan and Sindh, and the upcoming re-election of the President.

On the international front, the government wants to soften the international pressure of America and its Western allies in their constant demand to "do more" in the process of war on terror" he added. He said that the military governments had a tradition of staging such artificial crises, while recalling a similar situation in February 1981. At that time, when the opposition parties joined hands under the umbrella of the MRD by signing a declaration demanding an end to General Zia's regime and the Baluchistan High Court had admitted a petition challenging martial law, the teachers, lawyers and students were on strike. The MRD also set March 2 as the deadline for lifting press censorship and March 23 for complete restoration of democracy, failing which they warned of nation-wide non-cooperation and protest demonstrations. However, on March 2, the day on which the opposition had threatened to launch the countrywide agitation, a PIA plane was hijacked to Kabul. The military regime of General Zia deliberately prolonged and manipulated the hijack incident so that it turned into the longest hijack in the world, lasting for thirteen days. In the wake of the dynamics unleashed by the hijacking General Zia banned unions, came down heavily on political dissent, changed the basic structure of the Constitution by promulgating the PCO and made the Supreme Court subservient to the military courts by removing from its purview the sentences awarded by military tribunals.

Particularly talking of Lal Masjid issue, he said it was strange that the regime allowed the Ghazi brothers to play havoc for months, turning a blind eye on the issues of the illegal occupation of public library, kidnapping of women and infants, kidnapping policemen, vandalizing private property and shops, bringing heavy weapons into the mosque, threats of suicide bombings by the Ghazi brothers, setting up of religious *Shariah* parallel court in the capital and issuing a *fatwa* against female Minister Nilofur Bakhtiar. He added that it was only after the Chinese women had been taken hostage that the regime appeared to awake from its slumber. "Indeed, the Lal Masjid issue was allowed to simmer because it helped the Musharraf regime," he averred. Mr. Babar called for a review of national priorities by urging more investments in education, revision of the decision to spend hundreds of billions on a new GHQ in Islamabad, when a functional GHQ already existed in Rawalpindi, which could save over 500 billion Rupees. He also called for streamlining the control of the intelligence agencies to bring them under the control of Parliament and civil apparatus.

Prof. Ashfaq Saleem Mirza of the South Asia Free Media Association (SAFMA), lamented that the government of Pakistan was solely responsible for this crisis, adding that the military and civil governments in the country always spread red carpets for fundamentalists by succumbing to their demands while oppressing democratic groups. He said that, starting

with the Objective Resolution in 1949, the process of increasing "mullahism" in the Constitution still continued. He regretted that General Zia had upgraded the resolution from the Preamble to the main text of the Constitution. He deplored that fact that we had ignored theocracy's march into our polity, leading to a walkout from the National Assembly in February for excluding all chapters from history books that talked of the pre-Muslim era of Pakistan. Members of the Swat clergy stopped people from vaccinating their children against polio and doctors were beaten. The clergy even said that anybody dying with polo was a '*shaheed*.' He also quoted from General Zia who believed that God entrusted him to impose Islam in Pakistan.

The speaker noted that the Ghazi brothers had been arrested with weapons and explosives in 2004 but were exonerated through the efforts of Ijaz-ul-Haq after a written agreement and "the rest was history". He asked how a CDA law could allow construction of residential accommodation for clergy adjacent to every mosque. Prof. Mirza said that widespread poverty was the primary reason for the trends unfolded by the Lal Masjid and the Jamia Hafsa, which were 'nurseries' for recruiting militants for fanatic religious outfits.

Reviewing the Flood Emergency and Responses

July 20, 2007

While highlighting the numerous institutional, attitudinal, e-source management and mobilization lapses during the rescue and relief efforts in the flood-hit areas, the speakers urged the Federal government and the international community to generously contribute to end the suffering of the people of the affected areas. One of the speakers, holding the mega projects more responsible for the damage than the heavy rains alone, argued strongly for the need to develop risk-sensitive development projects in the country.

The Donors Coordinator of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Zubair Murshed, while sharing a detailed picture of the flood-hit areas through maps, stressed the need to make the development process risk-sensitive, adding that the impact of the floods was multiplied by the collapse of development projects. He noted that shelter, food, potable water, medicines, early recovery, livelihoods and disaster risk reduction were some of the priority needs of the NDMA in the early recovery process. He noted that the NDMA is a coordinating and supervisory body, which immediately mobilized different government departments and bodies to carry out an effective rescue and relief operation after the tragedy occurred in late June. He presented figures on the number of people killed, missing and made homeless as well as the number of houses damaged and operational relief camps established. He noted that the NDMA was mobilizing additional resources for shelter, medical care, and immediate compensation for the Mirani dam affectees, all intended to overcome the sufferings of those affected.

Former Governor of Balochistan, Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Abdul Qadir Baloch contested the figures of the NDMA and UNDAC representatives, urging the nation and the international community to focus their attention on the suffering of the people of Balochistan. This was especially necessary in still-

inaccessible areas such as Kharan, Washuk, Turbat and Noshki, since the flood losses in these areas are phenomenal. He said that there are different types of problems in different parts of Balochistan after the flood devastation, but the key problem was shelter. "I urge the nation and the international community to help the people of Balochistan in reconstructing their houses, by seeking an increase in the Rs 15,000 announced by the government to at least Rs 50,000 as 80% of the affected people have monthly incomes of only Rs 4,000 to 5,000". He also sought a fresh assessment for housing reconstruction, provision of medical facilities, and the establishment of a coordinating agency for relief and reconstruction. He particularly appreciated the role of national and international NGOs during this disaster.

Ted Peam, Team Leader of the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team (UNDAC), presented a brief report about the mandate, structure and functions of the UNDAC. He maintained that his team had conducted an initial assessment of the situation and there was still a strong need for a detailed assessment of the flood-hit areas to determine the future interventions. He said that after the launch of a central emergency response fund in the first phase, which focused on immediate humanitarian needs, UNDAC had launched a 'flash appeal' to the international community to donate around \$80 million over the next three months. He said that a team of donor agencies would carry out a survey in the disaster-hit areas from 23rd July and a detailed report will be submitted in late August. He noted that food security and shelter remained urgent priorities.

Harris Khalique, Chief Executive of Strengthening Participatory Organizations (SPO), highlighted the human suffering, damage to infrastructure and deficiencies in the rescue and relief operations, noting that the lack of disaster-management capacity at the District level, the absence of effective coordination between Islamabad and provincial capitals and the interference by law-enforcement agencies were some of the factors which substantially multiplied the miseries of the people of affected areas. However, he appreciated the role of the NDMA and its efforts in handling the overall situation.

Increase in Violence: Factors and Actors

July 23, 2007

The speakers held several factors and actors responsible for the grave crisis the country is facing today and urged the nation to consciously adopt approaches for national unity and reconciliation to deal with the hegemonic designs of the imperialist empire builders. They termed the Supreme Court's verdict of 20th July 'a ray of hope' for disillusioned Pakistanis and demanded an immediate end to the military role in politics and other civilian institutions for the best interests of Pakistan and its people.

Former General Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, Mohammad Akram Zaki, called for national unity and reconciliation in Pakistan and demanded that the rulers and policy makers de-link themselves from the imperialist empire builders of which they have become instruments to achieve their hegemonic designs. "It is high time for us to adopt the approaches of tolerance, coexistence and genuine democracy,

as the country is facing the most serious crisis today in its sixty years of existence" he maintained. He said that terrorism is a child of injustices, which ultimately breed suppression and tyranny. He said that Iranian revolution in 1979 and the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan were two turning points in history which provided the successors of George Washington an open opportunity to use Pakistan for the implementation of their imperialist designs. He added that the Americans took it as a 'project' while Pakistan and other parts of the Muslim world took it as a 'holy war'. He pointed out that after the demise of Soviet Union, the Americans 'flew away', leaving behind a majority of brainwashed people who have no other course but to rely on guns and drugs to achieve their objectives.

He also lamented the shifting role of the UN, noting that all of its pre-1989 declarations concerned means of *addressing* the causes and reasons of terrorism, while all of its post-1990s declarations seek to *eliminate* terrorism. The speaker argued that this cannot be done unless and until the causes are genuinely addressed. He also lamented that Pakistani youth, religious sentiments and seminaries are being exploited to drain the Pakistani mind.

Former Ambassador B. A. Malik urged national reconciliation in Pakistan on the pattern of South Africa to promote tolerance and co-existence to make it a stronger and more prosperous state. He declared the Pakistan military to be the 'mother of all evils' and a powerful actor behind all the factors which led Pakistan to this critical stage. He demanded an immediate end to the military's role in politics, maintaining that the military had never let the people have genuine democracy in the country, having ruled Pakistan directly or indirectly for almost 54 of its' years. "When people, any community or any nation is being deprived of its fundamental rights then ultimately it resorts to violence and sadly the Pakistan army has been violating the rights of the people, thus spreading violence in our society" he lamented. However, he appreciated the recent Supreme Court verdict which, according to him, will prove to be the first step towards an end to the military's deep-rooted and unconstitutional penetration of politics and society.

The Chief Executive of Strengthening Participatory Organizations, Harris Khalique, urged (i) the revamping of the existing biased education system, (ii) broad-based judicial reforms, (iii) rethinking of the foreign policy goals of Pakistan & India and (iv) addressing the Afghanistan link, to help Pakistan and its people to overcome the prevailing culture of violence and intolerance. He said that the majority of the population does not have access to good equality education, as there were serious *lacunae* in enrolment and the curriculum. He also noted the mushrooming of *madrassas*.

Speaking of the of judiciary, he said that the Supreme Court's landmark verdict against the presidential reference brought hope to the nation but that serious, 'bottom to top' broad-based reforms are the need of the hour, as the inability of the judiciary to deliver have caused serious depression and frustration in the people over the years. He cautioned that the time has now come for our foreign policy makers to realize the ground realities and take account of peoples' aspirations before taking overnight Uturns on critical national issues. "A

policy U-turn at top level cannot suddenly change the ground realities and ultimately causes tyranny which only provokes violence" he warned.

During the question and answer session, the participants raised questions regarding the lack of knowledge on social issues, freedom of expression, the military's frequent interference in the democratic system, and the inability of the existing government to handle national and international issues such as terrorism, extremism, poverty, price hikes and unemployment.

Looming US Invasion and Options for Pakistan

July 30, 2007

While stressing the urgent need for a broad-based national consensus and strong resolve on the part of the government to deal with the US threat of attacking inside Pakistan, the speakers virtually ruled out the possibility of such a strike. They noted that it is Pakistan's nuclear programme, the failures of the US in Iraq and Afghanistan, increasing internal pressure on US president J. W. Bush and the security of Israel which have led the US administration to threaten unilateral strikes inside Pakistan. Citing the situation in Iraq, they contested the authenticity of US intelligence reports regarding the persisting and evolving threat of "Islamists" in Pakistan.

Former Secretary of Foreign Affairs Riaz H. Khokhar urged the nation to unite against the serious menace of possible US strikes, cautioning that Pakistan's internal situation is more favorable today than ever before in terms of any foreign aggression. He said that a national consensus is building in the US to question the intentions of Pakistan in terms of protecting US interests, despite substantive financial, military and political support over the years. Noting that the US is world's sole superpower and its friendship and enmity are equally bad, he added that "in the friendship of US first we set our house on fire and now the fire is engulfing our house".

He said that Pakistan and the US had a history of checkered relationships but there have always been serious reservations among the masses of Pakistan on Pakistan's joining CEATO & CENTO as well as on Pakistan's role against communism in the shape of Afghan jihad and now the 'war on terror'. He said that the worsening situation in Iraq, insufficient US forces to open another war front, NATO's half-hearted involvement in Afghanistan and, more importantly, the mounting internal pressure on the US President, have compelled the administration to threaten Pakistan with such strikes. "George W. Bush will be remembered as the worst President in US history and he would not seek permission from Pakistani authorities in case of US strikes in the tribal areas of Pakistan" he feared.

Former Ambassador Tayyab Siddiqui ruled out the possibility of any American invasion, although he declared the present situation 'alarming', based on the recent US intelligence reports citing the case of Iraq. "The bottom-line of the Americans' threatening approach is to target Pakistan's nuclear programme only" he cautioned. He said that the US failures in Iraq and Afghanistan, and increasing pressure on President Bush, have compelled the Administration to reinforce the threat of terror so as to convince the American public that the

war on terror is not over and that it requires further legitimacy and justification.

He also stated his concern over the statements of some of Pakistani officials who were claiming the presence of foreign militants inside the Lal Mosque and the Jamia Hafsa during the standoff, adding that such statements serve short-term purposes but harm the national interest in long run".

Defense and political analyst Lt. Gen. (Ret'd.) Talat Masood urged a greater national consensus and genuine reforms in FATA to deal with the contemporary internal and international challenges. He said that following repeated US demands 'to do more' over the years, the US has now started threatening to carry out unilateral strikes inside Pakistan's tribal areas. The US has also passed a Congressional Bill for conditional support to Pakistan, in order to give internal support to the US President through the international threat of persisting and evolving threat of Islamists with the help of such intelligence reports. He hoped that the threatened actions would not materialize, adding that in case of strikes in the tribal areas, resentment would not be limited to the target areas but would spread across the country, creating resentment among the masses and instability across the country and in the Region. "There is a difference of perception between Pakistan and America on the issue of the 'war on terror': America considers it a global threat and a national security concern requiring military action, while Pakistan considers it a local issue" he added. He also declared the recent US-India nuclear deal a serious concern for Pakistan.

Former Chairman of the Institute of Strategic Studies Agha Murtaza Poya said that the US policies in the region are particularly aimed at protecting and strengthening the Zionist state of Israel, which is destroying its potential enemies one-by-one, especially Muslims and including Pakistan. "The US cannot not see a sovereign and prosperous Muslim state so it is carrying out the processes of 'de-Islamization', de-nuclearization and de-militarization in Muslim countries to strengthen the Zionist regime of Israel" he declared. Citing several examples - including its role in the dismemberment of Pakistan - he said that the biggest sponsor of terrorism in Pakistan is the CIA..

In the Light of the Twilight of the UN 'Year of Rumi': Political and Environmental Flirtations with Sufism

August 06, 2007

Dr Syed Noman-ul-Haq, Project Director of the American Institute of Pakistan Studies, declared that a 'policy' on Sufism without any context would fail. Dr Noman said that Sufism is a totality and has to be received in its totality. He said there is a 'romance' in Sufism but this romance has to be translated into policy. He added that Hegel knew Rumi and praised him, and through Hegel, Karl Marx also came to know of him.

Referring to interconnectedness, and quoting from Rumi, he said that one form of life is connected with the other. He said there is a problem with translation as it is the context without which we cannot understand Rumi. He said "Rumi was directly impressed by words of Quran. His is not a theological position but that of an artist". He said that rules must be followed in case of Rumi, citing Hajj and Zakat as exam-

ples.

Elaborating on the teachings of Rumi, he referred to the salient features of correcting the environment, which are: making no distinction between the Divine and the natural environment; inter-connectedness between different systems in the universe; the idea of biological evolution; the collision of different systems; the creation of new bodies and clear pluralism. He said that it is a duty of Sufis to take corrective steps. He added that some of the Sufi schools of thought, such as *Naqshbandi*, have strong elements of political activism. He gave two contemporary examples of political activism – the *Mehdi* movement in Sudan and *Al Sannusi* in Libya fighting against the Egyptian and Italian imperialist powers by integrating music and dance with political activism and waging *jihad*. While discussing Rumi's philosophy he recited many verses from Rumi's *masnavi*.

The discussion was followed by a heated debate. Responding to one question Dr Noman said that Sufi poetry was never accepted as a standard. He said that the *Wahabi* movement ran into problems and diverted into *different* possessions. The same, he said, happened with Sunni possession. He said we should see the historical Rumi and not the 'constructed' Rumi. To another query, he said that Qadria are not Sufis.

He remarked that students in *madrassas* from a specific class are taught a specific interpretation and if we teach Islam in its true perspective, the students will be open minded and not the likes of the Lal Masjid or Madrassa Hafsa.

The Prospects of the All Parties Democratic Movement

August 20, 2007

The speakers blamed military dictators for disrupting the social and political system in the country for their own vested interests. They vowed to strongly resist the re-election of President General Pervez Musharraf, saying they had already launched a "Go Musharraf Go" movement which would continue until the ouster of the regime and the restoration of the supremacy of the Constitution and true democracy.

They hoped for bright prospects for the APDM and demanded the restoration of the 1973 Constitution, as it was on October 12, 1999, as well as the formation of an interim government of national consensus to ensure free and fair elections and an end to the role of military dictatorship in national politics.

Senator Professor Ibrahim Khan of the MMA said that the APDM is not an electoral alliance but a political movement for the restoration of the Constitution. After discussing in detail the political and constitutional history of Pakistan, he lamented that the Constitution of Pakistan had been held in abeyance twice: first by General Zia ul Haq and then by General Pervez Musharraf. He noted that it is still not clear which part of the Constitution is functional, as General Musharraf holds two offices in gross violation of the Constitution. Professor Ibrahim warned that if the leadership of the country fails to respond to the aspirations and demands of the people, then 160 million people would choose its own leadership.

He noted that there is a wide public perception that it is the US, rather than elections, which has brought about

changes in Pakistan. He added that, unless and until this perception is removed, no genuine change could take place. He demanded the restoration and supremacy of the 1973 Constitution as it was on October 12, 1999 and a complete end to military dictatorship.

Admiral (Ret'd.) Jawaid Iqbal, Additional Secretary General, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, said that it is high time to expose the intellectual dishonesty which has caused harm to the country. He said that the rule of law, the supremacy of the Constitution and the strengthening of democratic institutions are essential for putting the country on the track of democracy. He highlighted the importance of justice and termed it one of the prerequisites for establishing a truly democratic system in Pakistan.

Zahid Khan, Central Secretary Information, Awami National Party, said that the worsening law and order situation and the weakening writ of the government, had made the life of the common man miserable and threatened the country's security. He maintained that the ANP had neither voted for nor accepted General Musharraf as President and that it would continue to resist his re-election, along with its APDM partners. He said that Musharraf was left with no option and that his days of dictatorship were numbered, adding that people would not accept any new General or any dictatorship after Musharraf. He said that, fortunately or unfortunately, the ANP had remained in the forefront of the resistant political alliances established for the restoration of democracy. He noted that his party would actively contribute to the movement launched by the APDM, which represented different parties and ideologies.

Zafarullah Khan, Executive Director, Center for Civic Education, Islamabad, said that it is difficult to predict the prospects of the newly emerged APDM as it is still in the process of evolving. He said that the political environment is clouded with confusion: some of the significant political parties have attached their hopes to the courts, while others are looking towards military generals. The real power - that of the people - was ignored. Noting that the APDM is the 23rd political alliance, he remarked that such political alliances had repeatedly failed to translate their power into electoral strength. The only exception was the IJI and MMA, who were like-minded.

Education Policies: Gaps and Lacunae

August 25 2007

This seminar was jointly organized for Parliamentarians by SDPI and Strengthening Democracy Through Parliamentary Development (SDPD-UNDP). SDPI Visiting Fellows Dr. Kaiser Bengali and Dr. A. H. Nayyar, with T.M. Qureshi, Deputy Education Advisor, Ministry of Education and Ali A. Naqvi of the Institute for Development Studies and Practices (IDSP) Pakistan, analysed the education policies.

In her opening remarks Ms. Marvi Sirmed, National Country Manager of SDPD spoke on the need to remove *lacunae* from the National Education Policy. Parliamentarians, including the Chairs of the National Assembly and Senate, representatives of the public and NGO-sector organizations contributed to the discussion.

An overarching theme was the need for commitment by

the state and comprehensive reforms in order to bring about an efficient and credible education policy. The speakers highlighted several institutional, political, attitudinal, resource-management and utilization lapses, as well as access and quality related *lacunae* in the education policies of successive governments.

Renowned economist Dr. Kaiser Bengali urged policy makers to broaden their focus from resource-based development to a knowledge-based economy, as various developed and developing countries have benefited from this approach. Discussing the broad perspective of 'economics of education', he lamented the extremely low budgetary allocations for education by successive governments. He noted that during 60 years of independence the state had never intended to achieve education targets; rather, the policies adopted were public relations exercises intended to soften both public pressure and international contexts.

He also said that education must be a provincial subject as successive 'one size fits all' policies have failed to produce the desired results. Instead of decreasing, the demand-supply gap is sharply increasing. First analyzing several failed initiatives, he then presented the findings of a study conducted in the Provinces. That study found that teachers were unavailable, basic facilities and physical conditions were poor and the quality of education in general was poor. The study also demonstrated that there are varied education ratios in different provinces and an ever-increasing rich-poor educational gap.

Educationist Dr. A. H. Nayyar, speaking about the quality of education, said that qualified and trained teachers, good learning materials, adequate infrastructure and improved examination systems are minimum requirements for achieving quality education. He said that early education is a key for any student but several serious issues at this level have hampered the genuine process of learning. Explaining the three tiers of quality education, he maintained that learning skills, languages, reasoning, creativity, critical thinking, assimilation and the frontiers of knowledge, discovery and application are achieved through this process. However, our existing educational policies are causing serious social implications and helping anarchy to prevail instead of the institutionalization of education for the betterment of the people and the country. He recommended establishing a National Commission to seriously address these critical issues.

T. M. Qureshi, Deputy Education Advisor at the Ministry of Education, who is presently revising Pakistan's National Education Policy, spoke on the financing of education and the disbursement and utilization of resources. He argued in favour of increasing the rational utilization capacity of the provinces and efforts to achieve a broad-based consensus for national policy formulation. He also called for the establishment of standards and for a positive role for legislators in establishing structures and policies.

Mr. Qureshi noted the prevalence of "basket funding" rather than "pool funding", and called for the de-politicization of education. He also discussed the budgeting process and various types of budgeting, as well as sources of funding, including donor funding. He also touched on budgets for education development and recurring budgets, as well as issues

regarding the release of funds.

He noted that the prevalence of establishing parallel institutions and authorities over the years has brought tragedy to the education system. He maintained that education is a provincial subject constitutionally but a number of serious problems at that level have apparently made it a federal subject.

Ali A. Naqvi of the Institute for Development Studies and Practices discussed access to education and issues related to privatizing education. He urged the creation of a comprehensive package to ensure greater access and higher quality, community ownership of education and public-private partnerships. He also noted the need for a universal education system. He maintained that education has been treated as a commodity by society and the state, which has led to the majority of Pakistanis missing out on the opportunity to receive an education.

He quoted some of the data on education: of the 245,682 education institutions, 164,579 belong to the government and 81,103 are non-government. 12,737 government institutions are non-functional. 5,154 did not provide any information. 3.78% of schools do not have a boundary wall. 32.3% have no water. 56.4% do not have electricity. 40.5% do not have latrines. Drop out rates are very high, reaching 60-70% in Sindh and Balochistan. This is the situation for 3.3 million children aged 5-9, the majority of them girls.

He lamented that our existing education system is based on the policy of exclusion and that this must be changed, so as to reach all sections of society. Universal education should encourage diversity. It would also transform vertical hierarchies to 'horizontal partnerships'. The result would be conscious citizens with meaningful livelihood skills, leading Pakistan towards becoming a just, peaceful and progressive country.

SDPI has sent its report on the seminar with policy recommendations to SDPD for consideration by the government.

Pak-Afghan Grand Jirga and Regional Peace

August 27, 2007

Discussing different aspects of Pak-Afghan grand Jirga, the experts present termed it a positive development amid a worsening crisis. They urged the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan, the strengthening of intra-Afghan dialogues for national reconciliation and peace in Afghanistan and the region.

Akram Zaki, former Secretary General of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, termed the recent Jirga a positive development and hoped that it would be instrumental in addressing the current Afghan crisis. He noted that the only solutions to the problem were political settlement and economic development. He lamented the fact that foreign powers have a tradition of occupying other countries and their resources and for their own interests, and in this case Afghanistan is being used to destabilize Pakistan, Iran and China. He added that the greatest tragedy of the situation is that Pakistan is killing its own people, which poses serious threats to the integrity of the nation.

Zahid Saeed, a former Ambassador, on behalf of an association of 39 former service Ambassadors called the AFA,

read out a declaration calling on all the concerned parties to carry on the dialogue process so as to reach a comprehensive political settlement based on genuine Afghan reconciliation, power-sharing and the establishment of a time frame for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. He said that the Jirga, in its historical context, is more of a *rivaj* than a law or *Shariat*, and expressed the hope that the instrument of the Jirga would be useful in addressing this crisis. He cautioned, however, that the withdrawal plan of foreign forces must follow a backup plan to avoid situations like those Afghanistan has witnessed in the past.

He said that Pakistan has extended the greatest possible cooperation to international efforts against terrorism and urged Pakistan to play a mediatory role in this crisis and to avoid the use of force in tribal areas or across the border as this latter action would 'sanction war to establish peace'. He urged comprehensive reforms in FATA, lamenting that despite sixty years of independence, Pakistan has introduced no substantive policy initiatives to bring about reforms in the tribal areas. He also demanded that the victims of actions by NATO forces should be compensated according to the Geneva Convention.

Dr. Azmat Hayat Khan, Director of the Area Study Centre, Peshawar, maintained that there are both negative and positive aspects of the recently held Jirga in Afghanistan. He argued that the presence of American forces in Jirga was the biggest negative aspect which poses a serious threat to the whole process. However, some positive aspects included: the development of an understanding between Pakistanis and Afghans; recognition of *de-facto* trade between the two countries; the emergence of new thinking among Pashtoons and non-Pashtoons to rebuild and reunite the country and to save it from disintegration were useful outcomes of this Jirga. He said that another positive aspect of the Jirga was the recognition among Afghans that they could not ignore Pakistan in the process of their recovery from the suffering of the last thirty years. He argued that the Afghan issue is not a religious phenomenon adding that terms such as Al Qaeda, the Taliban and "talibanization" were western terminologies, which needed re-definition.

Afzal Khamosh of the Pakistan *Mazdoor Kisan Party*, Charsadda, who also attended the Jirga in Kabul, urged the governments of both countries to end their cooperation with foreign occupiers to save their people and resources from the deep-rooted exploitation by the superpowers. He said that the presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan is a crucial aspect of the situation, adding that "it is not a fight of religion or nations but a fight for safeguarding imperial interests which have complicated the crisis and left millions of Afghans and people living across the border inside Pakistan miserably deprived of their fundamental rights and basic services". He said that the Kabul Jirga had provided an excellent opportunity to the 700 delegates of both sides to have an informal dialogue on common issues. He said that the majority of the delegates had developed a common understanding before the Jirga that it is neither Pakistan nor Afghanistan but someone else behind this worsening crisis. He then said that the country looked like a wounded bird looking to every visitor as a *Massiah*. He warned America to withdraw its forces, as the history of the

Afghans is full of resistance that has led to the defeat of foreign occupiers in the past. He drew a clear distinction between the Taliban and the process of "talibanization", questioning Pakistan's policies and warning of the dire consequences of the Afghanistan issue for the whole of Asia if not properly handled.

Mian Qadruddin, international diplomat and former Additional Secretary, said that the Jirga is a result of a summit meeting between the US, Afghan and Pakistani Presidents held in Washington last year. Giving some contextual background of the Pak-Afghan grand Jirga, he said that the purpose of the Jirga was to focus primarily on the domestic audience in America. He termed the Jirga a secular institution in which the traditional tribal leadership had significant authority to decide the inter-and intra-tribal disputes, rather than issues related to religious leadership.

Migration: Reducing or Inducing Risk?

September 10, 2007

Dr Zafar Mueen Nasir, Director (Policies) Planning Cell, Ministry of Labour, Manpower, and Overseas Pakistanis, identified the absence of employment opportunities and growing income disparities in Pakistan as the main catalysts of migration. He deplored the fact that, although these workers are contributing significantly to the national economy, their legal rights are often not being recognised, either within Pakistan or internationally, making the workers very vulnerable. Integration into the host society is a constant challenge for them. Special categories of migrants, such as victims of human trafficking as well as refugees, are particularly at risk. At the national level, he stressed the loss of a skilled workforce, - the so-called 'brain drain' - as another risk associated with transnational migration. He said that the implementation of existing legal instruments, greater emphasis on equal rights and treatment at work, a social charter for migrant workers, as well as the ratification of international Conventions providing for equal treatment, jobs, wages, security and safety and union rights, were some of the measures that need specific attention in our policies.

Arbab Azhar, Director General, Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, detailed the existing regulations concerning emigration under the Emigration Ordinance 1979 & Rules. Under this Ordinance, risk coverage of migrant workers going abroad for better earnings includes pre-departure briefings about the new environment as well as support at the destination in the form of Community Protection Officers in the migrants' host countries.

Professor Dr. Seema Pervez, former Professor at Quaid-i-Azam University, elaborated on the issue of migrants' integration in host societies. She highlighted 'the other side of the coins' that were remitted. According to her, the same migrant workers who are seen as key instruments for raising foreign exchange face serious psychological, social, and religious problems in the receiving countries. Their value systems are seriously shaken by the confrontation with a different culture. She blamed the lack of attention to the value of tolerance in Pakistani society for this. She noted that many migrants and their families often experience discrimination in the host coun-

tries. Overall, she criticised the lack of the government's attention to these psycho-social risks associated with migration.

From the perspective of the sending regions, SDPI researcher Mr. Maqsood Ahmad Jan shared the preliminary results of his ongoing research on the effects of trans-national migration in rural NWFP. In the study area - Upper Dir and Swat Districts -remittances are the most important source of cash income, covering expenditures for food, health, clothing and education. However, the fact that no significant differences in food intake, health status, or education were observed between households with and without migrants, raises questions regarding the role of remittances in economic progress. In some households the migration of husbands, brothers or fathers increases women's vulnerability. Their workload also increases as they take over male tasks and their dependency on other household members rises. On the brighter side, migrants' housing structures, including water supply and sanitation, often improve after migration. This would have a positive effect on the household members' health. At the village level, remittances sometimes stimulate construction, small-scale trade, and transport activities with positive effects on employment opportunities and wage levels.

Recommendations from the seminar included:

- At the national level, the Government of Pakistan should form a Labour Ministerial Committee on Migration, for better coordination among state level stakeholders. This includes the improvement of skills certification, which in turn requires improved cooperation between the national and provincial levels.
- The Government of Pakistan should ratify ILO Conventions 97 (on Migration for Employment) and 143 (on Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers) as well as the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers.
- The Government should campaign for the ratification of these Conventions in the main host countries of Pakistani migrants
- At the regional and international level, the Government of Pakistan should seek greater cooperation regarding the protection of the rights and interests of migrant workers in *fora* such as SAARC, ASEAN and the WTO.
- The Government should also seek greater and more effective cooperation between sending and receiving countries in order to protect the rights of the migrant workers through enhanced information and regulation at the grass roots level.
- The Government of Pakistan should address the neglected issues of identity, discrimination, and the integration of cultural and value systems of the migrant workers through awareness-raising and counselling.
- Migration-related welfare activities of the Government, such as housing and education, should be extended to the main sending regions, which are currently neglected.
- Development interventions should take the role of migration and remittances into account; for example, regarding

the development of SMEs and financial infrastructure.

- Ultimately, infrastructure improvement of, and economic development in, sending regions should become the Government's main concern, rather than the stimulation of migration. This includes education and health related awareness-raising activities designed to improve livelihoods in the sending regions.

The Deepening Political Crisis: Causes and the Way Out September 17, 2007

The speakers predicted that there would be no easy way out amid the deepening crisis in the country except free and fair elections with a level playing field open to all political forces in the coming elections.

Contesting the idea that the current crisis is only political in nature, political and defense analyst Lt.General (Ret'd.) Asad Durrani said that it is a state crisis. He said that the ongoing military *versus* militants situation in Waziristan and Balochistan, the 12th May incidents in Karachi and the recent attacks in Rawalpindi and Ghazi Turbela are dangerous events for the security and integrity of Pakistan. He deplored the fact that the government has not considered finding non-violent solutions to the crisis but has, instead, launched military operations under external pressure. He cautioned that the use of force by the state against own people is always counter-productive and resistance to the use of force tends to spread violence. He cited the spillover into Pakistan from Afghanistan, and from the tribal areas to the settled areas as examples. Speaking of military rule in Pakistan, Lt. General Durrani said that it always needs legitimacy and a political façade to remain in power, noting that military rule had received support from those political forces that lacked the peoples' backing and often disappeared after the end of military rule. The military rulers often faced judicial problems when they tried to manipulate the Constitution. He added that free and fair elections are impossible in the presence of a uniformed President. He expressed the fear that the political divide would be further sharpened due to external interventions to ensure the continuity in the system and attempts to line up the liberals against the extremists.

President of the National Party, Dr. Abdul Hayee Baloch, ruled out the possibility of a peaceful transition and said he feared a real confrontation in the ongoing political crisis. However, he hoped that finally the 'will of the people' and the 'power of the street' would prevail over the might of the state. He said that Pakistan has reached a defining moment in which it has become extremely difficult for the masses to remain subservient to the interests of the establishment. Equally, it has become difficult for the rulers to separate themselves from power, politics, hegemony and corporate interests. Dr. Baloch said that for the first time in the history of Pakistan the judiciary, the media, the *intelligentsia* and the people of Pakistan are playing an assertive role thereby posing a real challenge to the deep-rooted hegemony of the establishment and its political allies.

Dr. Baloch called for a 'politics of the people' in which nations are sovereign under a genuine democracy and federation and have control over their natural and marine resources.

He lamented that although Pakistan is a multinational country, its 'nations' are deprived of their basic rights. He said that the frequent periods of martial law and dictatorship have systematically ruined the Pakistan's institutions, federation, Constitution, democracy and rule of law. Speaking of a recent meeting of the All Parties' Democratic Movement (APDM), he said that the PPP did not join the APDM but they are in favor of its agenda and all of the member parties have decided not to hold any talks with the present regime led by a dictator.

Zafarullah Khan, Executive Director of the Center for Civic Education, noted the need for three things: a grand national reconciliation for free and fair elections; the need to review the Constitution to undo all unnecessary amendments and a functional federation. He added that all of these political issues must be resolved through political process. He said that many so-called myths have been shattered in this process and now it is time for the establishment of a functional democracy and democratic institutions. He said that the myth of 'sustainable democracy' by General Musharraf has shattered and is now the monster is about to eat its own creature.

He also cited the myth of the army being the strongest institution; a myth now being eroded with the continuous attacks and army personal being taken hostage in different parts of the country. The third example cited was that of a "convenient Constitution" constructed by General Musharraf through the 17th Amendments: this is no longer workable as manifested by the recent tampering with the presidential election rules.

Unprecedented Price Hikes: Whose Responsibility?

September 24, 2007

While highlighting several deficiencies in the Government's price control mechanisms and policies, the speakers demanded the effective implementation of a Consumer Protection Act, a proactive role for consumers and the strengthening of consumer rights organizations. These would make it possible to effectively control manipulated price hikes and to protect the rights of consumers.

Abrar Hafeez, Secretary General of the Consumer Rights Commission of Pakistan, termed most of the Government's claims about prices "eyewash" and urged consumers and consumer organizations to play a proactive role in effectively dealing with the unprecedented trends of price hikes in the country. He lamented that inappropriate and ineffective legislation, poor implementation and lack of awareness among people on consumer protection mechanisms are the major hindrances in controlling the unchecked prices of different goods and services. He said that there exists no real monitoring mechanism on the quality, quantity, and timely delivery of essential goods and services: this lack exposes all consumers – and especially vulnerable sections of the society - to manipulation by powerful market forces and service providers.

Mr. Hafeez identified the arbitrary price hikes, opaque and non-participatory policies of successive governments, the unchecked supply of spurious and hazard-

ous products, the poor quality of services, hoarding, the sale of contaminated food items, and the absence of any redress mechanism, as some of the problems consumers confront every day. Mr. Hafeez also questioned the capacity, outreach, access and discriminatory attitudes at the Utility Stores Corporation that claims to provide relief to the poor.

Mohammad Ajmal Baluch, Central Organizing Secretary of the Traders' Action Committee, Islamabad, urged the people of Pakistan to rise against their continued exploitation and victimization at the hands of powerful forces and 'mafias'. He predicted that Pakistan was heading towards a revolution as it is being run without any fair, transparent and participatory system of governance, which has eventually created disappointment and anxiety among the common people. He noted that both civil and military governments have a tradition of investing the taxpayers' money on baseless propaganda campaigns - particularly against traders - to shift the blame and to avoid public criticism. Mr Baluch also urged the creation and implementation of a Rent Control Act and the allotment of specified areas for the provision of subsidized goods to poor people in Islamabad.

M. Y. Khan, Communications Co-ordinator of The Network for Consumer Protection, Islamabad, called upon the civil society, especially consumer rights' organizations, to play their due role in consumer awareness and consumer rights' protection. Mr. Khan argued that it is the lack of political will in policy-makers, the lack of consumer activism and the lack of demand from consumers for quality and standards, which have systematically multiplied the miseries of consumers in Pakistan. Turning to the subject of wheat exports, he said that the unchecked smuggling of wheat and flour to neighboring countries had further exacerbated the situation. He noted that the Consumer Protection Act is ineffective and has failed to monitor and protect consumer rights. "The selective implementation of the Consumer Protection Act, under which some price-control committees are formed in different districts, is inappropriate and insufficient to control these manipulated prices". While discussing the recent unchecked price-hike, he said that people always blame the government, traders or the producers for the rising prices but the government alone is responsible for the price hikes as it has repeatedly failed to manage prices or to establish an effective consumer protection mechanism against hoarding, black-marketeering and price-hikes.

Faisal Gorchani of SDPI, referring to the continued influence of a few powerful and elite families in Pakistan's stock exchanges since Independence, urged the nation to collectively struggle against this deep-rooted exploitation of the majority of Pakistanis. "It is unfortunate that after sixty years of independence, Pakistan is still not a genuinely free country and society as a few elite families continue to enjoy an unhindered hegemony over business, politics, the establishment and other key institutions of the country" he concluded.