The Relationship between Food Insecurity, Poverty, Militancy and Conflict

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Traditionally, there has been a strong link between poverty, militancy and conflicts, but the ongoing unprecedented floods and massive devastation in Pakistan have multiplied the possibilities of such consequences in the near future. Pakistan’s floods have widely been termed as a ‘historic catastrophe’ on earth and the initial assessments suggest that losses may exceed 12 billion dollars. A recent US report prepared for US lawmakers and made public in mid August has raised fears of more lawlessness, dangers to national security, and the exacerbating threat of extremism in Pakistan due to environmental issues and climate change with which the recent floods have a direct link. The report adds that the country’s population faces critical risks of food security in the decades to come due to scarcity of water, population growth and mismanagement. The report was written prior to the floods but the ongoing devastation caused by the floods has increased the likelihood of food insecurity placing the risk of conflict at a much higher scale. Given the above situation, the panel discussion aims to educate, engage, mobilise and sensitise different stakeholders on the subject of the poverty-militancy nexus and its multi-dimensional implications. Specifically, the primary goal of this panel discussion is to engage policy-makers including parliamentarians and policy-making institutions as well as the researchers and academicians, civil society, the public, media, and social and political activists.