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SDPI's Sustainable Development Conference

Light at the End of the Tunnel: Hope in Times of Despair

20 - 23 November 2023

Islamabad, Pakistan



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26th SDC thematic poster and bulletin designed / formatted by: Umair Hassan

Some Glimpses of SDC 2023



SDPI's Twenty-sixth Sustainable Development Conference: A Recap

20 – 23 November 2023 | Islamabad | Pakistan

Light at the End of the Tunnel: Hope in Times of Despair

Introduction

Since its foundation, the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) has championed intellectual discourse by hosting a succession of Sustainable Development Conferences (SDCs).

The SDC is a flagship event of the Institute that not only provides a forum for SDPI's own research but also invites other researchers, practitioners, policy makers and academia to share their work and engage in a dialogue with fellow panellists and audience. This annual event has been established as a prime Conference in South Asia with a major focus on Asia and beyond. It is one of SDPI's many efforts in tackling sustainable development challenges through mutual and collaborative knowledge sharing, critical analyses, and best practices. Details of the SDCs can be found at <https://sdpi.org/sdcseries>.

Launching this tradition in 1995 with the inaugural SDC, each event culminates in the publication of an anthology — a testament to the rigorous peer-reviewed research inspired by the conference. These anthologies encapsulate the rich dialogues, insights, and pioneering discussions from their respective SDCs. Recent anthologies can be downloaded for free from <https://sdpi.org/sdconference/sdcpublications/publications>.

Twenty-Sixth SDC (2023):

“Light at the End of the Tunnel: Hope in Times of Despair” was the overarching theme of SDPI's the Twenty-Sixth SDC. It was inaugurated by H.E. Dr Arif Alvi, President of the Islamic Republic of



Pakistan, in the Evening Plenary on 20 November 2023 followed by panel and plenary discussions from 21 – 23 November 2023. Altogether a total of 40 sessions were organized of which 9 were plenary sessions

and 31 concurrent sessions. Over 300 speakers represented the following 19 countries: Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, Germany, Italy, India, Kenya, Nepal, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Thailand, the UK and the USA. It was attended by an audience of over 3,000 people.

For the first time, alongside SDC, Sustainability Investment Expo 2023 was held along with the Food Security Hackathon. The Expo aimed to bring together both public and private sector players in the design, production, and management of sustainability products, services, and initiatives while the two-day Food Security Hackathon focused on innovative initiatives to address food security challenges confronted by Pakistan and Afghanistan. Details of the Conference may be found at <https://sdpi.org/sdconference/>.

Policy recommendations were formulated during thematic and interactive sessions, roundtables, and policy forums at the Twenty-sixth SDC. This Special SDC Bulletin documents the agendas of the sessions, narrative reports of each session and the key policy recommendations from them.

Policy recommendations can also be viewed at <https://sdpi.org/sdconference/Light-at-the-End-of-the-tunnel-Hope-in-Times-of-Despair/policy-recommendations>.

Over the past years, SDCs are being held in a hybrid format as did this one. Some speakers joined online and so did the audience. Sessions were streamed live and recordings have also been made available for later viewing at this link: <https://sdpi.org/sdconference/Light-at-the-End-of-the-tunnel-Hope-in-Times-of-Despair/videos>.

Acknowledgements

Policy recommendations featuring in this Bulletin have been curated by Sarah Siddiq Aneel, Ahmed Khaver and Dur E Nayyab, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad. These recommendations were drawn from the thematic sessions and plenaries of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute's Twenty-sixth Sustainable Development Conference held in November 2023. A special thanks to the team of rapporteurs of the Conference for their valuable contribution to the compilation of policy recommendations and press releases.

SDC Anthology

Sustainable Development in Unusual Times: Building Forward Better

Jointly published by SDPI and Sang-e-Meel and launched at the 26th Sustainable Development Conference.

To purchase a copy, please contact Ahmed Salim Resource Center at (051)2278134.

For free download of a copy, please visit <https://sdpi.org/sdconference/sdcpublications/publications>

Blurb

Sustainable Development in Unusual Times: Building Forward Better provides a comprehensive exploration of the intricate challenges and innovative solutions for the sustainable development of South Asia, with a central focus on Pakistan. Amidst an era marked by climatic adversities, geopolitical conflicts, and a global health crisis, this anthology serves as a pivotal reference, diving into multifaceted issues ranging from climate resilience and energy, trade, governance vulnerabilities to gender disparities and healthcare challenges.

The section on *Environmental & Economic Paradigms* addresses topics of climate resilience, renewable energy solutions, and forward-thinking trade policies for Pakistan. It underscores the potential of the Climate and Disaster Risk Finance and Insurance (CDRFI) model and stresses the importance of climate diplomacy and Green Bond markets. Authors discuss energy insecurity and urge that while the sector is traversing through uncertain phases, strong domestic policy and regulatory support is essential for adopting a low carbon pathway and addressing both demand and supply side concerns. Finally, the use of innovative financial instruments, such as Catastrophe (CAT) Bonds, hinting at a promising avenue to reinforce sustainable agriculture and mitigate natural disaster risks; and the need to broaden the country's trade vision, especially Free

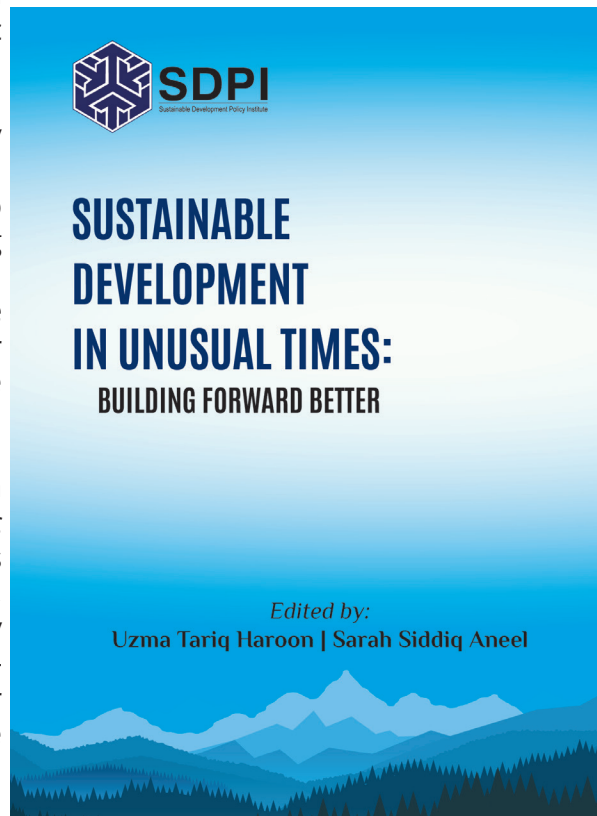
Trade Agreements (FTAs), are debated.

Governance Imperatives turns the lens to the profound societal impacts of public policy decisions. Authors conduct a deep dive of the Taliban's rise to power in Afghanistan and its implications, underscoring the importance of a well-structured, holistic refugee and asylum framework for Pakistan. Additionally, another chapter discusses the complexities of decentralisation stressing the latent promise of truly empowered local governments. The authors advocate for greater political ownership, adoption of best practices, streamlining bureaucratic processes, and enhancing public participation in decision-making to transform Pakistan's governance landscape.

In the concluding section, *Gender & Health Narratives*, the anthology examines societal constructs and healthcare challenges. This section zeroes in on strategic solutions, to overcome deep-seated gender disparities, such as a transformative shift in the patriarchal mindset through media engagement, boosting women's financial autonomy through interest-free loans, promoting their professional advancement with targeted tools and trainings, and promoting gender equality via educational reforms. The book then shifts its focus to the frequently neglected topic of rare diseases, highlighting the urgent need for inclusive healthcare policies, joint initiatives between the public and private sectors, community-centric healthcare strategies and prompt interventions in treating neurological ailments in Pakistan.

Written by the best and brightest minds, ***Sustainable Development in Unusual Times*** is not just a book, but a manifesto for change. It is a clarion call for collective action, an earnest invitation to rethink established paradigms, and a futuristic blueprint for ensuring a thriving, sustainable Pakistan.

Blurb by Sarah Siddiq Aneel



SDPI's Twenty-Sixth SDC was held with support from the following donors and partners



Inaugural Plenary: Navigating the Roadmap to Recovery, Resilience and Optimism

Master of Ceremony: Dr Vaqar Ahmed, Joint Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Host: Ambassador Shafqat Kakakhel, Chairperson, Board of Governors, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Welcome Address and Introduction to the 26th SDC: Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Special Remarks: Dr Masoud Jarallah Al-Marri, Director General, Islamic Organization for Food Security; and Director, Food Security Department, Ministry of Municipality and Environment, State of Qatar

Guest of Honour: Ms Mushaal Hussein Mullick, Special Advisor to the Caretaker Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Government of Pakistan

Address by the Chief Guest: H.E. Dr Arif Alvi, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Group Photo with the Chief Guest

Plenary Organisers: Mr Hassan Murtaza & Mr Asim Zahoor, SDPI

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/cXKYBR4pAYU>



NARRATIVE REPORT

No sustainable development sans women empowerment, global peace: Dr Alvi.

President of Pakistan Dr Arif Alvi said the world cannot achieve the goal of sustainable development without women empowerment and global peace amid dehumanizing of society through perpetuated conflicts around the globe.

He was addressing the Inaugural Plenary of the 26th Sustainable Development Conference organized

by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here on Monday under the title: "Light at the End of the Tunnel: Hope in Times of Despair". The President expressed his commitment towards the matter of sustainable development as an issue of great significance.

Expressing his commitment to sustainable development in the country, Dr Alvi said human history reflects a primitive account of violence that was made at the hands of demonizing humanity and trampling of human norms. However, amid prevailing crisis and turbulence, it was the human intellect that gave him hope.



Development Conference of SDPI's theme of hope is very important amid challenges the world is faced with, as it underscores the attention needed to global trials. He added that trade, technology, and local resources were important for the Sustainable Development Goals whereas multisectoral approaches were required to tackle the multidimensional crisis of climate change.

In his opening remarks, SDPI Executive Director, **Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri** extended his gratitude to the President for his persistent support to the forum. He informed the audience that the delegates from some 19 countries including Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, Germany, Italy, India, Kenya, Nepal, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Thailand, the UK and the USA would be sharing their outputs during different sessions of the three-day conference and present their policy proposals at the forum.

Dr Suleri said despite all the crises, a ray of hope still persists depending on the civil society, bureaucracy, private sector, and the activists working for the betterment of the system.

Elucidating the SDC theme, he said it was decided keeping in view the fact that some 70 countries around the world would witness elections in their states in 2024. He said that the unfortunate tragedies in Palestine particularly Gaza indicate that through coercion the issue of two-state solution could not be suppressed, the community response to the Gaza massacre globally is a ray of hope, and that the general summit of the UN in 2024 will be reshaping the governance of the global financial institutions. He further stated that the Artificial Intelligence is another ray of hope to bring something optimistic.

He added that the goal of sustainable development amid times of crisis would be achieved through collective effort and the SDC forum would convene international experts, members of civil society, academia, public and private sector to provide their recommendations which will be shared with the policy makers for their consideration.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, **Ms Mushaal Hussein Mullick** said the SDC served as a beacon of collaboration where diverse minds will unite to work out strategies for sustainable development in the future.

She added that sustainable development and women's rights are intertwined, and both cannot

Elaborating upon human history and its linkages to the world order, the President said the current era of this world order was carved by the 20th century world era of renaissance and development of arts as there were more conflicts recorded in that part of the world where human thinking was evolving. He went on to say that the human footprint on the globe was important as it was on the path of conflict and may incur devastating impacts on the life of people.

The President categorically indicated the potential risks of Artificial Intelligence that was projected to surpass human mind in the coming decades and its access to individuals in a democratic way a more damaging arm than the weapons of mass destruction.

"Human intellect's development is faster than his habitats and I find hope in human intellect but not passion as the former has the potential to deliver. I pin hope in evolution of world order with participation of the people while using human intellect," the President said, and concluded that without human values, no world order could attain its shape.

Dr Masoud Al-Marri, the Director of Food Security Department, Ministry of Municipality, State of Qatar, said the 26th Sustainable



be achieved sans empowering women who comprise half of the world population. Mullick said the women empowerment demanded equal opportunities and focus on dismantling all barriers impeding their way to success, which should be done through fostering partnerships as a cornerstone of development agenda.



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Encourage a collaborative approach involving governments, civil society organizations, private sector, and individuals to actively engage in addressing crises like climate change, political turmoil, and economic challenges. This collective action should be informed by the insights and experiences of international delegates and experts, aiming to formulate and implement effective strategies for sustainable development, particularly in regions heavily impacted by these global challenges.
2. Enhance food security through climate-smart agriculture, sustainable water management, and technological integration, focusing on comprehensive strategies for prevention, mitigation, and adaptation in areas affected by climate change and conflicts. This effort should involve international organizations, governments, and agricultural sectors, aiming to develop and implement solutions for a resilient food supply.
3. Promote gender equality as a key element of sustainable development by providing education and economic opportunities for women, ensuring their equitable participation in decision-making processes, and challenging societal norms that hinder gender equality. This effort should involve governments, non-profits, businesses, and individuals, focusing on actionable initiatives that empower women, crucial for achieving a sustainable and equitable future.
4. Governments and international development organizations should prioritize policies that reduce economic and social disparities. Initiatives must focus on equitable access to education and healthcare and support fair trade practices to ensure inclusive economic growth.
5. Environmental regulatory agencies and industry leaders must enforce and adhere to stricter environmental standards.



Opening Plenary 1.1: Balancing Geostrategic and Economic Diplomacy

Master of Ceremony: Ms Khansa Naeem, Research Associate, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Welcome Remarks: Ambassador Shafqat Kakakhel, Chairperson, Board of Governors, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Distinguished Speakers:

1. Ambassador Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, Spokesperson and Additional Foreign Secretary (Strategic Communications Division & Public Diplomacy), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan
2. Mr Haroon Sharif, Former Chairman, Board of Investment, Government of Pakistan
3. Dr Moeed Yusuf, Vice Chancellor, Beaconhouse National University (BNU), Lahore (Online)

In Conversation with: Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Book Launch: *Sustainable Development in Unusual Times: Building Forward Better*

Plenary Organisers: Dr Kashif Salik & Ms Khansa Naeem, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Naima Shehzadi

PRs: Ms Huma Arshad

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/-v1SSZA0pMk>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Pakistan needs inhouse reset, improved governance to achieve economic, geostrategic balance: Experts

Pakistan needs a serious inhouse reset and order amid improved governance to achieve an economic and geostrategic balance in the region, say experts.

This was a consensus at the opening plenary of the 26th Sustainable Development Conference organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) titled "Balancing Geostrategic and Economic Diplomacy".

Foreign Office Spokesperson **Mumtaz Zahra Baloch** said the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) was a commendable platform

where international, federal, provincial, and local institutions are working together to enhance investment in the country. Amid rising significance of economic diplomacy, it is important for our diplomats to secure the long-term national interests of the country, she said, adding that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is training its diplomats in economic diplomacy. The focus of the country's foreign policy is on developing partnerships based on mutual respect and confidence whereas it is important for Pakistan to avoid being embroiled in great power rivalry, Baloch said. She underlined that the bureaucratic adjustments were important as the ambassadors and diplomats need to understand economic diplomacy.

Former National Security Adviser, and Vice-Chancellor of Beaconhouse University, **Dr Moeed Yusuf** said no relevant experts are deployed to the fields at the Pakistani missions abroad to promote economic diplomacy like IT or medical diplomacy. The National Security Policy was the document with a vision owned by many federal and state entities that will take years to yield results, he added. Dr Moeed said the world is changing faster leaving nations unprepared. However, geoeconomics and geostrategy are the same but it is ultimately the priority of the state keeping in view its national interests. Regarding Palestine-Israel conflict, he said it was important for Pakistan to take policy measures to safeguard its interests in the Middle East.

H a r o o n Sharif, Former Chairman of Board of Investment, said the world including Pakistan is undergoing the times of uncertainty because it's the readjustment

of the past 30-40 years world order shift from unipolar to multipolar world. He noted that the geoeconomics is not a new topic but now it has changed its shape aggressively whereas Pakistan is stuck in a situation where there is liquidity in the region but its dynamics or nature has changed. It is pertinent to understand the nature of liquidity as at present the commercial interests are dominating the strategic interests, he added. "We must react to this extraordinary shift in a non-traditional fashion as the country needs to make

a different economic equation for all," he added.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementing the following strategies will require concerted effort from all levels of government, especially the diplomatic corp and active engagement with stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector. The goal is to create an economic diplomacy framework that is responsive, stable, and capable of driving Pakistan towards sustainable development and prosperity. The government, therefore, needs to:

1. Acknowledge and actively address macroeconomic challenges such as inflation, import pressures, and weak connectivity. This involves implementing strategic measures like planned development partnerships and privatisation.
2. Reduce the size of the government to make it more efficient and cost-effective. This involves eliminating redundant roles, merging overlapping departments, and focusing on core functions. Streamlining should aim to improve service delivery, reduce bureaucracy, and improve governance.
3. Implement measures to ensure greater political stability. This includes encouraging long-term policy planning rather than short-term political gains. Political stability is crucial for attracting investment, maintaining economic growth, and

ensuring effective implementation of policies.

4. Shift from short-term, reactive policy making to a long-term, strategic approach. This requires the government to engage in comprehensive planning, considering future challenges and

opportunities. Long-term policies should be grounded in data and analysis and be flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances.

5. Establish clear boundaries between political and economic decisions. This separation is crucial for creating a stable and predictable economic environment, attractive to investors and beneficial for long-term economic planning.
6. Undertake comprehensive bureaucratic reforms to streamline government operations



and make them more conducive to economic growth and efficient administration.

7. Invest in the education and training of individuals to become experts in specific policy areas. This specialisation is essential for informed decision-making and effective policy implementation.
8. Focus on enhancing regional connectivity as a cornerstone of Pakistan's geopolitical and geoeconomic strategy. This would involve fostering development partnerships that are regionally focused and aim to improve transportation, trade links, and economic cooperation with neighbouring countries.
9. Foster a non-zero-sum approach in international relations, stressing collaboration over competition. Focus on aligning diplomatic efforts with Pakistan's national interests independently.
10. Actively seek new international partners and investors. Explore and develop new sectors for trade and investment to broaden economic opportunities.
11. Diplomats should prioritise economic diplomacy, adapting to global economic shifts. This involves understanding and promoting Pakistan's economic interests internationally.
12. With limited resources, Pakistan must intensify efforts to create more economic opportunities, focusing on areas with high potential for growth and innovation, such as services sector and knowledge economy.
13. Shift focus to commercial interests while understanding their increasing dominance in international relations. This involves reorienting policies and strategies to cater to contemporary commercial realities.
14. Develop non-traditional, innovative economic strategies in response to the changed geopolitical landscape post-US withdrawal from Afghanistan. This includes diversifying economic activities and creating unique economic value.
15. Encourage deeper understanding among foreign ministers of the private sector. Enhance coordination between the private sector and foreign ministries to align diplomatic efforts with market realities.
16. Incorporate advanced technology to modernise diplomatic processes and restructure embassies, making them more efficient and responsive to contemporary challenges.
17. Adopt a specialised approach towards global economic diplomacy, recognising its unique requirements and potential impact.



Thematic Session A-1: (Roundtable)

Weaving Circularity: Rethinking Pakistan's Textile Industry for a Sustainable Future

In collaboration with UNEP

Moderator: Ms Zainab Naeem, SDPI

Chair: Mr Syed Naveed Qamar, Former Federal Minister for Commerce, GoP

Speakers:

1. Ms Adriana Zacarias, UNEP, Nairobi (Online)
2. Mr Basit Ali, IPRI & Dr Aneel Salman, IPRI
3. Presentation: Sustainable Futures: Prioritising Degrowth for Economic and Social Well-being in Pakistan
4. Ms Nazish Shekha, PBC
5. Mr Rehan Bharara, Faisalabad Garment City
6. Ms Mehak Masood, Artistic Milliners
7. Ms Farheen Zahoor, AGI Denim
8. Ms Azka Abdur Rehman, Sapphire Finishing Mills Limited
9. Mr Rafah, Sapphire Finishing Mills Limited

Panel Organisers: Ms Zainab Naeem, SDPI | SDC Unit

Rapporteurs:

PR: Mr Huzaifa Rehman

PRs: Ms Dur E Nayyab

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/-p-h-7Tg8P0>

NARRATIVE REPORT

Textile industry faces challenges in the face of climate change, energy cost, big markets: Naveed Qamar.

Former Commerce Minister **Naveed Qamar** said that textile is the biggest export of Pakistan, but it is facing stringent challenges in the face of climate change, high energy cost and the new regulations



from big markets like the US and the European Union.

He was speaking at a session titled **“Weaving Circularity: Rethinking Pakistan's Textile Industry for a Sustainable Future”**. Stressing the need to make textile sector competitive and learn from the experts, Naveed Qamar said that there is a huge import of recycled garments which means that there's a huge market in Pakistan. “Rather than asking the industry to change their methods and try and trace where the governments have gone, there is a need to create a whole new industry because it's only the profit motive that move people into doing this and not the regulations,” he concluded.

Ms Adriana Zacarias from the United Nations Environment Programme highlighting the circulatory issue, said the textile industry is the biggest one which has been greatly impacted by the climate change. She added that they are focusing on related global issues, social protection, and necessary infrastructure. The circulatory

mechanism could reduce the emissions to a greater extent for larger social benefit.

Ms Mehak Masood from Artistic Milliners said the main challenge faced by the textile Industry is the regulation of supply chains through a collaborative approach with focus on global demands and regulations. Circularity, she said, is the need of hour, but there needs to be certain guidelines in this regard; it is a very old concept but the bigger challenge is how to regulate it.

Mr Rafeh Bin Rauf from Sapphire Textile Mills Ltd said circularity is in the habit of Pakistanis because we reuse our products and it has come down through generations but there is a need to formalize this sector.

Ms Rehan Bharara from Faisalabad Garment City said we need to create new jobs in circularity areas. The bigger issue for the SMEs, he said, is that they are not represented at the government policy-making level.

Ms Farheen Zahoor, AGI Denim, said we can learn from other countries' studies and findings as we know that the future belongs to circularity. We must keep abreast with the latest developments in this regard, as EU is coming up with new legislation in next few years.

Ms Ayesa Aziz, Packages Limited, said circularity revolves around three Rs, i.e. reduce, reuse, and recycle. Every year, there's a new art added to that, so what we need to do is we need to build a lot of awareness. "We also need to build awareness on reusing and reducing and also acceptance in the

consumers for using recycled clothing."

Mr Umar Saleem from APTMA said measuring circularity in Pakistan is one of the biggest challenges. We need circularity to make things more sustainable and this can be done through efficient use of resources.

Dr Amna Basharat from FAST-NUSEC said that circularity actually tells us that nothing is a waste, and everything must go somewhere. This is fundamental whether it's in industry, plastic, pharmaceutical, or textile. If we learn this basic fundamental, we will be able to sort out the solution.

Dr Aneel Khawaja, DG Apparel, said, "I'm not going to talk about textile sector, or particularly the pharmaceutical learning, but I'm just looking at the overall economy. When we imagine the economy, we just see that if the economy is growing, if the GDP is growing, the economy is good. But that is a misplaced conception, as we talk of 2023. We are a consumer society and we need to change the structure of our economy," he concluded.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations collectively aim to modernise Pakistan's textile industry, making it more sustainable, competitive, and aligned with global environmental and labour standards. The government's role in facilitating these changes through policy, infrastructure support, and international collaboration is crucial:

1. Align the textile industry with the European Union (EU) and global standards on environmental and labour practices. This



- includes adopting track and trace systems, establishing recycling industries, incentivising waste-to-energy projects, and using recycled materials to meet stringent market requirements.
2. Adopt a holistic approach towards transitioning the textile industry to a circular economy. Implement global guidelines for used textile trade, provide capacity building for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in managing chemical usage, and initiate consumer behaviour change towards sustainable choices. Leverage support and expertise from international bodies like the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for infrastructure development and regulatory changes.
 3. Develop a comprehensive strategy to incorporate circular principles throughout the textile supply chain, involving collaborative efforts and regulatory support for sustainable practices from farmers to garment manufacturers. Invest significantly in R&D for sustainable product development.
 4. Establish structured, in-house recycling processes for pre- and post-consumer waste, focusing on commercially viable recycling systems. Move away from informal waste practices towards organised and sustainable waste management.
 5. Innovate in the textile industry by producing higher thread count fabrics, aligning with global quality standards and reducing energy costs. This shift is essential for enhancing global competitiveness and sustainability.
 6. Develop policies to incentivise the integration of recycled content into textile products, supporting not only large manufacturers but also SMEs. This approach is crucial for maintaining competitiveness, especially with upcoming EU legislation on waste.
 7. Launch educational campaigns to inform consumers about the environmental impacts of fast fashion and the benefits of sustainable purchasing choices. This is vital for promoting a cultural shift towards recycled fabrics.
 8. Adopt a life cycle assessment approach to quantify the impact of textile production on resources, energy, and water. This technical method will help the industry manage its environmental footprint and transition towards sustainability.
 9. Incorporate sustainable manufacturing strategies like lean manufacturing, Six Sigma, and green practices. Develop standardised designs to address post-industrial waste.
 10. Focus on reducing economic activity to prioritise environmental stability and social well-being. Redefine success beyond GDP, advocating for renewable energy, green taxation, and sustainable government policies.
 11. Move from a GDP-centric growth approach to a sustainable, circular economy. Focus on regeneration and redistribution, not just recycling and reusing.
 12. Emphasise the importance of measuring and reporting sustainability practices for effective management in achieving circularity. Foster strong partnerships between academia and industry to foster innovation.



Thematic Session A-2: (Policy Dialogue) Prosperity for Pakistan: Policy Agenda for the Incoming Government

In collaboration with UNDP

Moderator: Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, SDPI

Welcome Remarks: Ms Ammara Durrani, UNDP

Opening Remarks: Mr Samuel Rizk, UNDP

Panelists:

1. Dr Hafiz A. Pasha, Former Federal Minister for Finance, GoP (Video Message)
2. Dr Musadik Masood Malik, Former Minister of State for Petroleum, GoP
3. Dr Aisha Ghaus Pasha, Former Minister of State of Finance & Revenue, GoP
4. Mr Mian Iftikhar Hussain, ANP (Online)
5. Senator Saleem Mandviwala, PPP
6. Mr Zafar ul Hasan, Planning Commission, GoP
7. Mr Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan, PML-N (Online)
8. Ms Shaza Khawaja, Former SAPM Youth Affairs, GoP
9. Mr Najy Benhassine, TWB
10. Senator Taj Haider, PPP
11. Senator Syed Faisal Ali Subzwari, MQM
12. Dr Reza Baqir, Former Governor, SBP (Online)
13. Dr Asad Sayeed, CSSR (Online)
14. Mr Mehtab Haider, The News
15. Mr Ali Khizar, Business Recorder

Panel Organisers: Dr Sajid Amin Javed, Ms Arooj Waheed Dar & Ms Aqsa Naveed, SDPI | Mr Umer Akhlaq Malik, UNDP

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Umber Azeem

PRs: Ms Aqsa Naveed

Video Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKpS8_3k36o



NARRATIVE REPORT

Call to focus on water productivity, agriculture yields & young entrepreneurs.

Senator **Dr Musadik Malik** said that the country needs to focus more on its water productivity, agriculture yield and the rising young entrepreneurs and startups linked to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to ensure its economic



sustainability and revival.

He was speaking at a session titled **“Prosperity for Pakistan: Policy Agenda for the Incoming Government”**.

“The more we look at economy from an accounting perspective, the more we sink into it,” the Senator said, adding that “the reality is that people in this country were poor,” Dr Malik questioned whether there was a policy for those people? Dr Malik said that it was inappropriate to consider only the accounting perspective of the economy, which was multifaceted in nature. For rural economy, he suggested, there was a dire need for improving yields and the focus must be on adding value to rural economy as this was the only way to prosperity.

Dr Aisha Ghaus Pasha, former Minister of State for Finance and Revenue, said the country would have faced great inflation, unemployment and public unrest if the default had not been averted. She added that the IMF bailouts were needed to manage the fiscal issues of the country whereas it was necessary to implement quick and precise policy decisions.

Saleem Mandviwalla, the former State Minister for Finance, said governance was the core issue of the country and the past 16 months were crucial to save the country from default. However, he said, lack of governance, political instability and bureaucratic hiccups needed to be addressed for a better economic system and betterment of the country.

Mian Iftikhar Hussain, Secretary-General of Awami National Party (ANP), said fear and security were the main issues of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province with poor water governance further aggravating the crisis as almost 80 per cent of the freshwater is wasted due to poor storage capacity. He regretted that the IMF had directed the government to provide relief to the poor, but the budgets presented at the floor of parliament were merely a play of words.

Senator Taj Haider, the central leader of Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) said the economic build up should be the priority to be addressed on war footings as it is an existential threat if left unattended.

Former SAPM on Youth Affairs, **Shaza Fatima Khawaja**, stressed the need to ensure the ease of doing business, consistent policies, youth-led policy, and e-governance along with progressive taxation and targeted subsidy to improve the economy of the country.

Country Representative, UNDP-Pakistan, **Samuel Rizk**, appreciated the political leadership’s discourse on core issues of public interest. He suggested the stakeholders to adopt a social and political contract to make the government’s decision for the benefit of the unserved and the poor.



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations focus on creating a sustainable, equitable, and resilient economic environment in Pakistan through tax reform, improved governance, strategic investments in human capital, and policies that foster ease of doing business and efficient resource management for the attention of the new government in 2024:

1. Initiate comprehensive tax reforms at the provincial level, including the establishment of a provincial agricultural income tax and adjustments to property taxes, to generate significant revenue and promote a more equitable fiscal environment.
2. Implement a new IMF programme to create room for measures that boost Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and safeguard social development indicators. Political parties must understand the seriousness of the economic situation and make swift, well-informed decisions.
3. Tackle the local mafia in agriculture and tailor specific strategies for each segment to optimise potential and contribute to socioeconomic development. Focus on increasing production while reducing costs, requiring political commitment for successful implementation.
4. Enhance governance and decision-making processes to overcome challenges in political and bureaucratic governance. Meaningful change depends on substantial progress in these fundamental aspects.
5. Establish a system that efficiently utilises resources with a focus on long-term conservation, ensuring sustainable and inclusive governance for community well-being and future generations.
6. Prioritise investments in human capital and skill development initiatives to ensure sustainable economic growth. This strategic emphasis on nurturing expertise and talent is key to long-term economic resilience.
7. Simplify documentation processes and adopt a progressive approach towards local enterprises. Ensure consistency in policies, integrating youth-led initiatives, political will in budgeting, and the implementation of e-Governance with vertically aligned data. Streamline progressive taxation and targeted subsidies through effective data alignment.
8. Develop and implement a comprehensive population growth policy to address broader socioeconomic issues.



Thematic Session A-3: Tobacco Taxation – Light at the End of Health and Poverty Tunnel

In collaboration with the Vital Strategies

Moderator: Syed Ali Wasif Naqvi, SDPI

Special Remarks: Dr Syed Kaleem Imam, Former Federal Secretary, MNC, GoP

Speakers:

1. Dr Waseem Iftikhar Janjua, SDPI
2. Ms Blanca Llorente, Fundacion Anaas, Colombia (Online)
3. Mr Asif Iqbal, SPDC, Karachi
4. Dr Muhammad Ashfaq Ahmed, Former Chairman FBR

Vote of Thanks: Mr Khurram Hashmi, Vital Strategies

Panel Organisers: Syed Ali Wasif Naqvi & Dr Waseem Iftikhar Janjua, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Mr Alamgir Khan

PRs: Mr Javeria Malik

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/QbzHRVrJSQg>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Experts for strict regulatory regime to control tobacco usage causing serious socio-economic hazards.

Experts at a policy dialogue called for implementing strict regulation and punitive measures to reduce the usage of tobacco to eliminate its socio-economic hazards.



The demand was made at the session titled **“Tobacco Taxation – Light at the End of Health and Poverty Tunnel”**.

The experts warned that the use of tobacco products was leading to 80 million deaths per year across the low and medium-income countries and over 160,000 people were dying each year in Pakistan due to tobacco borne diseases.

Speaking at the discussion, **Dr Waseem Iftikhar Janjua** from SDPI said that tobacco industry is building a deceptive narrative about the use of tobacco products to enhance their sales by misleading the youth and general folk. “Besides, it was also marketing its products with different lucrative labels to attract people towards smoking by publicizing cigarette packets with the brand label of filter cigarettes and light cigarettes to enhance their sales,” he said.



more than 30 million people are tobacco users in the world causing around 160,000 deaths every year.

Dr Waseem Iftikhar Janjua shared the SPDC data which reveals that the poor households in Pakistan spend more from their budget on tobacco compared to wealthy households whereas the lower income households budget share allocated to tobacco is even higher than education. He also underscored that reduction in tobacco expenditure in low-income households would lead to a substantial increase in the expenditure on food and health. He suggested to the government and stakeholders to prevent tobacco industry interference in health policy, expose and counter tobacco industry narratives, improve communication within government entities, build capacity of enforcement officials and increase the youth awareness campaigns.



Blanca Llorente, Fundacion Anaas, Colombia, who participated in the discussion via video link, said that from 2010-23, Colombia followed three different tracks: government intervention, local research and civil society's continuous advocacy for major tax increase on tobacco products. Ms Llorente added that three-tier tax regime helped in putting a dent to the increased consumption of tobacco products whereas further taxes were under consideration in the congress. She underscored that the current number of smokers had direct link to SDGs particularly those related to poverty, health, livelihood and waste management as cigarette butts were becoming toxic waste after dumped openly in access.

Asif Iqbal, SPDC Executive Director, said every 50 individuals among 1,000 use tobacco products and

Dr M Ishfaq, the former Chairman of FBR, termed the relationship between tobacco sales and taxation as a complex issue. He said Pakistan was the 10th largest tobacco producing country in the world with 46,000 hectares under cultivation for its production comprising of the areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Dr Syed Kaleem Imam, former Secretary, Ministry of Narcotics Control, said cigarettes were expensive in the US whereas tobacco sector was involved in tax evasion. He commended the SDPI initiative of tracking and tracing the tobacco law evasions, illegal selling of tobacco products and help reduce the use of tobacco in the country.

Khurram Hashmi of Vital Strategies stressed the need for enhancing knowledge base, include

literature against tobacco usage in curriculum, and engage all stakeholders to enhance complained against illicit trade of tobacco.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations aim to enhance the effectiveness of tobacco control measures in Pakistan by curbing industry propaganda, ensuring transparent policymaking, improving inter-agency communication, addressing tax evasion, and raising public awareness, particularly among the youth:

1. It is vital to stop the tobacco industry's propaganda. The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) and the Government of Pakistan (GoP) must halt treaty and regulatory violations by the tobacco industry. Specifically, state communication channels, including Radio Pakistan, should prohibit the tobacco industry from propagating messages about tobacco.
2. The Ministry of Narcotics Control and the Pakistan Tobacco Board should collaborate to prevent tobacco industry intervention in public health policy. This joint effort is crucial to ensure unbiased and effective public health strategies.
3. Enhance communication among relevant government entities to foster effective collaboration in preventing tobacco use. There is a current lack of productive cooperation in efforts to address tobacco consumption.
4. The GoP and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) need to work together to address the under-reporting of tobacco product production and combat the issue of illicit trade and the informal sector. Integrating this sector into the taxation framework is essential to manage tobacco usage effectively.
5. PEMRA should develop and disseminate awareness campaigns targeting youth, highlighting the harmful health and social effects of tobacco use. These campaigns should utilise various media channels, including social media, television, radio, and the press, for maximum outreach.



Thematic Session A-4: (Policy Review Exercise) Gender and Disaster Resilience Lens: Recommendations and Way Forward

In collaboration with ReMIT and FCDO

Moderator: Ms Gulalai Khan, REMIT Pakistan

Co-Moderator: Ms Naghma-e-Tehniat, FCDO

Chair: Ms Sandra Baldwin, Deputy Development Director, FCDO, British High Commission in Pakistan

Scene Setting: Dr Fareeha Armughan, SDPI

Panellists:

1. Mr Hamed Yaqoob Sheikh, ReMIT Pakistan
2. Ms Ambreen Iftikhar, BOI, GoP
3. Mr Riaz Nazarali Chunara NIBAF, SBP
4. Mr Rafi Ullah Kakar, Planning Commission, GoP

Concluding Remarks: Dr Vaqar Ahmed, SDPI

Panel Organisers: Dr Fareeha Armughan & Mr Naimat Wazir, SDPI | Ms Gulalai Khan, ReMIT | FCDO

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Anam Malik

PRs: Mr Naimat Wazir

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/I56o52SLBns>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Policy makers urged to build gender empowerment perspective in policies.

Experts at the session called upon the policy makers on Tuesday to build gender empowerment perspective in the disaster management and resilience policies in Pakistan.

This demand was made at a session titled “**Gender and Disaster Resilience lens: Recommendations and Way Forward**”.

“We can help policy makers understand who is at most risk and who is most likely to have quick recovery in terms of both economically and socially and who has stronger voice to respond to”, Deputy Director, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), **Sandra Baldwin**, said.



She said during the recent devastating floods in Pakistan, more girls were dropped from schools and after few months when the schools reopened, very few girls returned to schools in the flood-hit areas. She said gender responsive disaster management is essential in tackling inequality as women and girls are more vulnerable. She said Revenue Mobilisation, Investment and Trade Programme’s work highlights that there is a substantial scope to integrate intervention that can strengthen the overall planning framework and financial inclusion.

Hamid Yaqoob Sheikh, team leader at Revenue Mobilisation, Investment and Trade (REMIT) said the programme works towards increasing the number of taxpayers to strengthen tax revenue

mobilization besides addressing investment climate challenges faced by local and international businesses and reducing barriers to trade and drive competitiveness, thereby increasing exports to reduce Pakistan’s trade deficit.

SDPI Research Fellow **Dr Fareeha Armughan**, in her presentation, stressed the need for hotspot mapping to identify the vulnerable areas and the people especially the women during and after the natural disasters. She also emphasized moving from conventional gender exploitive pattern to gender transformative approach. She recommended that the women’s participation in the government intervention in the post disaster activities should be increased to ensure better and speedy relief to the affected people. Similarly, she said an early warning system and pre-disaster risk management approach should also be adopted that would help minimizing post disaster activities. Additional Secretary of the Board of Investment, **Ambreen Iftikhar** said women can play a key role in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by contributing to the pre and post disaster risk management, as they have more first-hand knowledge and information in this regard.

Managing Director of National Institute of Banking and Finance (NIBAF) **Riaz Nazar Ali Chunara**, said the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) is diligently working toward digitalization of economy and banking sector in the country. He said RAAST service is one of the major steps in this regard that is providing free and fast channel of money transaction. He said the NIBAF is also working to incorporate financial topics in the national curriculum at school levels to create awareness among the youth at an early age.

Member of Social Sector Planning Commission, **Rafi Ullah Kakar**, said the Commission has dedicated gender unit to ensure that the development projects are prepared from gender sensitive lens. He said in another project, the finance division has proposed to finance the women entrepreneurs to promote women empowerment in the country.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

These following recommendations are important to integrate gender considerations deeply and systematically into Pakistan’s economic and

developmental policies, ensuring gender parity and resilience in the face of disasters and economic challenges:

1. Prioritise exploring new revenue streams and addressing gaps in the economy, with a specific focus on incorporating gender considerations to strengthen macroeconomic stability and foster sustainable, inclusive growth in Pakistan.
2. Implement departmental alignment, digitalisation, and institutional reforms to contribute significantly toward achieving these goals, ensuring these reforms are inclusive and gender-sensitive.
3. Ensure the integration of gender considerations into commerce, investment, and taxation policies. This integration is vital for enhancing overall economic conditions and promoting gender equity and financial inclusion of women.
4. Adopt anticipatory actions through tools such as liquidity management, risk management, future investment, institutionalised consultation, international cooperation, and programme impact evaluation, all while incorporating a gender lens.
5. Develop governance structures and infrastructure that are responsive to gender needs. This includes creating a gender data repository and promoting inclusive green finance as part of a comprehensive approach.
6. Centre the discourse around social and cultural factors that impact gender equality, acknowledging their significance in shaping policies and practices.
7. Develop robust support systems that aid in recovering dignity, self-assurance, necessary skills, and physical assistance, with a focus on gender-specific needs.
8. Institutionalise the evaluation of development projects by incorporating a gender perspective into public investment considerations, ensuring gender-responsive budgeting and investment.



Thematic Session A-5: Empowering Communities: Poverty Graduation in Pakistan

In collaboration with PPAF

Moderator: Ms Uzma Nomani, PPAF

Chair: Ms Shandana Humayun Khan, RSPN

Presentations: Mr Nadir Gul Barech, PPAF

Presentation: Poverty Graduation as PPAF

Dr Kate Vyborny, South Asia Region Gender Innovation Lab, TWB, USA (Online)

Presentation: *Role of Community Institutions in fostering Social and Economic Empowerment at the Grassroots Level*

Prof. Dr Imran Rasul, University College London, UK (Online)

Presentation: *Big Push Pro-poor Policies and Economic Preferences: Evidence from a Partial Population Experiment*

Panellists:

1. Ms Shandana Humayun Khan, RSPN
2. Dr Hamna Ahmed, CREB, LSE, Lahore (Online)
3. Dr Ayesha Khan, AHKF, Islamabad

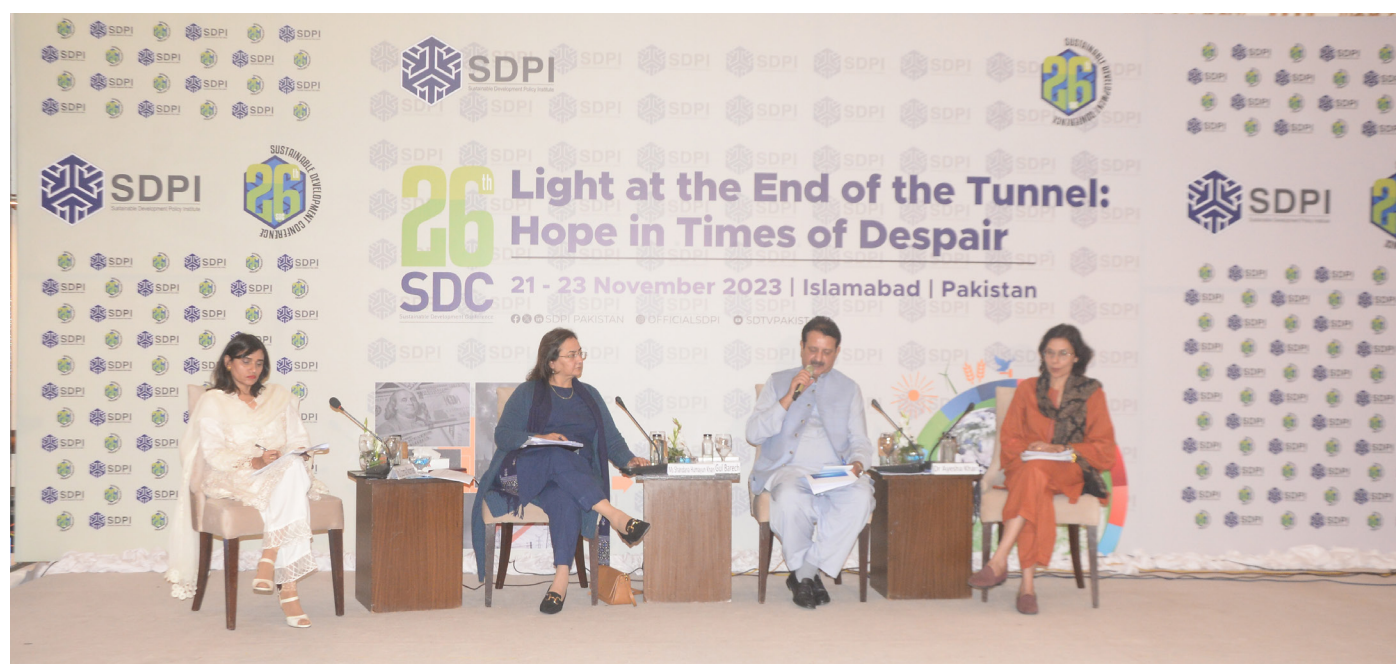
Panel Organisers: Mr Ahmed Khaver, SDPI | Ms Raabiya Babar, PPAF

Rapporteurs:

PR: Mr Mohsin Ali Khan

PRs: Ms Javeria Malik

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/k0rJHFvA6MM>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Speakers for extended social protection interventions focusing community development.

Experts said that extended social protection is crucial in the present circumstances of economic crisis and there is a need to take more such initiatives focusing community development.

This was consensus at a session titled “**Empowering Communities: Poverty Graduation in Pakistan**”.

The Chief Executive Officer of Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, **Nadir Gul Barech**, highlighted the key achievements of the organization in fighting poverty together with the government and discussed strategies for poverty alleviation. He said that their strategy was based on five key values of inclusion, participation, transparency, accountability, and stewardship. The organization is currently present in 149 districts, and to fully realize the goal of ending extreme poverty, fiscal devolution is essential to the lowest tier, he added. Around three million interest-free loans were provided by the organization and 55 per cent beneficiaries were women, he said.



Moreover, 38,900 different projects related to water, health and education had been completed, he maintained.

Prof Dr Imran Rasul from University College London, UK talked about the impact of interventions on economic attitudes. Presenting the findings of research titled: ‘Big Push Pro-poor Policies and Economic Preferences: Evidence from a Partial Population Experiment’, he said that economic attitudes could be understood in three sets, i.e. redistributive preferences, pro-market beliefs, and trust in neighbours. A social protection programme is a central policy issue for governments throughout the developing world, he quoted. The main findings, he said, were that interventions substantially impacted the economic standing of the poor. Such programmes also had a measurable impact on village inequality, he

said, adding that the study covered 88 villages in four districts, namely Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Lodhran and Muzaffargarh.

Dr Kate Vyborny from South Asia Region Gender Innovation Lab, TWA, USA joined the session online. She highlighted the role of community institutions in fostering social and economic empowerment.

Dr Ayesha Khan from Akhtar Hameed Khan Foundation (AHKF) said that community institutions of the poor were either very weak or altogether missing. As a result, NGOs stepped in to fill the



gap. She said that the task of NGOs was to facilitate the transitioning of community institutions and strengthen them. The success of this transition depended on community participation, she added. She also mentioned the post three to four years after completion of a project were very crucial, adding that this period, “post project sustainability” should be incorporated in the programme design.

Ms Shandana Humayun Khan from RSPN



stressed that the data shared in this session is very useful for the practitioners and that we need a strategy to make use of all this information.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

These following recommendations will enhance the effectiveness of poverty graduation efforts in Pakistan through improved collaboration, women's empowerment, sustainable planning, local government support, and the integration of climate change considerations:

1. Enhance collaboration between different organisations and with the government to create a more unified and effective approach to poverty alleviation.
2. The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) should recognise and increase the role of women in Third Tier Organizations (TTOs), given that women-led organisations are statistically more likely to be active and effective.
3. Move towards institutionalising poverty graduation initiatives, as the combined efforts of multiple organisations are more impactful than isolated actions.
4. Include post-programme design in poverty alleviation and graduation programmes to ensure sustainable exit strategies. This will enable TTOs to transition from active roles in a way that continues to strengthen communities without the need for ongoing aid.
5. Bolster government presence and support at the local level to enhance local infrastructures, potentially reducing the need for external intervention.
6. Ensure that the PPAF and other stakeholder organisations incorporate and address climate change challenges in their poverty graduation programmes, given the significant impact of climate change on poverty and community resilience.



Thematic Session A-6: Towards Affordable and Resilient Food Systems in Pakistan

In collaboration with GAIN Pakistan

Moderator: Ms Rabia Tabassum, SDPI

Chair: Prof. Dr Tariq Mukhtar, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, PMAS-Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi

Opening Remarks: Mr Faiz Rasool, GAIN Pakistan

Panellists:

1. Dr Lawrence Haddad, GAIN International (Online)
2. Dr Jamie Morrison, GAIN International
3. Dr Ghulam Sadiq Afridi, PARC
4. Dr Shaheen Ashraf Shah, WFP

Panel Organisers: Mr Qasim Ali Shah, Ms Rabia Tabassum & Mr Salah Ud Din, SDPI | Ms Maryam Mirza, GAIN Pakistan

Rapporteurs:

PR: Mr Alamgir Khan

PRs: Mr Salah Ud Din

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/zLnPBIO6czA>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Women engagement key to gender equality in food security perspective.

Experts at a panel said women engagement is the key to gender equality in the context of food security, as Pakistan's food systems are vulnerable

to shocks which has profoundly affected the nutrition of individuals, especially women, hence impacting their future resilience.

These views were discussed at panel discussion titled **"Towards Affordable and Resilient Food System in Pakistan"**.



In his opening remarks, **Prof Dr Tariq Mukhtar**, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, said from global perspective, an overall 3.1 billion population is unfortunately unable to afford healthy diets as per 2021 data.

In Pakistan, he said, nearly 18.5 per cent people are undernourished. "If we look into moderately and severely food insecure people in Pakistan, unfortunately, almost 100 million people are facing this serious trouble." Apart from all these challenges, 33 million people have been impacted by climate induced floods and related implications, he said. In addition, he said, the vulnerability of Pakistanis also increased in the aftermath of Russia and Ukraine war that led to sharp increase in the commodity prices world over.

Dr Lawrence Haddad, Gian International, said one of the motivations for the food system summit in 2021 was the recognition that although there are many well-intentioned interventions of both governments and in development partners to improve the functioning of food systems, these were very weakly coordinated. So, finding the food system Summit, a range of organizations have come together and taken up roles to support governments and the implementation of their pathways.

"Malnutrition is the intergenerational transmission mechanism for making fragility today, translates into fragility tomorrow and so good nutrition can be the way to break that intergenerational cycle and make resilience today, equal resilience tomorrow. But there are many ways to build resilience of food systems."

Mr Jamie Morrison, Gain International, in his presentation, talked about issues emerging within the ecosystem and how to develop partnerships. "We would also suggest that all organizations within the ecosystem of support must take lead from national government and ideally through the National Convener, who is coordinating and also responsible for facing action on food system transformation within the country." He also stressed the need for access to data.

Dr Ghulam Sadiq Afridi from Pakistan Agriculture Research Council, in his presentation, highlighted



the achievements of Pakistan in food sector, saying we had 65 million people in 1972 and now the number has increased to over 240 million, which is more than 3.3 times while we have increased wheat and rice production almost four times and sugarcane nine times while cumulative food production is seven times. He said we can categorize food insecurity in three different dimensions. The first one is prevalence of undernourishment, second malnutrition and the third micronutrient deficiency.

Dr Shaheen Ashraf Shah from World Food Programme said women farmers' condition in



Pakistan are very poor and there is an urgent need for their financial inclusion and skill development. However, she said women have a very low number of employments within the country's systems be it food systems or the transportation system. So, the presence or the absence of women from these corridors itself is a big issue. She said bringing more women in these institutions will be the first indicator for substantive change.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations will help build a more affordable and resilient food system in Pakistan, addressing key issues such as food diversity, gender disparities, wastage reduction, strategic planning, and improved distribution networks:

1. The government should actively engage with various stakeholders to promote diversification in Pakistan's food system. This includes diversifying crop production, the geographical areas where food is grown, and involving a broader range of people in food production. Enhancing food diversity will not only vary the population's consumption patterns but also increase inclusivity in the food systems.
2. Recognise and reduce gender disparities in the agricultural sector. Women, despite their significant role in agricultural production, are often excluded from decision-making processes. Implementing a food-based social protection system that includes women in decision-making can help address this imbalance.
3. With Pakistan wasting approximately 19.6 million tonnes of food annually, the government should collaborate with relevant stakeholders to decrease food wastage, especially during post-harvesting. This involves improving food storage, transportation, and distribution systems.
4. The Federal Government should set specific goals for food systems and integrate these pathways into their planning. This requires strengthening decision support systems, such as enhancing data collection and analysis, and fostering collaboration between national and global actors. Establishing a robust coordination mechanism is essential for this approach.
5. Enhance the impact of Pakistan's Food Distribution Networks (FDNs) on women's and children's nutrition. This can be achieved by introducing social and behavioural change communication strategies and linking local production with local markets, ensuring that nutritional benefits are maximised, especially for vulnerable groups.



Thematic Session A-7: Envisioning Universal Health Coverage in Pakistan – How to Make it Possible?

Moderator: Prof. Dr Zafar Mirza, Former Minister for Health, GoP

Co-Moderator: Dr Razia Safdar, SDPI

Chief Guest: Lieutenant General Nigar Johar Khan, HI(M) (Retd.)

Speakers:

1. Prof. Dr Zafar Mirza, Former Minister for Health, GoP
2. Dr Abdul Ghafoor Shoro, PMA (Online)
3. Dr Safdar Ali Sohail, SPRC, Islamabad
4. Dr Raza Zaidi, UHC, MoNHSRC, GoP
5. Dr Sonia Omar, UoP, Lahore (Online)

Panel Organisers: Dr Razia Safdar & Ms Misbah Khan, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Mr Muhammed JahanZaib

PRs: Ms Amina Qazi

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/7evq0KgzFmA>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Experts for extending universal health care service to every citizen.

Experts at a panel discussion called for the vital role of public-private partnership to extend universal health care services to everyone across the country to achieve the social and economic dividends of healthy society.

This was discussed at the session titled “**Envisioning Universal Health Coverage in Pakistan – How to Make it Possible**”.

Former minister for health, **Dr Zafar Mirza**, said that health care is a fundamental human right and everyone should be given this right since we are signatory to the conventions of the World Health Organization and other international bodies. He said that it is vital to ensure the outreach of health coverage to attain SDGs. He said there is a public health care crisis in the country that needs coordinated efforts of the departments concerned to protect everyone. He added that so far Pakistan is not able to eradicate Polio and every 4th adult has type-2 diabetes and every 3rd adult over 45 has high blood pressure. “Seventy per cent health care services can be delivered at primary health care level,” he said, adding that universal health care



has negative impact on labour market and other social indicators. He stressed the need for prioritizing health in social protection systems to enhance the outreach of universal health coverage. He also urged the authorities to rationalize the operational cost of the health sector to reduce the prices of medicines and hospital expenditures. Dr Safdar said that intensity of regulatory infrastructure in Pakistan is thinnest as compared to the other regional countries.

Dr Raza Zaidi from Universal Health Coverage (UHC) said that Pakistan is a resource constraint country and required to focus on its primary health care systems and strengthen its inter-sectoral coordination. He said that 63 per cent of primary health care services are provided by the private sector, which is playing a major role in health care services.

system is evolving and currently about 47.5 million families are covered under this system.

Dr Sonia Umar from the University of Punjab recommended the extensive refresher training of lady health workers and that they must be equipped with updated knowledge and applications. "Supply of medicines and contraceptives is a regular issue for these lady health workers, therefore

Lt-Gen. Nigar Johar Khan (retd.) stressed the need to focus on primary health care as it has the major portion of universal health coverage.



inter department coordination is required for the effective working of field staff." She said that social and cultural barriers are the main obstacles in efforts to control increasing birth ratio as well as creating awareness. Over 42 per cent mothers aged between 15-49 are anaemic and they need necessary medical services.

Dr Sohail Safdar from Social Protection Resource Centre (SPRC) said that currently health sector of Pakistan is facing several challenges, which

She said that health services are dependent on workforce and there is a need to strengthen it by inducting skilled workforce.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations focus on creating a more integrated, equitable, and accessible healthcare system in Pakistan, leveraging both public and private sectors, and urging preventative care and financial sustainability:





preventive approach.

4. Link primary healthcare services to health insurance and social health insurance systems to move towards universal healthcare coverage.

5. Introduce and consider various financing mechanisms at the government level, involving the private sector, including insurance companies and general practitioners, given their significant role in healthcare provision.

6. Address the profit motive and lack of standards in private healthcare facilities to provide quality healthcare provision.

7. Significantly increase investment in district-level healthcare infrastructure to improve accessibility and quality of services.

8. Enhance the linkage between primary and tertiary care to create a more integrated healthcare system.

9. Develop a unified health insurance programme to guarantee financial protection and accessibility for all, irrespective of socioeconomic status.

1. Increase investment in impactful initiatives like the Lady Health Worker programme and adopt a multifaceted approach to overcome financial constraints. This is essential for equitable healthcare distribution, especially in underserved regions.
2. Give focused attention to the LHW programme as a crucial element of primary healthcare provision at the community level.
3. Implement a paradigm shift in healthcare strategy, highlighting a proactive and



Thematic Session A-8: (Roundtable) Green Transition in South Asia

In collaboration with The World Bank

Moderator: Mr Abdullah Khalid, SDPI

Co-Moderator: Ms Maheen Rehan, SDPI

Opening Remarks: Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, SDPI

Presentation:

Dr Margaret Triyana, Office of the Chief Economist, South Asia, TWB (Online)

Speakers:

1. Mr Hridayesh Joshi, Journalist, India
2. Md Shamsuddoha, CPRD, Bangladesh
3. Dr Posh Raj Pandey, SAWTEE, Nepal
4. Ms Rija Tayyab, Roshan Packages Limited
5. Mr Ali Tauqeer Sheikh, Climate Change and Development Expert
6. Dr Imran S. Khalid, WWF
7. Mr Bilal Khalid, TWB

Panel Organisers: Engr Ahad Nazir, Mr Abdullah Khalid & Ms Maheen Rehan, SDPI | Dr Zoe Leiyu Xie, TWB

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Zainab Baloch

PRs: Mr Hammad Nadir

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/v0duCpY0JZA>



Experts for adopting holistic approach to promote green transition in South Asia.

Experts here at a session on Tuesday called for adopting holistic approach besides involving women in the policy making process to promote green transition in South Asia.

The demand was made at a session titled “**Green Transition in South Asia**”.

In his opening remarks, SDPI Executive Director **Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri**, said the government should make policies to encourage green transition that will help stop the climate change impacts in the country and the region. He called for providing legal protection and financial incentives to the investors and the individuals working in renewable energy in the region.

Mr Hridayesh Joshi, journalist from India, said empowering women at the forefront in the policy-making in green transition can bring about change because they are very intelligent and hard working. Further he said dependency on coal has to be reduced sharply, and renewable energy sources must be promoted.

Dr Maragret Triyana from the Office of the Chief Economist, South Asia, the World Bank, said South Asia has big renewable energy potential. She said the energy transition will help cut pollution, reduce reliance on fossil fuel imports, and ensure lasting growth by creating jobs. “Even cash strapped governments can speed up energy efficient technology adoption through private sector,” she added.

Dr Posh Raj Panday, SAWTEE, Nepal said the policies should focus on incentivizing firms to use efficient energy. He proposed to provide direct funding such as loans, subsidies, insurance for the adoption of green efficiency. Dr Panday also



suggested to the governments to strategically support specific industries promoting the green energy. He said the governments should also facilitate promotion of trade and investment in the areas of latest energy technology. With regard to regional cooperation on energy trade, particularly hydro trade, he said we can develop regional capital market by issuing green bond or any other kind of financial instrument to promote green energy.

Dr Imran Khalid from WWF-Pakistan said through a project of Water Sensitive Cities (WSC) in Islamabad WWF-Pakistan is improving access to safe water and sanitation services for two disadvantaged communities, i.e. children and women. He hoped that the government would replicate this project in other areas of the country with its own resources.

Mr Ali Tauqeer Sheikh, Climate Change Expert, recommended developing coordination between sectors and ministries. “Normally climate change ministries in the region are weak that need to work in collaboration with other ministries,” he added. Stressing the need for labour market transition to re-skill the labuor as per the modern technologies, he said the regional countries such as Pakistan and Bangladesh need to spend 3% to 5% of their GDPs to invest in green transition technology sector.

Mr Md. Shamsuddoha from CPRD, Bangladesh



called for ensuring regional coordination to promote green energy. He said Bangladesh wanted to import hydropower electricity from Nepal, but India was not allowing to pass the energy through its country. He said the national governments should provide risk mechanisms to the investors and consider regional marketplace to promote renewable energy.

Ms Rija Tayyab from Roshan Packages said 50 million tons of solid waste is produced in Pakistan every year out of which 23% is recyclable waste. She said if the government supports the departments concerned at municipal levels, the recyclable waste can produce huge energy.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

These following recommendations are likely to facilitate a comprehensive green transition in South Asia, focusing on clean energy adoption, regional collaboration, innovative financing, reduced coal dependency, and inclusive participation in green initiatives:

1. Advocate for import taxes on products associated with non-renewable energy sources to encourage a shift towards clean energy adoption. Support the development

of a regional marketplace with flexible terms to enhance collaboration in clean energy initiatives.

2. Foster cooperation among South Asian nations in clean energy projects, such as hydrogen production. Support policies and investments that facilitate regional connectivity and collaborative efforts in clean energy.
3. Explore the creation of regional capital markets specifically for green financing. This includes issuing green bonds and developing financial instruments that support clean energy projects at various scales.
4. Develop and implement a comprehensive plan to reduce reliance on coal, particularly in areas heavily dependent on coal. Encourage sectors like aviation to move away from coal and offer incentives for adopting clean energy alternatives.
5. Introduce legislation to encourage green housing practices, such as solar panel integration in residential areas. Actively involve women in clean energy policymaking and the green transition given their unique contributions and potential.



Evening Plenary 1.2:

Annual State of Renewable Energy 2023: Unlocking Private Sector Finance

In collaboration with PFAN & in Knowledge Partnership with Unilever

Moderator and Technical Presentation: Engr. Ahad Nazir, Head, Center for Private Sector Engagement, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Presentation: *Unlocking Private Finance to Achieve Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in Pakistan*

Chief Guest: Senator Dr Musadik Masood Malik, Senate of Pakistan

Keynote Speaker: Mr Amir Paracha, President, Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce & Industry (OICCI) & CEO, Unilever Pakistan

Opening Remarks: Mr Michael Williamson, Section Chief, Energy Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Thailand (Online)

Special Remarks: Dr Hina Aslam, Hoffman Research Fellow, World Economic Forum & The Australian National University, Australia

Distinguished Panellists:

1. Mr Ahmed Ammar Yasser, Chief of Party, Private Financing Advisory Network (PFAN)
2. Dr Amiera Sawas, Head, Research and Policy, Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, UK
3. Ms Rabia Bukhari, Program Management Specialist, Energy Office of Climate and Sustainable Growth, USAID – Pakistan

Concluding Remarks: Mr Shah Jahan Mirza, Managing Director, Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB), Ministry of Energy (Power Division), GoP

Panel Organisers: Dr Khalid Waleed & Mr Ubaid ur Rehman Zia, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Zona Usmani

PRs: Ms Zainab Babar

SM: Ms Saleha Qureshi & Mr Ubaid ur Rehman Zia

Video Link: https://youtu.be/o0QIz_p2bs4



Pakistan's renewable energy transition crucial to ensure energy access, affordability:

Senator Dr Musaddik Malik, former Federal Minister for Energy, said that the country's renewable energy transition is crucial to ensure energy access and affordability. He was speaking at a plenary titled "Annual State of Renewable Energy 2023: Unlocking Private Sector Finance".



The Senator said Pakistan had a population of 240 million, which is projected to exceed 350 million by 2050, which will exert immense a gigantic pressure on shrinking resources. Keeping in view the country's population growth, energy demand is expected to sky-rocket, he said, adding that with two energy sources, i.e. electricity and gas dominating the mix, less than 30% of the consumer population was connected to gas and more than that was linked with electricity. He said electrification was the only viable solution, as LPG and LNG were not sustainable solutions. Highlighting the immense potential of renewable energy generation, he said Pakistan is a vast country with abundant natural sources from lakes to rivers to oceans as a resource for renewable. He also stressed the need to base the transition on indigenous solutions due to the fiscal sustainability of renewables. Expressing his concerns about carbon credits, he remarked that carbon credits' trading was not benign rather it can be used as another leverage in global geopolitics. "We will have to manage this energy transition, strengthen our grid and transmission systems and capacity for managing reactive energy," he said. He emphasized that ease of doing business, level playing field and deregulation was important for facilitating renewable energy transition in Pakistan.

Mr Shah Jahan Mirza, the Managing Director of Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB), said that the estimated finance of \$150 billion for Pakistan's clean energy transition is a mind-boggling number whereas at present 31% of the



country's energy mix comprised of renewables and it intended to scale it up to 60% by 2030. He said the country lacked proper planning and leadership in renewable energy transition, therefore, there is a need to revamp the entire planning system of the country.

Mr Michael Williamson, the Section Chief of Energy Division of UNESCAP said technology, policy, and finance were the three intertwined tracks to renewable energy transition. He added that there was more than enough finance in the global system, but it faced allocation constraints.

Mr Amir Paracha, the Chief Executive Officer of Unilever Pakistan and President of OICCI said the private sector envisions climate action as a compelling business opportunity and a smart business solution. To commercialize renewable energy transition, incentivizing private sector and policy consistency and continuity are essential.

Engineer Ahad Nazir from SDPI, provided detailed overview of a report, "Unlocking Private Finance to Achieve Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in Pakistan" published by SDPI. While highlighting recommendations, he said the country needs post legislative and post policy scrutiny and probe to ascertain the changes required in it.

Ms Rabia Bukhari, the Programme Management Specialist, Energy Office of Climate and Sustainable Growth, USAID, opined that the renewable energy transition needs to be well-planned and well-coordinated to achieve maximum outcomes of the effort.

Mr Ahmed Ammar Yasser, Chief of Party, PFAN, urged the private sector to take responsible measures in ensuring climate sustainability and environmental conservation.

Dr Amiera Sawas, Head, Research and Policy, Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, UK provided a detailed account of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, which has been endorsed by

the eight countries least contributing to the global carbon emissions.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations aim to create a more transparent, stable, and supportive financial environment for the growth of the Renewable Energy (RE) sector in Pakistan, encouraging private sector investment and participation:

1. The Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Government of Pakistan, should collaborate with policymakers and regulators to establish a strong Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system. This system will ensure transparency in climate finance investments and direct them towards appropriate projects, enhancing credibility and accountability.
2. Collaborate between the government, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), and Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) to create a de-risking framework for climate finance. For foreign investments, develop mechanisms like Currency Exchange Funds in collaboration with Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) to manage risks associated with currency devaluation.
3. The Ministry of Energy, supported by relevant authorities, should hasten decisions on policy frameworks that create a conducive environment for RE investment. This includes easing private sector facilitation and implementing larger policy reforms such as power wheeling, to attract more investors to Pakistan's RE sector.
4. The government should introduce financial incentives for the private sector in the RE domain, including preferential loans, tax reduction schemes, lower import duties, and RE bonds, to encourage investment and participation.
5. Address the challenges of the RE sector being a risky venture for financing institutions and the banking sector. Reinstate the SBP's RE financing facility and provide additional concessional financing options. Utilise structured financing products like InfraZamin or Pakistan Credit Guarantee Company (PCGC) through equity provisions or guarantee structures to support RE offtake.



Evening Plenary 1.3: Sustainable Development in Troubled Times (with a focus on Pakistan)

Moderator: Dr Fareeha Armughan, Research Fellow & Head-Center of Evidence Action, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Introductory Remarks: Prof. Dr Zulfiqar Ali Bhutta, Founding Director, Institute for Global Health and Development, Aga Khan University, Pakistan (Online)

Keynote Speaker: Professor Dr Jeffrey David Sachs, Director, Center for Sustainable Development, Columbia University, USA (Online)

Special Remarks: Ms Esther Perez Ruiz, Resident Representative in Pakistan, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Islamabad, Pakistan

Vote of Thanks: Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Plenary Organiser: Dr Fareeha Armughan, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Mr Ayesha Ahmed

PRs: Mr Muhammed Jahan Zaib & Mr Naimat Wazir

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/RWIF92GP1eg>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Pakistan stuck in development phase and needs regional ties to come out of problems: Dr Sachs.

The fundamental problem of Pakistan is that the

country is stuck in the development phase and worsening economic situation, which requires innovative solutions and regional cooperation, said **Prof. Dr Jeffrey David Sachs**, the Director of Center for Sustainable Development, Columbia University, USA.



He was speaking at a plenary session titled **“Sustainable Development in Troubled Times”**. Expressing his concerns over the world’s inactivity towards global challenges, **Dr Sachs** said: “The global political systems have failed to cater to the needs of their people and to maintain civility.” “As a US citizen, I bemoan the US government’s aggressive approach towards the rest of the world,” he added. Analysing the issues hindering sustainable development in Pakistan, he said that it is an emerging economy facing all sorts of difficulties. “Pakistan has undergone a lot of shocks such as heavy floods due to climate change,” he added.

Regarding the IMF programme, he said it focuses on austerity measures. “Austerity is not a solution to Pakistan’s deeper problems,” he added. Pakistan needs investment-led growth, Dr Sachs said, adding that the secret to China’s success is that it pursued a consistent economic policy for 40 years. “Chinese model of economy is suitable for any emerging economy, including Pakistan,” he said and identified the high potential sectors for investment such as education, basic health care system for the entire population, clean and green energy, industrial development, sustainable land use and agriculture, urban infrastructure, and digital transformation.



Discussing three main economic indicators, he said last year the country’s investment rate was recorded at 14% whereas it was 50% in China. “Schooling is the single most important investment in human capital, but the average schooling period here is 8 years, which is one of the lowest in the world. In such a situation in education, Pakistan cannot progress. The third major indicator, he said, is the revenue as a share of GDP, which in Pakistan’s case is merely 12%, again one of the lowest in the world. Stressing the need to broaden the country’s tax base and ensure fair contributions from all sectors, he suggested implementing effective tax policies, and streamlining tax collection processes to reduce leakages and enhance revenue collection efficiency. He also suggested exploring alternative revenue sources, such as non-tax revenues and public-private partnerships, to diversify income streams.

Presenting a three-pronged financing strategy, he stressed the need for raising revenues to 25-30 per cent. Secondly, he suggested taking measures to raise private savings’ rate. The third measure is to go for a long-term external debt instead of short-term, which required creativity, he added. “Pakistan has liquidity problem and also needs a comprehensive debt management strategy.” He emphasized that Pakistan should utilize its friendly ties with China to achieve these goals. Since COP28 is a few days ahead, Pakistan should plead its case on climate justice. He concluded that South Asian region is interconnected, though deeply divided politically. If the countries in South Asia could somehow resolve the disputes, the economic gains would be enormous, he said.

Earlier, **Prof Dr Zulfiqar Ali Bhutta**, Founding Director of Institute of Global Health and Development, Aga Khan University, in his

introductory remarks, said that Pakistan was plagued by many crises, which may be termed “polycrisis”.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This following structured approach outlines a comprehensive plan for Pakistan to navigate its current challenges and invest strategically for sustainable development. The focus spans from emulating successful growth models to investing in critical sectors and adopting a multifaceted economic strategy, with a strong emphasis on technological advancement and digital transformation.

Strategic Investment for Economic Prosperity

1. Emulate China’s strategy of meaningful investment in key sectors for sustained growth. This model, focusing on education, health, infrastructure, and industrial sectors, can serve as a blueprint for Pakistan. In this regard:
2. Prioritise investments in quality education and a robust basic healthcare system. These sectors are fundamental for building a skilled, healthy, and productive population.
3. Allocate resources towards transitioning to sustainable energy sources and industrial development to drive economic growth.
4. Invest substantially in agriculture for food security and economic stability, focusing on sustainable land use.
5. Enhance urban infrastructure to improve living standards and economic activities in urban areas.
6. Invest in digital infrastructure to leverage opportunities in the evolving global digital economy.
7. Ensure that the benefits of these investments reach all societal levels, promoting inclusivity and shared prosperity.
8. Multifaceted Economic Strategy
9. Implement effective tax policies to broaden the tax base, streamline tax collection processes, and explore alternative revenue sources like Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs).
10. Promote a savings culture through awareness campaigns and financial literacy programmes and introduce incentives for saving.
11. Adopt prudent external borrowing strategies, negotiate favourable debt terms, and diversify external financing sources to mitigate risks.
12. Prioritise digital transformation across sectors to align with future technological trends and enhance efficiency and competitiveness.



Thematic Session B-1: Climate-Smart Food Systems: Enhancing Sustainability, Supply Chains, and Consumer Welfare

In collaboration with USSEC

Moderator: Mr Saram Bokhari, Cargill Worldwide

Co-Moderator: Dr Vaqar Ahmed, SDPI

Distinguished Panellists:

1. Dr Akmal Siddiqui, MoNFSR, GoP
2. Ms Farzana Altaf Shah, PEPA
3. Ms Nazish Shekha, PBC
4. Dr Thushara Wickramarachchi, HORDI, DoA, Sri Lanka

Closing Remarks: Mr Shakeb Elahi, USSEC

Panel Organisers: Ms Fatima Muzammil & Mr Yahya Gulraiz, SDPI | Mr Shakeb Elahi, USSEC

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Naima Shehzadi

PRs: Mr Muhammad Daniyal Masood

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/cV3vPkhcqGU>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Speakers for developing climate resilient technology to ensure sustainable profitability in agriculture.

Experts called for providing proper climate resilient policies, plans, training, technology, and state-of-the-art machinery to the farmers to enhance per acre yield thereby ensuring their profitability on sustainable basis.

The demand was made at a session on **“Climate-Smart Food Systems: Enhancing Sustainability, Supply Chains, and Consumer Welfare”**.

Dr Akmal Siddique, Technical Advisor, Ministry of National Food Security and Research, said the country's agriculture, especially farming is not much profitable, and it needs to make profits on a sustainable basis. He pointed out that modern agriculture is not a cup of tea for any farmer as it requires government policies, strategies, investment in research and development. “Pakistan government should be investing at least 0.2% of agricultural GDP in agriculture research and development,” he said, adding that India is spending 0.4%, and China is spending 0.6% of the agriculture GDP. He said farmers in Pakistan are still using the centuries-old way of sowing wheat crop. He said Pakistan can manufacture itself the



seed planter machinery that can save 42 kg of seed per acre.

"He said access of farmers to technologies proves to be productive and profitable. Hybrid seeds of rice and maize are giving very healthy yield to the farmers in Pakistan while cotton, wheat and sugarcane seeds need to be developed to enhance per acre yield of the crop." In last six years alone, Pakistan imported \$9 billion worth of wheat and cotton which looks alarming, he said, adding that farmers do not want subsidies, they only require the latest technology and quality seeds.

Ms Nazish Shekha, senior research associate with Pakistan Business Council said women being in-charge of their households can play a vital role in building resilience against climate change impacts. "We can make women more resilient by giving them loans, and providing awareness and technologies to improve farming practices," she maintained. She said climate risk mapping with regard to the agriculture sector in the country is also need of the hour.

Dr Thushara Wickramarachchi, Director Horticulture Crops Research & Development Institute, Sri Lanka highlighted the need for evolving sustainable and doable plans, arranging awareness programmes for farmers, developing

policies and regulations, focusing research and development, creating coordination among organizations to evolve effective policies and above all ensuring implementation of the plans and policies.

Ms Farzana Altaf, Director-General at Environment Protection Agency said in order to promote smart-climate agriculture, growers, transporters, providers, and traders need to be integrated. She said most of the farmers are not educated enough to understand the use of artificial intelligence and mobile apps to forecast weather, etc., therefore the government needs to impart suitable training to the farmers

about the use of latest technology. Similarly, she also called upon the government to revise laws relating to the environment sector to cope with the future challenges of climate change. Ms Altaf recommended the government to control expansion of housing societies across the country that is a big threat to the agriculture land.

Mr Shakeb Elahi from USSEC said by embracing climate smart food system, the environmental impact will not only mitigate but will also pave the way for a more resilient and eco-friendly future. The following information was shared with regard to the U.S. Soybean Export Council "The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) focuses on differentiating, elevating preference, and attaining market access for the use of U.S. Soy for human consumption, aquaculture, and livestock feed in 80+ countries internationally. USSEC members represent the soy supply chain including U.S. Soy farmers, processors, commodity shippers, merchandisers, allied agribusinesses, and agricultural organizations. USSEC is funded by the U.S. soybean checkoff, USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) matching funds, and industry. Get a U.S. Soy Sustainability Assurance Protocol (SSAP) transferable certificate to address your customer requests for documented and verified sustainable soy. The SSAP verifies that soybeans and soy products produced in the United States are compliant with a system of sustainability and conservation laws and regulations and farmer participation in the U.S. Farm Program. SSAP is one of the largest sustainability verification programs in the agriculture industry and has proven to be a highly reliable measure of U.S. Soy farmers' commitment in areas like biodiversity, sustainable production practices, public and labour health, and continuous improvement of farming practices. Because U.S. soy is verified sustainable under the SSAP, it allows global customers to meet strict sustainability standards outlined by their companies or customers. The protocol positions the U.S. soybean industry as a leader in sustainable



agriculture, contributing to a more resilient and ecologically conscious global food supply chain. It has been positively benchmarked against the European Feed Manufacturers' Federation's soy sourcing standards. And it was approved by the Tokyo Olympics Procurement Committee for soy sourcing at the 2021 Olympic Games."

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are designed to modernise Pakistan's agricultural sector by adopting advanced technologies, boosting profitability, strengthening resilience against climate change, and promoting private investment. The integration of modern research, technology, and gender inclusivity is essential to building a robust, sustainable agricultural framework capable of withstanding environmental challenges and climate change impacts, not just in Pakistan but also within the region:

1. Adopt and implement modern agricultural technologies and ensure their dissemination to farmers and crop growers at the grassroots level. This approach is vital for maximising impact and achieving desired outcomes in the agricultural sector.
2. Recognise that farming is currently less attractive to private investors compared to other sectors. The government should implement strategies to make agriculture consistently profitable, thereby encouraging private sector involvement and contributing to the sector's growth and development.
3. Increase government investment in modern agricultural practices and technologies. Actively communicate the benefits of these advancements at the grassroots level, particularly as a means to mitigate the impacts of climate change on agriculture.
4. Identify and address the underlying reasons for limited private sector participation in agriculture. The government should offer incentives and actively promote the sector's potential benefits to attract private investments.
5. Promote active involvement of the academic sector in researching climate-smart agriculture practices. This research should aim to develop innovative strategies and technologies tailored to Pakistan's unique agricultural challenges and climate conditions.
6. Establish an advanced agricultural mapping system in Pakistan. This system should enable the identification of lands best suited for specific agricultural purposes, optimising resource allocation and enhancing overall sector development.
7. Enact appropriate environmental laws and formulate clear, consistent policy guidelines to support climate-smart agriculture. This approach is essential to ensure sustainable and responsible agricultural practices that align with both national and global environmental standards.
8. Boost female participation in the agricultural sector, particularly in rural areas. Women play a critical role in agriculture, and addressing malnutrition among them is key to managing food security challenges.
9. Tailor region-specific policies to effectively address the impact of pests and climate change on agriculture. These policies should be adapted to local conditions and risks to effectively mitigate adverse effects and promote sustainable agricultural growth.



Thematic Session B-2: Sustainability in the Digital Age: Potential of AI in Pakistan

Moderator: Mr Parvez Iftikhar, Consultant ICT Policy and Regulation, Former CEO, USF

Chair: Major General Hafeez Ur Rehman, HI(M), (Retd.), Chairman, PTA, GoP

Opening Remarks: Brig. Mohammad Yasin (Retd.), Senior Advisor Emeritus, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan

Special Remarks:

Mr Nasruminallah Mian, Lead – Digital Sector Program, ADB

Speakers:

1. Mr Muhammad Aslam Hayat, LIRNEasia (Online)
2. Dr Yasar Ayaz, NUST, Islamabad
3. Mr Tahir Ahmed Masood, Transworld Associates, Islamabad
4. Mr Waqas Burney, @Google APAC, Singapore (Online)

Closing Remarks: Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, SDPI

Panel Organiser: Ms Sadia Satti, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Farwa Gohar

PRs: Mr Mohsin Ali Khan

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/A829Lsot5Tk>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Developing regulations for an enabling AI ecosystem crucial: Experts.

Tapping the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) can bring significant foreign direct investment (FDI) into Pakistan and boost employment, but it requires long-term regulatory policies.

This was stated by the experts at a panel titled

“Sustainability in the Digital Age: Potential of AI in Pakistan”.

Major General Hafeez Ur Rehman, HI(M), (Retd.), Chairman of Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), said that creating an AI ecosystem in Pakistan is crucial for which regulatory policies must be developed in consultation with experts. Stressing the need for averting the risk of breach of sensitive databases and personal data, he

warranted immediate attention.

Brig. Mohammad Yasin (Retd.), SDPI's Senior Advisor Emeritus, highlighted the vast potential and capabilities that AI is driving in sustainable development, transforming the health, industry, education, agriculture, defence, and human resources. He also warns of the job displacement that AI has caused and may cause in the future. He proposed the creation of a task force, which represents all the sectors, to meet periodically to discuss policy and planning recommendations provided to agencies for implementation. The potential of AI is vast, but to harness its true potential requires concerted efforts by all the stakeholders.

Mr Waqas Burney from Product Partnerships at Google PAC, via video-link from Singapore, highlighted that AI can both predict natural disasters and analyse the damage inflicted. With AI, riverine floods can be predicted seven days earlier, he said, adding that "Google Map" for floods is now available in over 80 countries as open-source software. Similarly, he further said AI can also predict and monitor wildfires through satellite imagery and machine learning. He maintained that generative AI identified nearly 60,000 damaged buildings in 2022 floods in Pakistan.

Mr Tahir Ahmed Masood from Transworld Associates remarked that governance and regulatory delays for AI results in disruption. Generative AI offers customized learning experiences, allowing students to focus more on challenging concepts. "It is only fair that Generative AI be included in the education and training sectors; developing AI regulatory framework is crucial to avert 80% of the population being at a disadvantage".

Dr Yasar Ayaz from the National University of Science and Technology, Islamabad said: "AI is the past, present, and future and needs interventions through competitive skill development to avail the potential to create 133 million jobs by 2030 and displacement of about 400 million jobs". He suggested that regulatory bodies must create conducive environment for the 25,000 people graduating in AI skills annually and reskilling labour to attract more Foreign Direct Investment particularly in startups in the country.

Mr Nasruminallah Mian, the Lead of Digital Sector Programme, Asian Development Bank (ADB) stressed on a 10-year framework to boost FDIs especially in health care and agriculture. He added that Pakistan must avail the opportunities of technology transfers and develop on those which

can save the cost of research and innovation.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations highlight the diverse potential of AI in various sectors in Pakistan, from education and healthcare to disaster management, underscoring the need for strategic collaboration and innovation in its implementation:

Policy and Planning Recommendations

1. **An AI Task Force**, representing all sectors, should be constituted in the Cabinet Division to keep pace with the rapidly evolving AI technology. It should meet periodically to discuss and evaluate current developments in this field, foresee future developments and prepare policy and planning recommendations for the implementing agencies.
2. **AI Regulation** is extremely important, but it needs to come after sufficient development of technology – not too late and not too early. Regulatory frameworks should be adaptable. AI experts in Pakistan should sit together to form the regulations. Universities should play a leading role in research and development in this area.
3. **Ethical challenges** of AI have to be addressed by:
 - establishing comprehensive ethical frameworks, guidelines, and codes of conduct and employing techniques like algorithmic auditing, diverse data-set curation, and fairness-aware machine learning to mitigate biases.
 - defining clear lines of responsibility and liability and implementing mechanisms for redressal in case of any AI-related harm.
 - employing rigorous testing, validation, and continuous monitoring of AI systems, ensuring safety and reliability.
4. **Long-term AI strategy** should be overseen by the proposed Task Force. A conducive environment should be created for AI experts so that they might work with zeal and dedication. There must be clear-cut directions on who will be behind the long-term strategy.
5. **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** has the potential to impact every aspect of human life. In particular, the following segments

should be addressed as a priority.

- **Climate change:** Multiple catastrophic issues have been exacerbated by the change in climate, leading to natural disasters like floods and wildfires. AI can mitigate these by understanding the historical patterns of floods and the seasons of flooding in the region. This can help save the lives of millions of people around the world, including Pakistan. Relevant agencies – like National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and flood control agencies - should adopt AI to forecast natural disasters. AI should also be adopted for post-disaster management by filling the informational gap through Automated Damage Assessment using satellite imagery that goes beyond regions.
- **Education-related** AI should be included in the curriculum from a very early stage. Over 25,000 IT graduates, partly skilled in AI, are produced yearly. They should be utilized to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the country. There are other multiple issues associated with attracting AI-related FDI in the country. For example, for AI companies to progress, there is still insufficient publicly available data on which to base their products.
- **Healthcare** providers from the private sector in Pakistan fear including AI in their healthcare systems' approach. They are afraid of who will bear the responsibility if a mistake occurs, and the cost associated with it. Steps must be taken to streamline and regulate the use of AI in the health sector so that healthcare providers can freely operate within the given parameters.
- **Job displacement** is a bigger issue, as more than 400 million jobs (mostly low-skill jobs) are likely to be impacted by 2030. However, AI also creates new/more job opportunities, such as in the media industry where humans can focus on the generation of ideas, make use of AI models, and address major legal issues such as copyright, etc. With important interventions and support, AI can create more than 130 million new jobs. Thus, there is a pressing need to reskill the already skilled professionals. Skill development, especially AI-related, should be promoted at all levels of education.
- **Military uses** of AI are almost in thousands. Several countries have developed autonomous weapons by using AI. To forestall any surprise, close collaboration between the universities, industry, and the Pakistan military for research and development in this technology should be forged. This triangle will enable us to keep pace with the help of emerging AI technology and find cutting-edge solutions to our needs.



Thematic Session B-3: (Report Launch)

Human Security in Pakistan

In collaboration with FES

Moderator: Mr Abdullah Dayo, FES

Opening Remarks: Dr Niels Hegewisch, CD, FES

Keynote Speaker & Report Author: Dr Hafiz A. Pasha, Former Federal Minister for Finance, GoP

Panellists:

1. Dr Moeed Yusuf, BNU, Lahore (Online)
2. Prof. Dr Aliya Hashmi Khan, QAU
3. Dr Hamza Ali Malik, UNESCAP, Thailand
4. Mr Rana Kaiser Ishaque, UNDP Pakistan
5. Dr Zainab Jehan, FJWU
6. Mr Ali Khizar, Business Recorder

Panel Organisers: Dr Sajid Amin Javed, Mr Muhammad Umar Ayaz & Mr Zahid Majeed, SDPI | Mr Abdullah Dayo, FES

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Umber Azeem

PRs: Ms Aqsa Naveed & Mr Salar Babar

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/mj0R03aTCAE>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Security must not be evaluated in terms of arms: Dr Pasha.

Dr Hafiz Pasha, the former Federal Minister for Finance, said that security must be analysed keeping in view the universal and people-centric nature and must not be evaluated in terms of arms.

He was speaking at the launch of his report titled **"Human Security in Pakistan"**.

The report, comprising 87 indicators under the

Human Security Index, delved into multifaceted aspects of human security, addressing freedom from fear, want, inequality, and access to human rights.

Dr Pasha said that external financial vulnerability indicator is of critical importance for Pakistan to assess the threat to human security. "Between the years 2020-2022, Pakistan witnessed massive decline in human security indices and in the last two years 41% increase in the food prices was witnessed which significantly undermines food security and nutritional security of the people," he stated. "The black hole in Pakistan's economy



is the energy sector, due to unbelievable levels of line losses and rising energy prices,” he said while identifying key areas which undermine human security in the country. He went on to say that the divergence in development among the provinces is the other major issue, with the biggest problem being Balochistan where the per capita income has declined by 30-35% in the past two decades. Stressing the need to improve income inequality, regional disparities, education, upskill labour, etc., he said two decades back, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had the lowest per capita income, but it has improved by 30-35% due to increase in regional and international migration. Though gender equality indicators have improved due to improvement in labour force particularly considering that women make half of the country’s population and there has been little to no improvement in Pakistan’s Human Development Index (HDI) in the past many years and is second lowest in South Asia. He highlighted that “Pakistan has PKR 2,250 billion poverty gap and only PKR 400 billion mobilized as direct cash transfers,” and emphasized the need for progressive resource mobilization across different social strata.

Dr Hamza Ali Malik, Director, Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development, UNESCAP, said “There are two birth defects that Pakistan still confronts; one is the confusion as if we are a nation or Islamic state and the second being the type of government structure.” Unless the core issues are resolved, course correction for policies is impossible and policy fatigue will continue without yielding optimal results. Going forward,

Pakistan needs collaborative, corrective measures designed by economists and social scientists if the inequalities have to be addressed.

Rana Kaiser Ishaque, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP, said that human security lies on building human capacity and is threatened by environmental hazards and biodiversity, political unrest, socioeconomic disparities, technological havocs, which must be addressed to avert human security risks.

Ali Khizar from Business Recorder remarked that Pakistan is getting poorer and projected indices related to human capital, education, technical skills suggest that the situation will worsen. He called for re-evaluation of national priorities, devolution of further subjects to provinces and course correction of structural policies to address unsustainable debt challenge.

Dr Aisha Ghaus Pasha, former Minister of State for Finance and Revenue, said the kind of reforms implemented in Pakistan are hitting the people hard, but no reforms to curtail twin deficit of taxing the powerful segments and massive burden of recurring expenditures, pensions, and addressing privileges remain eluded due to lack of political will. She sought structural reforms for addressing the twin deficit, reducing import burden and behavioural changes by public to support these reforms.

Dr Aliya Hashmi Khan, former Dean, Quaid-e-Azam University, said human development

and human security are interconnected and enshrined in the Constitution and international commitments.

Dr Moeed Yusuf, VC of Beaconhouse University and former National Security Advisor, said that the first national security policy of Pakistan came in 2022 that focuses on ensuring that the most vulnerable people are safe, secure, have decent employment and their dignity is protected for economic security. "The pre-requisite of implementation is to have a benchmark to evaluate the implementation and the consolidation of indicators by Dr Hafeez Pasha is the next logical step".

Abdullah Dayo, Program Coordinator and Advisor, FES, termed the National Security Policy (NSP) as a groundbreaking decision, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach centred around citizens

Dr Niels Hegewisch from FES said the report is very timely in the face of significant climate devastation and economic turmoil. He expressed the hope that this report would influence upcoming party manifestos, fostering a new consensus to tackle Pakistan's multifaceted challenges.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations focus on a multidimensional approach to enhance human security in Pakistan, encompassing economic, social, and governance aspects, and recognising the intricate relationship between individual

welfare and broader national security concerns:

1. Pursue a renewed International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreement to mitigate external vulnerabilities. This is crucial considering the significant economic repercussions, such as a potential 9% decrease in GDP and a 72% increase in prices if Pakistan defaults. Establishing a robust economic charter and achieving political consensus on human security are essential steps.
2. Implement a finance plan with direct taxes from federal and provincial governments to generate substantial fiscal resources. Address the identified poverty gap of PKR 2,250 billion through progressive resource mobilisation, targeting different social strata.
3. Address issues in civil-military relations and the governance system. In this regard, develop a coherent approach that includes the inclusive involvement of various professions for effective policy implementation and governance reforms.
4. Incorporate a micro-level approach in policy formulation to effectively tackle the complexities of human security. This approach should focus on the specific needs and circumstances at the community and individual levels.
5. Adopt people-centric approaches that recognise the interconnection between national and human security. Implement measures such as expenditure cuts, pension reforms, and addressing privileges to enhance economic security.



Thematic Session B-4: Roundtable: Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Context of Circular Economy and Climate Agenda

In collaboration with CANSA & OSF

Moderator: Mr Arif Rahman, Co-founder and CEO, Climate Chain

Chair: Mr Amir Khan Goraya, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP Pakistan

Opening Remarks: Dr Shafqat Munir Ahmad, SDPI

Special Remarks: Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, ED, SDPI
Topic: *SCP and Climate Policy Framework in Pakistan*

Scene Setting: Mr Sanjay Vashist, CANSA, India

Keynote Speaker: Mr Ali Kemal, SDGs Taskforce, GoP

Speakers:

1. Mr Hridayesh Joshi, Journalist, India
2. Ms Shabnam Baloch, IRC
3. Mr Aftab Alam Khan, Resilient Future International Pvt Ltd
4. Engr. Memon Abdul Jabbar, Member, BoGs, SDPI
5. Dr Amiera Sawas, Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, UK
6. Dr Saqib Nasir, P&D, PSF

Panel Organisers: Dr Shafqat Munir Ahmad, Mr Salman Danish, Mr Ali Rehmat, SDPI | Mr Sanjay Vashist, CANSA

Rapporteurs:

PR: Mr Ali Rehmat

PRs: Ms Ramsha Mehboob Khan

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/7nbkAP90Dxw>



Wealth belongs to individual, and resources belong to society: Dr Suleri.

SDPI Executive Director **Abid Qaiyum Suleri** said that we need to promote this slogan that wealth belongs to an individual, but resources belong to the society and the concept of sustainable production and sustainable consumption is to promote social justice.

He was speaking at a session titled **“Sustainable Consumption and Production in the context of Circular Economy and Climate Agenda”**.

Dr Suleri said that there is an abundance of policies with regard to production and consumption, but their implementation is less than desired. Emphasizing on learning from successful sustainable production and sustainable consumption models, he said that more emphasis is given to production, but consumption is equally important.

Mr Sanjay Vashist, Director CANSA, India,



stressed the need for holding discussion among stakeholders, including the government, civil society, policy makers and private sector in the context of sustainable production and sustainable consumption. He said under the present circumstances, biodiversity is on the decline while there is a bigger challenge of climate change. “We not only need to conserve but also efficiently use our resources,” he said.

Mr Ali Kemal, Chief SGDs, SDG Support Unit,



Ministry of Planning Development and Reforms, said we need to use our resources responsibly, as according to available data, we waste 36-million-ton food annually. He added that for sustainable growth and production, we need to minimize the use of natural resources and material in a manner which is socially beneficial particularly from the perspective of environment. Stressing the need for evolving a new system where resources do not go waste and the material is regenerated and the products are kept in circulation, he said the role of the institutions is very important here while the government must regulate the system.

Mr Hridayesh Joshi, NDTV researcher from India, focused on environmental issues like climate change and rising temperatures and stressed upon creating awareness in this regard. He said that pollution is also on the rise which is making life difficult, and the media can play an effective role in disseminating such information.

Eng. Abdul Jabbar, Member of SDPI Board of Governors, said circular economy and circularity is the old concept but efficiency is the key in the context of production. There is a huge wastage of resources as according to estimates, an individual on average wastes 65 kg food per annum while instead of controlling, it is increasing, therefore, waste management is the issue which demands special attention.



Dr Amiera Sawas, representative of Fossil Fuel Non-proliferation Treaty Initiative, UK said we need to look at the problem in a systematic way. She said that at the moment countries like Pakistan are really struggling within a global economic context, which is very historical. She further said it is also important to strengthen cooperation and, in this context, multilateralism has actually been beneficial to countries such as Pakistan.

Mr Amir Khan Goraya, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP questioned what exactly the use of resources is being spent on distribution, if there is no recycling. He also highlighted the significance of carbon footprint in the context of efficiency angle and stressed upon incentivizing sustainable production and devising sustainable consumption.

Mr Bilal Anwar, CEO of National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF), said it is important to optimize this pathway using the intermediaries and the products which we are getting through the

production cycles. In this regard, he said, the role of science communication is very important, adding, "We need to inculcate this concept of science communication in our youth that using something is the core responsibility on their shoulders and they would be answerable for that in future."

Mr Aftab Alam Khan from Resilient Future International said that we should look for new production and consumption models and patterns as currently we are following the produce more, sell more and earn more business model instead of reducing greenhouse gases.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are centred on embedding sustainable practices in both consumption and production. They advocate for systematic changes and educational initiatives, crucial for aligning with the objectives of a circular economy and climate agenda. The focus is on enhancing sustainability across different sectors through strategies such as reducing carbon footprints, revising business models, improving production efficiency, and nurturing a culture of individual and collective responsibility towards sustainable practices.

1. Prioritise the effective management and reduction of excessive water consumption as a key element of sustainable consumption and production.
2. Concentrate on achieving sustainable growth that accounts for long-term environmental and social impacts, rather than solely on economic growth.
3. Embrace a comprehensive, holistic approach to sustainable development, addressing interconnected social, economic, and environmental factors.
4. Balance deregulation with the rationalisation of regulations to effectively meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensuring

streamlined and efficient frameworks.

5. Increase consumer awareness about sustainable consumption patterns and encourage the private and industrial sectors to adopt sustainable marketing and packaging practices.
6. Advocate for the shift towards a circular economy through sustainable production and consumption as a voluntary initiative in both industrial and private sectors, stressing the critical role of food and resource management. Introduce circular economy principles as mandatory practices.
7. Focus on reducing the carbon footprint of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and humanitarian agencies. This will involve highlighting green procurement practices and engaging with stakeholders like vendors to educate them about sustainable production and consumption.
8. Encourage individual responsibility and targeted sustainable practices among citizens.
9. Foster public and stakeholder engagement to achieve the goals of a circular economy.
10. Make sustainable practices fashionable and appealing to the wider population.
11. Enhance production pathways and intermediary systems, focusing on efficiency and sustainability. The success of a circular economy hinges on this optimisation and resource synchronisation.
12. Adopt a holistic approach in coordinating ministries, integrating scientific evidence for effective policy implementation and sustainable practices.
13. Inculcate a sense of individual responsibility through small steps, building a collective commitment to sustainability. Develop incentives that promote sustainable processes. Highlight success stories, like the decline of cigarette smoking, as models to inspire sustainable production and consumption practices.



Thematic Session B-5: (Policy Forum)

Sustainable Agriculture: Pakistan's Path to Food Security

In collaboration with BoP

Moderator: Dr Fareeha Armughan, SDPI

Technical Presentation: Mr Zafar Masud, CEO/President, BOP

Welcome Remarks: Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, SDPI

Panellists:

1. Mr Malik Amin Aslam, Former Minister of State for Environment, GoP
2. Prof. Dr Muhammad Naeem, AAU, Rawalpindi
3. Dr Babar Shahbaz, Professor, UoA, Faisalabad
4. Mr Fouad Bajwa, Agriculture Republic and Digital Dera
5. Air Commodore Dr Tauseef ur Rehman, SI(M), NASTP
6. Mr Kazim Saeed, Pakistan Agricultural Coalition
7. Ms Rija Tayyab, Roshan Packages Limited

Vote of Thanks: Dr Vaqar Ahmed, SDPI

Panel Organisers: Dr Sajid Amin Javed, Engr. Ahad Nazir, Mr Abdullah Khalid & Ms Zainab Baloch, SDPI | Mr Asad Zia, BOP

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Maheen Rehan

PRs: Mr Hammad Nadir

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/JTPJQqjBrs8>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Agri experts stress capacity building of farmers to develop climate smart agriculture.

Experts have stressed the need for capacity building of farmers to develop climate-smart agriculture in

order to attain the goals of sustainable agricultural growth and economic prosperity in the country.

The suggestion was made at a policy forum titled **"Sustainable Agriculture: Pakistan's Path to Food Security"**. They said that the sector was currently facing numerous challenges,



which were taking place due to rapid changes in weather patterns and resulting in uneven weather conditions including excessive rains and catastrophes in shape of devastating floods thus eroding agriculture, livestock, and livelihoods.

President of the Bank of Punjab, **Mr Zafar Masood**, said that agriculture sustainability is of paramount importance to maintain food safety and security as well as for industrial development. He said that the sector has enormous potential to enhance crop productivity as well as exports to fetch



much needed foreign exchange for the country especially through aquaculture, meat, fruits, and vegetable exports. About 1,440 km long coastline of Pakistan offers a huge potential of aquaculture which can enhance the country's seafood exports up to US \$2 billion annually, he said, adding, local meat export is recorded at \$350 million, which has the potential of about \$10 billion, and fruit and vegetable trade potential can bring US \$5 billion.

Malik Amin Aslam, the former Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Climate Change, said that Pakistan's case presents the harsh reality of climate change, which is threatening the country's breadbasket with erratic changes in temperature and precipitation patterns. He said that extreme



climatic events are not only eroding crops and damaging soil quality, but also threatening the quality of underground aquifers amidst increasing water stress. He emphasized that without strict implementation of policies, and modernizing the

sector, Pakistan will not be able to bridge the financing gap that hinder agricultural growth.

SDPI Executive Director **Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri** called for prioritizing the agriculture sector to put it on path of sustainable development and transformation and stressed the need for strengthening the collaboration between four basic pillars to promote sustainable agriculture, i.e. academia, government research institutions across the country, agriculture extension and private sector. The digitization of agriculture sector is crucial to safeguard the farming communities from the exploitation of middleman, he emphasized and called for revamping Zarai Taraqati Bank Ltd (ZTBL) for performance enhancement and ensure access of farmers to credit facility.

Prof. Dr Muhammad Naeem, Vice-Chancellor of Pir Mehr Ali Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi said that the excessive use of pesticides is a threat to pollinator population, which is crucial for food security and human survival. Moreover, pesticides cause annual \$10 billion loss to biodiversity and ecosystem in the US alone. He also called for educating farmers about resource conservation, efficiency, and ecological concerns besides the modernization of logistical aspects and technology to transform agriculture into a sustainable sector.

Prof. Dr Babar Shahbaz from the University of Agriculture Faisalabad underlined the need for promoting mix cropping patterns to increase crop productivity while simultaneously reducing resource consumption as well as improve farm income and resource conservation. This is especially pertinent as Pakistan is among most water stressed countries and it could grow even more vulnerable by 2050.

Air Commodore Dr Tauseef ur Rehman, SI(M) from National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP), said that technological advancement alone will not be the saviour of our current challenges. "It must be complimented by customizing technological solutions to Pakistan's context, and responsible consumption patterns at individual level to reduce agriculture's ecological and environmental impacts," he added.

Mr Kazim Saeed from Pakistan Agriculture Coalition emphasized that boosting agricultural exports must be leveraged to attract Foreign Direct Investment and bring macro-economic stability. He warned that if the sector's performance is not improved, then Pakistan may experience livestock feed insecurity as well.

Mr Fouad Bajwa from Agriculture Republic called for addressing the institutional gaps and digitalizing the sector to attract the youth back into the sector. He added that small holding farmers are very disenfranchised and lack access to modern technologies that may be addressed by

strengthening the digital infrastructure so that the digital technologies can reach the small farmers in remote areas.

Ms Rija Tayyab from Roshan Packages Limited highlighted that high food losses are induced due to poor packaging techniques and standards at the farm level, which ultimately reflects in Pakistan being unable to meet international packaging standards. She further said that a general lack of awareness and reluctance to adopt international packaging standards was observed at the farm level particularly by small farmers. She suggested establishing packaging standards at farm level and improving storage and transport of agricultural produce to tap into the export market potential.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are designed to tackle crucial elements of sustainable agriculture in Pakistan. They urge efficient water management, robust financial support systems, the advancement of agricultural technology, and the establishment of coherent policies. The goal is to enhance the sustainability and resilience of the food supply chain in the country:

1. Invest in water storage infrastructure and implement smart water management strategies to efficiently distribute water, particularly for agricultural needs.
2. Develop policies and educational programmes to encourage water conservation across

industries, agriculture, and households, ensuring equitable water access.

3. Allocate financial resources to support climate-resilient agriculture, including the development of drought-resistant crops, efficient irrigation systems, and sustainable farming practices.
4. Expand financial assistance for farmers through subsidised loans and insurance, facilitating easier access to resources, technology and inputs like seeds, fertilizers, and equipment to ensure affordability and sustainability in farming.
5. Implement soil and water testing initiatives to guide farmers in making informed decisions about fertilization and irrigation, enhancing soil health and water use efficiency.
6. Offer and mandate crop insurance for farmers, particularly with coverage for irrigation, to safeguard against natural disasters and promote responsible farming.
7. Enhance infrastructure, including roads, telecommunications, and internet access, to connect rural and urban areas, aiding farmers in accessing markets, information, and technology.
8. Establish a consistent Agricultural Policy Framework for agricultural reforms to safeguard long-term sustainability of the farming sector.
9. Incentivise and reward the adoption of digital tools in agriculture to facilitate data collection and promote innovative, sustainable practices.
10. Adopt proper packaging methods for food and vegetables to reduce spoilage and extend shelf life in the supply chain.



Thematic Session B-6: Climate-resilient and Low-carbon Health Systems: Strengthening Partnerships for Impact

In collaboration with Alliance for Health Policy & Systems Research (HPSR)

Moderator: Ms Rabia Tabassum, SDPI

Chair: Prof. Dr Zafar Mirza, Former Minister of Health, GoP

Speakers:

1. Dr Robert Marten, AHPSR, WHO, Switzerland (Online)
2. Dr Shehla Zaidi, AKU, Pakistan (Online)
3. Dr Mahwish Hayee, OPM, Islamabad
4. Dr Hasan Bin Hamza, HPSIU, MoNHSRC, GoP

Panel Organisers: Mr Qasim Ali Shah, Ms Rabia Tabassum, Mr Hassan Murtaza & Mr Salah Ud Din, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Mr Salah Ud Din & Muhammad Daniyal Masood

PRs: Mr Athar Akhtar

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/SwbCWgBdjfo>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Intersectoral coherence, policy consistency a must for climate health resilience: Experts.

Intersectoral coherence among the federal and provincial entities along with consistency in policy initiatives is imperative to ensure the country's climate health resilience.

These views were expressed by the experts at a session titled **"Climate-resilient and Low-carbon Health Systems: Strengthening Partnerships for Impact"**.

Former Health Minister **Dr Zafar Mirza**

enunciated the intricacies of climate change and the complex interplay between the health impacts of environmental degradation impacts. He said that climate change had emerged as an all-encompassing determinant of health in recent times. He recommended that climate change has to be integrated into the healthcare organizations, policy systems and institutions relevant to the field. The unexpected climate events' frequency has increased that demands emergency response and preparedness to be reinforced in that context with enhanced efficacy, he said, adding that "Lahore has become the most polluted city in the world and Pakistan is the eighth most vulnerable country due to climate change." Dr Mirza said that an issue like smog has different sources but

almost all of them are manmade and preventable. "Climate finance is a problem, but the country needs to own environmental degradation as its own issue and then we should contact the international organizations," he added. For improved governance, he said, policy coherence across all institutions is necessary which is a challenging task. The Climate Change debate, he said, is restricted to merely the federal capital whereas the most impacted provinces were not part of it.

Dr Mahwish Hayee from OPM said that Pakistan has signed climate resilient health systems related pledges at the COP26 global environmental moot held in Glasgow. She highlighted that the country lacked robust greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) registries critical for guiding scientific evidence related to carbon emissions of the country. She pointed out that the country's regulatory authorities pertaining to health are not trained on climate resilient infrastructure. However, climate finance is the biggest issue at the local and global level which was evident at the COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh.



Dr Hassan Bin Hamza, Policy and Planning Lead at HPSIU - Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination said globally Pakistan has no contribution to climate change or is not among top ten biggest polluter countries. However, the transport sector in the country has the highest carbon emissions indicating inefficient transport system directly casting impacts on health. He underscored that annual increase in average temperatures of the country would cause rampant increase in vector borne diseases like malaria. He added that under the health framework signed at COP26 by 60 countries, the Ministry of Climate Change and Health Ministry have created a working group and a health alliance, a scoping study was done, whereas accreditation of health institutions was also required. The scoping study shows that the first level care provider has indirect access to climate related information through media not meteorological office, he said, adding that it also indicates knowledge gaps and poor condition of health infrastructure.

Dr Sohail Safdar, Social Safety Expert, said health system is where low carbon will have to be considered by the manufacturers and pharmaceuticals. The ministry of industries and international trade organization need to devise sustainable practices as the country lacks proper taxonomies in industries that can identify weak and less efficient systems.

Dr Robert Marten, AHPSR, WHO, Switzerland via video link said many countries are struggling with knowing that what is a climate resilient health infrastructure and system whereas Pakistan is at the forefront of global negotiations on the subject. He added that National Adaptation Plan implementation and its outcomes will provide learning lessons to many countries whereas his alliance had created an association of 12 countries and Pakistan was also part of it.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations provide a strategic approach to developing a robust, climate-resilient, and low-carbon health system in Pakistan. They underscore cross-sector collaboration, targeted training, infrastructure assessment, and sustainable financing:

1. Designate specific focal points within ministries to coordinate climate change and health initiatives effectively, ensuring focused and streamlined efforts.
2. Create cross-sectional policy and technical working groups involving all relevant stakeholders. This collaborative approach will incorporate diverse perspectives and expertise in policymaking and technical solutions.
3. Enhance local leadership to integrate climate resilience effectively into health services.
4. Develop a 'National Health Adaptation Framework' which is comprehensive and multifaceted for adapting health systems to climate challenges.
5. Encourage multisectoral involvement through the active involvement of academia, public, and private sectors in health and climate research for an integrated approach.
6. Provide specialised training for the health workforce, including medical students, on climate resilience in health and emergency preparedness.
7. Evaluate existing health infrastructures, technologies, and processes, and adopt new technologies to enhance the health system's reliability.
8. Conduct a review of the current private healthcare infrastructure to identify climate change vulnerabilities and establish minimum standards for climate-smart health facilities.
9. Allocate public funds to support health practices that are resilient to climate change impacts.

Thematic Session B-7: Celebrating a Legacy: HDF's 25 Years of Transforming Communities

*In collaboration with HDF
Dedicated to Dr Pervez Tahir*

Moderator: Ms Zainab Naeem, SDPI

Chair: Dr Adil Najam, President, WWF International

Opening Remarks: Mr Mehboob Ul Haq, CEO, HDF Pakistan

Distinguished Speakers:

1. Dr Muhammad Khalid Riaz, HDF Pakistan (Online)
2. Lieutenant General Anis Ahmed Abbasi (Retd.), HDF
3. Dr Nadia Tahir, Independent Economist
4. Ms Fatima Hussain, HDF North America
5. Tariq Banuri, University of Utah

Concluding Remarks: Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, SDPI

Exchange of Mementos

Panel Organisers: Ms Zainab Naeem, SDPI | SDC Unit

Rapporteurs:

PR: Mr Huzaifa Rehman

PRs: Ms Dur E Nayyab

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/PmlulGdsPs0>



NARRATIVE REPORT

SDPI, HDF sign MoU to explore potential of carbon markets.

Journey of learning towards human development must continue: Dr Adil.

Dr Adil Najam, President of WWF International,

said that hope must come from the ideas and efforts a person makes; sometimes our obsession with the achievements overshadows our efforts, therefore, the journey of learning to explore what human development must continue.

He was speaking at a session titled **“Celebrating a Legacy: Human Development Foundation's 25 years of Transforming Communities”**.



Dr Najam said that in simplest terms, human development is the answer to the question: 'How are you?' "The answer to the question would be in three categories, Health, Wealth and Knowledge. This is what human development is," he said.

Dr Tariq Banuri from the University of Utah, US, said that human development provides us with a framework on how to resolve problems. He recalled his meeting with Dr Mohammad Younis and quoted him saying: "I did not want to do it (microfinance); I just wanted to make people's lives better."

In his introductory remarks, the CEO of Human Development Foundation **Mehboob ul Haq**, said that he was not here merely to celebrate HDF's 25th anniversary, rather to reaffirm their

He further said that we must make efforts to address climate change hazards and build a resilient future for all. "As we embark upon a new chapter of our journey, we are driven by the same values which underpinned our success." He said over 3.7 million people have benefitted from HDF. Moreover, PKR 8.5 million was granted in terms of scholarships.

Afterwards, tributes were paid to Dr Pervez Tahir, renowned economist. His wife, **Dr Nadia Tahir**, was invited to say a few words on the life of her late husband. She said that late Tahir was a man who truly believed in transforming communities. She quoted him as saying: "If you want to work for people, then you have to live the way they are living their lives."

Responding to a question, **Dr Khalid Riaz**, Chairperson of HDF, said that the motivation to establish HDF came from the North-South gap that he personally witnessed. This gap was of both intellectual and resource distribution. There was a clear disparity between Americans and Pakistanis. So, the Pakistani diaspora decided it was time to go back to Pakistan.

He said that development has to come from inside. "If the people of Pakistan really want to improve their lives, the motivation has to come from them. We, the diaspora, can only do our share. But the real motivation has to come from the people living in Pakistan."

Earlier, SDPI and HDF signed an MoU to explore the potential of carbon markets in the country. The signing ceremony took place during thematic session. A documentary was also played highlighting HDF's achievements and future projects.



commitment to the unwavering cause of human development. "The past 25 years have been a journey of remarkable achievements. Still our work is far from finished, and we must continue to strive," he said.





At the end, SDPI Executive Director **Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri**, made the concluding remarks and exchanged souvenirs with the HDF.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are structured to advance human development in Pakistan, highlighting significant improvements in education and healthcare, redressing economic imbalances, realigning policies for optimal impact, encouraging international cooperation, and engaging the Pakistani diaspora:

1. Build more schools and clinics in underserved regions, train educators and healthcare workers, and provide essential resources to improve access to quality education and healthcare.
2. Foster innovation and entrepreneurship in rural areas through skill development programmes, microfinance, and support for

small businesses. This approach should involve the government.

3. Shift the focus of Pakistan's policies towards human development and poverty alleviation, particularly in rural and underprivileged areas. This involves reorienting strategies within key governmental bodies like the Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance to prioritise initiatives that improve quality of life, integrating grassroots-level experiences into national policymaking.
4. Leverage the expertise and resources of the Pakistani diaspora, especially those in the healthcare sector, to enhance Pakistan's healthcare infrastructure and practices. Collaborate with international health organisations to create sustainable healthcare models that draw on successful practices from developed nations.
5. Redefine development goals to focus on people's well-being and opportunities, integrating this approach into all government policies. Work towards empowering individuals to access opportunities, including quality education and livelihood training.
6. Strategically involve the Pakistani diaspora in development projects, tailoring approaches to different generations with distinct motivations and expectations. Ensure financial transparency and effectiveness to maximise their contributions.
7. Encourage collaboration among organizations across various sectors, including education and health, to improve Pakistan's Human Development Index through a unified approach.



Thematic Session B-8: Study Launch: Domestic Child Labour in Pakistan

In collaboration with FES

Moderator: Mr Abdullah Dayo, FES

Opening Remarks: Dr Niels Hegewisch, CD, FES

Keynote Speaker: Mr Iqbal Ahmed Detho, Sindh Human Rights Commission

Speakers:

1. Ms Mehnaz Akbar Aziz, Children's Global Network Pakistan
2. Barrister Rida Tahir, Gender and Child Rights Expert
3. Mr Geir Thomas Tonstol, ILO, Pakistan Office
4. Ms Khalida Saleemi, SACH-Struggle for Change
5. Mr Iftikhar Ahmed, Comparative Labour Law Expert

Panel Organisers: Dr Sajid Amin Javed, Mr Muhammad Umar Ayaz & Ms Zarmina Aijaz, SDPI | Mr Abdullah Dayo, FES

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Umber Azeem

PRs: Ms Aqsa Naveed & Ms Javeria Malik

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/FZIsb95kIPA>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Experts seek re-evaluation of child protection laws to stop exploitation.

Experts at a panel discussion stressed the need for re-evaluation of child protection laws since the lack of cohesion in these laws across the provinces and their weak implementation allows continuous violation of children's rights and prevalence of domestic child labour.

The discussion was held at the launch of a study titled **"Domestic Child Labor in Pakistan"**.

Dr Niels Hegewisch, FES Country Director, said the study aimed to influence the political party manifestos in the forthcoming elections. The study has suggested to the political parties to bring about progressive reforms in order to address the needs of the marginalized groups and protect their rights.

Mr Iqbal Ahmed Detho, the Chairperson of Sindh Human Rights Commission and author of the study, underscored that while international commitments hold weight, they do not supersede the laws of the country. Within the Constitution of Pakistan, he said, the minimum age for work stands at 15 years; however, nuances in definitions

based on labour conditions, such as light work or hazardous work, create variations. "This leads to a conflicting scenario between the legal age for work and the minimum level of education provided to children." He proposed judicial reinterpretation aligning the definition of a child with international standards. "The ambiguity surrounding the definition of 'light work' and variation across provinces further compounds the issue and exacerbates the challenge." Mr Detho said the unavailability of child labour statistics in Pakistan shows the shortcomings of the state in monitoring, reporting and enforcement by the state.

Mr Geir Thomas Tonstol, Director of International Labor Organization, Pakistan said: "Nothing embodies social injustice more than child labour." Owing to livelihood losses post COVID-19 and 2022 floods, poor families in Gilgit-Baltistan and Punjab have resorted to employing their children in labour activities employing 13% child labour force. He emphasized the significance of aligning labour laws with ILO conventions, proposing amendments to the rules governing business conduct in the Punjab.

Ms Mehnaz Akbar Aziz from Children's Global Network, Pakistan, lamented the prevalent notion of recognizing an individual only upon reaching the age of 18, correlating it solely with attaining voting eligibility. Highlighting a critical aspect, she called for addressing the political reluctance to implement robust child labour laws.

Mr Iftikhar Ahmed, the Comparative Labor Law Expert, highlighted the severe risks inherent in domestic child labour, surpassing even hazardous occupations like mining, often leading to instances of torture, rape, and murder. He pointed out the absence of social security provisions for vulnerable child workers, the ambiguity surrounding definition of 'light work' and the pressing need for robust monitoring of child labour cases within households by local governments.

Ms Khalida Saleemi, the Executive Director of Struggle for Change (SACH), said the implementation of the Vagrancy Act often exposes

children to certain abuse and exploitation. She emphasized that children engaged in domestic labour can endure post-traumatic stress disorder due to severe emotional toll. She also demanded reassessment of the laws to protect vulnerable children from exploitation and rights abuse.

Barrister Rida Tahir, the Gender and Child Rights Expert, said one in every four households engages children in domestic labour. She called for urgent measures and designating child domestic labour as a cognizable and non-compoundable offense.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following pragmatic steps focus on aligning national definitions on domestic labour with international norms, resolving legal discrepancies, strengthening legal responses to child labour offenses, and raising awareness through education:

1. Align Pakistan's definitions of 'child,' 'child labour,' 'Child Domestic Labour (CDL),' 'hazardous work,' and 'light work' with international conventions. This should be a collaborative effort involving the Government of Pakistan, National Commission for Child Welfare and Development, International Labour Organisation, NGOs, and child protection experts.
2. Revise the 'Pakistan Penal Code' to address discrepancies between articles regarding the minimum age of education and work, while also modifying it to classify child labour offenses as cognizable and non-compoundable. This comprehensive legal reform should work towards establishing a unified framework that effectively balances child protection, the value of education, and age-appropriate work experiences, and ensure a consistent and stringent legal approach to child labour offenses across all provinces.
3. Incorporate child labour policy discussions in curricula of academic institutions and universities. This should aim to enhance awareness of social issues and cultivate social responsibility among students.



Thematic Session B-9: High-Level Policy Dialogue: Effective Implementation of Carbon Markets in Pakistan

In collaboration with the Danish Embassy

Moderator: Mr Ubaid ur Rehman Zia, SDPI

Chair: Dr Sardar Mohazzam, MD, National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority

Opening Remarks: Mr Bilal Anwar, CEO, NDRMF

Presentation:
Dr Khalid Waleed, SDPI

Speakers:

1. Mr Khurram Lalani, Resources Future
2. Mr Arsalan Ali Faheem, DAI
3. Ms Sameera Sheikh, MoCC, GoP
4. Dr Hassan Daud Butt, China Energy Engineering Group Co. Ltd

Panel Organisers: Ms Saleha Qureshi, Dr Khalid Waleed, Mr Ubaid ur Rehman Zia & Ms Zainab Naeem, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Zona Usmani
PRs: Ms Saleha Qureshi
SM: Ms Zainab Babar

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/Sr3VXDRzCIE>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Need stressed for exploiting carbon market potential to protect environment.

Experts underscored the need for exploiting potential of carbon market in Pakistan to strengthen the ongoing efforts for environmental protection and sought a policy framework to



harness carbon market potential at the session titled **“Effective Implementation of Carbon Markets in Pakistan”**.

Joint Secretary for the Ministry of Climate Change, **Ms Sameera Shaikh** said that Pakistan is among the top 10 countries, which were the most affected due to extreme climate events. “The share of Pakistan in greenhouse gas emission was merely 1 per cent, she said, adding that in 2021 during the Paris agreement in 2021, it was agreed to reduce the GHG emissions by 50 per cent by the end of 2030. She said that only 15 per cent resources would be generated domestically to implement the climate agenda whereas 35 per cent is contingent to the international funding. She added that Pakistan would require \$101 billion for energy sector transition. She said that many countries all over the world are looking into the carbon market to incentivize climate change action by reducing the GHG emissions. She maintained that the government is finalizing the policy guidelines and regulatory framework for volunteer carbon market to meet the climate goals.

Dr Sardar Mohazzam, Managing Director, National Energy Conservation and Efficiency Authority, said that a framework for the carbon market is under consideration. He stressed the need to focus on mitigating sides of climate change as compared to adoption sides. He added that the carbon markets of different countries have different mechanisms and implementation requirements. Owing to gap in demand and supply, power sector in Pakistan is facing challenges, he said, adding that in winter season demand of electricity shrank to 8000 MW, whereas it jumped to 27,000 MW in summer seasons, he said. He said that to bridge the gap, the energy deficiency was covered by different means and coal-fired power plants are among them. He said that according to a study, over 800 MW of electricity could be conserved by shifting 140 million existing fans to energy saving fans.

Mr Khurram Lalani from Resources Future reiterated the need for a robust policy framework for effective implementation of carbon market. Regulations and digital infrastructure development are also required for the effective implementation of carbon market, he said, adding that public private partnership would also help harness the potential of carbon market. He said that long-term and continued policies would be the other measures as such projects take time to materialize the provision of dividends.

Mr Bilal Anwar, the CEO of National Disaster Risk Management Fund, said that a lot of potential exists for the carbon market in Pakistan. Stressing the need for developing required infrastructure to get its benefits like other countries, he

called for enhancing the industrial base as the current industrial base was limited in terms of carbon intensity and the need to protect their competitiveness. He said that agriculture is among other potential areas, he said that urgent policies for the effective implementation.

Dr Khalid Waleed, SDPI Research Fellow, underscored the critical nexus between the carbon market in Pakistan and equitable development. He emphasized the imperative of incorporating principles of economic justice, climate justice, and a just energy transition for a holistic and sustainable approach.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations propose a systematic approach for establishing and integrating carbon markets in Pakistan. They stress the need for a legal and regulatory groundwork, alignment with national policies, simplified credit assessment processes, and collaborative efforts across various governmental and academic sectors:

1. The Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination should establish a robust legal and regulatory framework for the implementation of voluntary carbon markets. This framework should detail necessary activities, define the scope, rules, and applicability of the programme, including sector and provincial-level Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) protocols.
2. Ensure that the carbon market framework is consistent with existing national policies, particularly in the areas of energy, environment, and sustainable development.
3. The Ministry should foster synergy between carbon markets and broader national objectives.
4. Implement Voluntary Emissions Trading Schemes (ETS) to unlock private finance through carbon credits, focusing on co-benefits to ensure the effectiveness of the Voluntary Carbon Market (VCM). The Ministry should design a mechanism to simplify the ‘Carbon Credit Assessment Process’ currently managed by international crediting agencies. This mechanism should facilitate the evaluation of abatement potential across all sectors at the provincial level.
5. Strengthen collaboration between federal and provincial governments, relevant stakeholders (e.g., Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, National Energy Efficiency & Conservation Authority), and academia for the effective implementation of the carbon market policy framework.

Thematic Session B-10: Policy Forum: Rethinking Public Debt Sustainability Analysis with a Focus on SDGs

In collaboration with FES and UNESCAP

Moderator: Dr Zainab Jehan, FJWU

Co-Moderator: Mr Abdullah Dayo, FES

Technical Presentation: Dr Hamza Ali Malik, UNESCAP, Thailand

Speakers:

1. Dr Mohsin Hassan, MoF, GoP
2. Mr Ali Kemal, SDGs Taskforce, GoP
3. Dr Muhammad Aman Ullah, Planning and Development Board, GoP (Online)
4. Mr Adnan Ashraf Ghuman, TWB
5. Mr Murtaza Jafferjee, JB Securities Ltd, Sri Lanka (Online)
6. Mr Waqas Paracha, KP Finance Division

Book Launch: *Impact of Foreign Debt on Labour Rights in Pakistan*
(Authored by: Zulfiqar Shah and Muhammad Rafique)
(Presented by: Mr Muhammad Rafique)

Special Remarks on Book:

- Dr Sajid Amin Javed, SDPI
- Dr Uzma Ashiq, Social Work Dept. Punjab University

Panel Organisers: Dr Sajid Amin Javed & Mr Muhammad Umar Ayaz, SDPI | Mr Vatcharin Sirima-
neetham, UNESCAP | Mr Abdullah Dayo, FES

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Umber Azeem

PRs: Ms Aqsa Naveed & Mr Salar Babar

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/OrDc6L7B1eM>



Fiscal policies & debt management pressing challenges for Pakistan: Dr Hamza.

Dr Hamza Ali Malik, Director, Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development, UNESCAP, Thailand, said the management of fiscal policies and debt has emerged as a pressing policy challenge for countries like Pakistan, and if managed properly, it can lead to sustainable growth.

He was speaking at a thematic session titled **“Rethinking Public Debt Assessment with SDGs Lens: Pakistan in Focus”**.

Dr Malik said for future debt investments, aim to fuel Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and national financial stability, robust structural development policies are deemed indispensable. The economic landscape in the Asia Pacific region portrays a concerning slow down in growth, coupled with an unprecedented surge in inflation rate, a stark shift from pre-pandemic times where inflation was not a primary policy concern, he added. Despite all this, he stressed the need to amplify investments in SDGs.

Elaborating the different ways to assess debt vulnerability, he said: “Interestingly, a low level of debt might not inherently signify vulnerability, and conversely high debt levels don’t always indicate imminent problems, thus a comprehensive assessment of a country’s debt, delving beyond numerical figures, becomes essential to truly understand its vulnerability. Ultimately, debt, if managed judiciously, holds the potential to reshape economic trajectories and foster sustainable growth.” He suggested adopting a conventional approach as adopted by the IMF and the World Bank to assess the situation.

Dr Mohsin Hassan from the Ministry of Finance said last year our GDP growth was 0.3 per cent while inflation remained nearly 30 per cent and our national savings were 12.3 per cent of GDP and the domestic savings were six 6.5 per cent, which is one of the fundamental reasons of our rising deficits. He said in the region, the savings stood about at 20 to 30%. To maintain balance of

payment, we need external financing at a cheaper rate, he said, adding that domestic interest rate is very high which needs to be lowered.

Mr Ali Kemal from SDGs Task Force said if we maintain debt to GDP ratio at 60 per cent then the debt in real and nominal terms will be four times more than it was in 2000. He said it’s not the level of taxes but what you’re doing with the debt is important. “We need to ensure sustainability and make optimum use of the external loans,” he said, adding that “we also need huge resources to meet SDGs targets that primarily focus on education and health.

Dr Muhammad Amanullah, Joint Chief Economist at the Planning and Development Board, Punjab said as far as the development projects are concerned, we are getting 50 to 53 per cent resources from the National Finance Commission (NFC) award, but we are trying to get some more resources through our own source tracking. He said we have implemented various initiatives for achieving accelerated growth with focus on improving and developing health, education, skills development, water and sanitation, equal education, energy, physical infrastructure, urban development, information technology and governance.

Mr Adnan Ashraf Ghumman, the Country Economist of The World Bank, discussed the role of fiscal policy and how we can look at that and assess to get sustainability. He said there is a standard approach in which we look at two broad things, the solvency and the liquidity issue, and the standard practice that has also been followed by the institutions like IMF and World Bank as well. We do see that there is a clear relationship between fiscal policy and the level of debt. He stressed the need for political consensus to overcome economic challenges like debt. He added that Pakistan’s debt to GDP is not very high and can be managed.

Mr Murtaza Jaffarjee, the CEO of JB Securities Ltd, Sri Lanka, said that in Pakistan, you should start talking about the primary balance. In Sri Lanka, he said, the primary balance remained surplus twice in the 1950s, once in 1991, and twice in 2017 and 2018. He said during all the other periods, we had large primary balance deficits. He said this situation like high debt to GDP ratio necessitated the structural reforms in both domestic and external debts with a focus on improved efficiency.

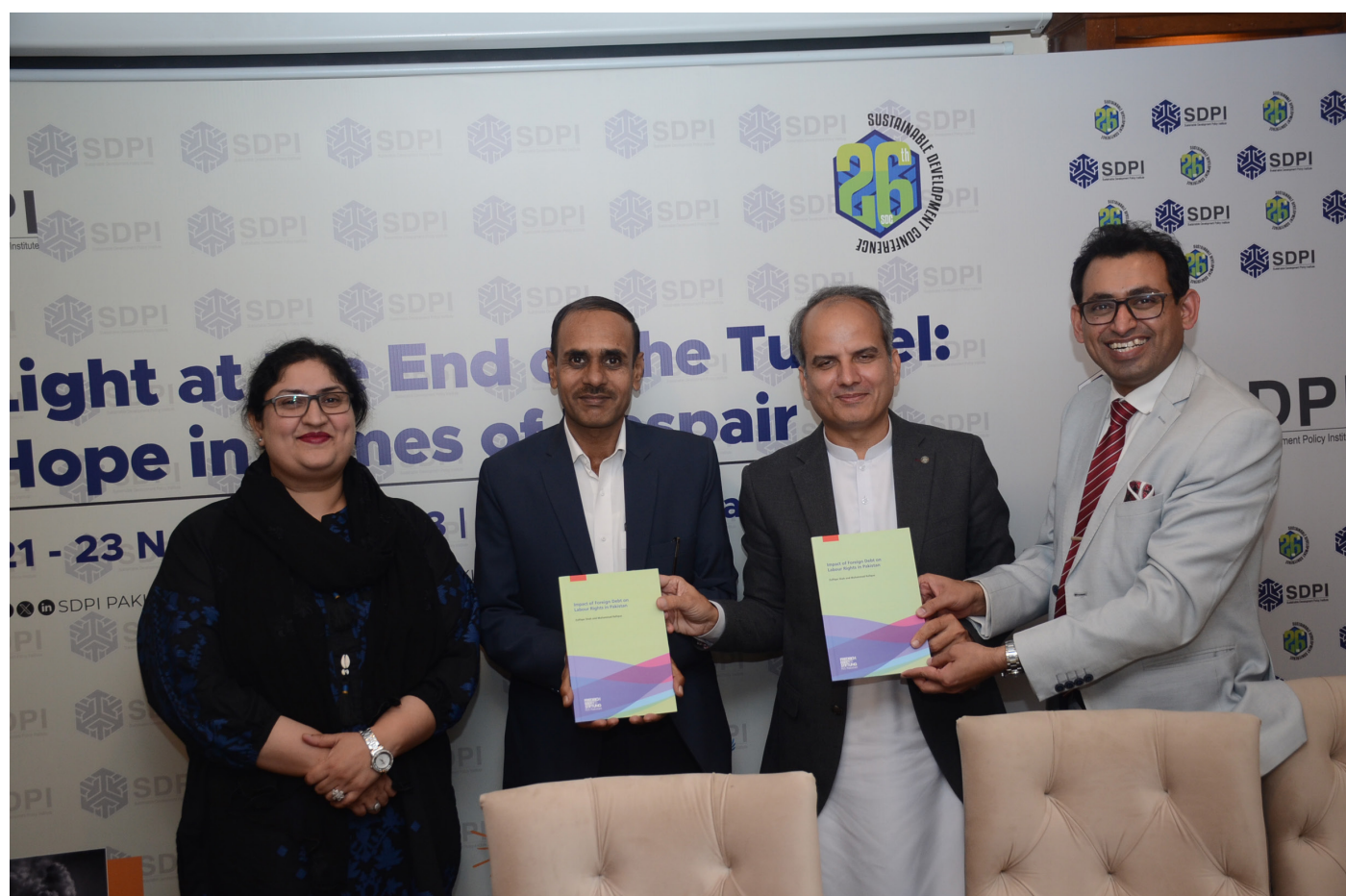


Mr Waqas Paracha, from the Finance Division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, deliberated on the short and long-term debt the country is grappling with. He said Pakistan is the fifth largest country in terms of size, but 46th in terms of economy, so there are some major issues that need urgent attention. He said our debt to GDP ratio is 70 per cent which is not high as some people think. "If you go into the detail, India, Japan and even Bangladesh and other countries have higher debt to GDP ratio," he said, adding, "Unlike these countries, Pakistan's external debt ratio is 36.4 per cent, which is very high." He said keeping in view these figures, the government must have a capacity of efficient management, medium term debt strategy to finance the budget deficit, on time payments, and increased productivity of loans.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations provide a comprehensive approach towards managing public debt in Pakistan, underscoring sustainable growth, effective utilisation of resources, fiscal responsibility, and institutional strengthening to align with the SDGs:

1. Regularly assess national debt sustainability, considering the impact on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and potential debt distress.
2. Amplify investments in SDGs despite economic slowdowns and inflation, focusing on managing primary deficits and understanding the nuanced implications of debt levels.
3. Address macroeconomic challenges, including currency volatility and circular debt, through targeted fiscal policies like taxing bank profits from government lending and enhancing auditing for greater accountability.
4. Focus on the effective utilisation of debt, particularly in financing SDGs, while managing the fiscal capacity to meet investment requirements.
5. Conduct comprehensive reviews of public expenditure, especially in key sectors like health, education, and governance, to evaluate progress on SDGs, in collaboration with development partners.
6. Maintain fiscal prudence and sustainability, cautioning against excessive debt accumulation, and focusing on sectors that can drive economic resilience, such as services.
7. Strengthen institutional capacity to implement and sustain fiscal reforms, considering long-term fiscal consolidation and alternative public expenditure strategies.
8. Foster robust political consensus and policy coherence, learning from global examples of successful fiscal reforms.
9. Tackle pervasive corruption and enhance system accountability to strengthen social compacts and tax compliance.
10. Enhance debt management capabilities, focusing on sectors like agriculture and local production to build economic resilience and stability.



Thematic Session B-11: Circular Economy in Pakistan – The Untapped Potential of Waste to Resource

In collaboration with IoU and HBS

Moderator: Mr Asmat Ullah, IoU

Chair: Dr Ali Malik, Deputy Sect. PM Youth Program, PM Secretariat, GoP

Technical Presentation: Ms Ayesha Majid, IoU

Speakers:

1. Ms Mehrunisa Malik, Saaf Suthra Sheher Pvt Ltd
2. Ms Li Stephanie Choo, UNESCAP, India
3. Dr Bishnu Raj Upreti, NCCR, Nepal

Presentation: *Conflict and Cooperation in Municipal Solid Waste Management: Some Reflections from Nepal and Lessons for South Asia*

4. Ms Farah Rashid, Engro Foundation, Karachi

Panel Organisers: Ms Zainab Naeem & Mr Huzaifa Rehman, SDPI | Ms Samima Durrani, IoU

Rapporteurs:

PR: Mr Huzaifa Rehman

PRs: Ms Dur E Nayyab

Video Link: https://youtu.be/2PzcM26tX_8



NARRATIVE REPORT

Experts for engaging youth, especially women, to tap waste management potential.

Ms Li Stephanie Choo, representative of UNESCAP from India, stressed the need for engaging the youth especially women diaspora in the waste management process, and said gender perspective should be integrated in circular economy policies, strategies, and processes at all levels of a government.

She was speaking at a session titled “Circular

Economy in Pakistan – The Untapped Potential of Waste to Resource”.

Ms Choo said gender perspectives should be given priority while devising circular economy policies, especially in waste management, to get indigenous ideas to turn waste potential into economic resources. She elucidated that gender perspective includes implementation of gender-based quotas, affirmative action in male-dominated fields, and provision of specific training and fiscal incentives for women entrepreneurs.

Ms Ayesha Majid, the Programme Coordinator



of IoU, in her presentation, said: “With over 64 per cent of the population below the age of 30, Pakistan has a major demographic advantage that can be capitalized for transitioning towards zero-waste cities.” Pakistan generates around 48.5 million tons of solid waste annually that is growing by 2.4 per cent annually due to rapid increase in population and urbanization, she said. According to estimates, the current waste collection rate in cities range from 60 to 70 per cent, she said, adding that the collected waste is often dumped in unscientific landfill sites that leads to unmanaged emission of Greenhouse Gases (GHGs). More than five million people die annually because of waste-related illnesses. Lack of segregation of waste at source and low recycling rates are major challenges that prevent the utilization of waste as a resource in Pakistan, e.g. waste-to-energy projects, production of organic fertilizers from wet kitchen waste, etc., slowing the shift from the linear paradigm of production and consumption to a circular model of economy, she maintained.

Ms Mehrunnisa Malik, the Chief Executive Officer of Saaf Suthra Shehr (SSS), said that Islamabad generates 1,000 tons of waste everyday but there is no legal designated landfill site in the city. She stressed the need for innovative ideas to reduce, reuse, recycle, and upcycle waste besides ensuring formal responsible interventions. Highlighting the main role of her organization, she said the SSS collects all recyclable waste, and guarantees that it gets recycled, without letting it go to a landfill or to an environmentally or socially harmful industry.

Dr Bishnu Raj from Nepal Center for Contemporary Research pointed towards few of the leading reasons behind poor waste management in South Asia that include tensions between municipalities and waste workers, conflicts between environmentalists and waste managers, poor waste governance, and weak enforcement of

Ms Farah Rashid from ENGRO said: “We will be investing into financially stable enterprises that will be working to find out solutions and coming up with certain plastic models which will be replicated across the country.

Dr Ali Malik, the Deputy Secretary at the Prime Minister’s Youth Programme, said the speakers had a constructive discussion as to how we can build effective partnership to transform waste into a source of economy. He said 170 million people in Pakistan are under 30, which means a huge chunk of population will soon enter the job market. The government, he said, is committed to creating more opportunities for the youth by engaging them in various initiatives. Under the PM’s youth programme, 25 per cent quota has been allocated for women in the government’s business loan scheme.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations will enable harnessing the untapped potential of waste-to-resource initiatives in Pakistan by engaging youth, supporting formal enterprises, integrating gender perspectives, developing recycling infrastructures, and coordinating urban waste management efforts:

1. Develop policies to integrate youth, especially young women, in the circular economy and environmental initiatives, providing education, employment, and skills training, particularly in sustainable practices and waste management.
2. Promote youth entrepreneurship in sustainability.
3. Provide support and incentives to formal waste management businesses, including tax benefits, grants, or subsidies, to enhance their competitiveness against the informal sector.
4. Incorporate gender perspectives in circular economy policies, especially in waste management. Implement gender-based quotas, affirmative action in male-dominated fields, and offer specific training and fiscal incentives for women entrepreneurs.
5. Establish a comprehensive plastic recycling infrastructure to convert plastic waste into high-quality resin for industrial use. Incentivise the collection, sorting, and processing of plastic waste to reduce reliance on virgin plastic.
6. Implement a coordinated policy for municipal solid waste management in urban areas. This should involve collaboration among local communities, municipal authorities, environmentalists, and various government levels to resolve conflicts, allocate resources effectively, and promote waste reduction and recycling initiatives.



relevant laws and regulations. He said monetizing waste and value addition by waste-based products is becoming popular among the youth in Nepal. “Youth are engaged in waste-based enterprises and successfully managing their businesses,” he told the participants.

Thematic Session B-12: Socially and Environmentally Compliant Construction Industry in Pakistan

In collaboration with NED and SC

Moderator: Dr Shafqat Munir Ahmad, SDPI

Chair: Mr Geir Thomas Tonstol, CD, ILO, Pakistan Office

Speakers:

1. Mr Khalid Mahmood, LEF, Lahore
2. Dr Saifullah Chaudhry, Development Impact Solutions Islamabad – Toronto
3. Mr Malik Najaf Khan, Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affectees
4. Mr Mehar Abdul Haq, Brick Kilns Owners' Association Pakistan

Panel Organisers: Dr Shafqat Munir Ahmad, Mr Salman Danish, Mr Muhammad Awais Umar & Ms Ramsha Mehboob Khan, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Mr Ali Rehmat

PRs: Ms Ramsha Mehboob Khan

Video Link: https://youtu.be/lURwYf7J_L0



NARRATIVE REPORT

Monitoring of environmental laws and labour rights a must for just transition in construction sector.

Robust monitoring of environmental regulations as well as protection of labour rights is crucial for a just and sustainable transition in the construction industry.

This was the crux of a panel discussion titled

“Socially and Environmentally Compliant Construction Industry in Pakistan”.

Mr Geir Thomas Tonstol, the Country Director of International Labor Organization, Pakistan, said that the construction sector transforms source materials into capital assets, contributing significantly to economic activity and thus holds immense potential for poverty reduction and income generation. However, he said, the lack of specialized skills, and high risks of occupational hazards have made it one of the riskiest sectors





globally. High prevalence of informal employment further weakens the social security and workers' rights, he said, adding that coordinated efforts are required by the government, employers, and workers with initiatives focusing on promoting greater compliance and fostering decent working conditions in the construction industry in Pakistan.

Dr Saifullah from Development Impact Solutions, highlighting the hazardous working conditions in brick kiln industry, said that out of 4.4-5.2 million brick kiln workers, 68 per cent are doing bonded or forced labour, with 19 per cent being under 18 years of age. The industry employs an estimated 1.3 million workers, including 23 per cent women, with 69 per cent dedicated to moulding. There is a significant demand-supply gap, he said, adding that there is an average 13 million tons of coal consumption in the industry annually. He called for enhancing productivity by introducing new technologies to reduce occupational and environmental hazards.

Mr Khalid Mahmood, Director, Labor Education Foundation, stressed the need to protect workers' rights for a truly just transition.

Malik Najaf Khan from Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affectees, remarked that land rights are at the heart of the reconstruction efforts, and called for empowering affected people through ownership, particularly for women and vulnerable households.

Mr Mehar Abdul Haq, Brick Kilns Owners' Association Pakistan, called for eco-friendly technologies in kilns, such as Zig Zag, for emissions reduction, energy conservation, and enhanced

environmental sustainability. He also called for enhancing registration kilns workers with the government institutions concerned particularly social protection institutions and strict enforcement and compliance of labour laws, safety standards, and environmental regulations within the brick kiln industry. He suggested providing capacity building training for brick kiln workers, regarding environment-friendly and safer brick-making techniques, health safety, and labour rights and incentivizing

the adoption of eco-friendly technologies. He emphasized to ensure strict adherence to labour laws and the protection of workers' rights within the brick kiln industry and foster collaborative partnerships between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, industry associations, and international bodies to develop and implement policies that support environmentally compliant brick kilns.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

These focused recommendations aim to significantly improve the safety standards and regulatory compliance of the construction and brick kiln industries in Pakistan, contributing to a safer, more sustainable, and socially responsible sector:

1. Implement comprehensive safety protocols and training programmes in the construction industry to address the significant lack of health and specialised skills among workers. This initiative should aim to align the sector with fundamental workplace safety principles and promote decent working conditions, ensuring a safer and more compliant construction sector.
2. Mandate the registration of all brick kiln establishments and their workers with relevant government institutions, such as the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI), Social Security, and the Workers Welfare Fund.
3. Enforce strict compliance with labour laws, safety standards, and environmental regulations in the brick kiln industry to ensure workers' rights and environmental protection.

Evening Plenary 2.1: Climate Change & Food Security: Does Regenerative Agriculture Offer Hope in Despair?

In collaboration with Nestle, Pakistan and Cargill

Moderator: Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Chair: Dr Van Nguyen, Deputy Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme, Pakistan

Keynote Speaker: Dr Adil Najam, President, World Wide Fund for Nature International

Distinguished Panellists:

1. Mr Sheikh Waqar Ahmed - Head of Corporate Affairs & Sustainability, Nestlé Pakistan
2. Ms Dipanwita Chakraborty, Regional Director, Corporate Responsibility & Sustainable Development, Asia-Pacific, Cargill, India (Online)
3. Dr Masoud Jarallah Al-Marri, Director General, Islamic Organization for Food Security; Director, Food Security Department, Ministry of Municipality and Environment, State of Qatar
4. Dr Iqrar Ahmad Khan, Vice Chancellor, University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF), Pakistan

Plenary Organisers: Dr Kashif Salik & Mr Mobeen Ali Khan, SDPI | Ms Aatekah Mir Khan & Ms Namwar Yusuf Rahman, Nestle, Pakistan

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Ayesha Ahmed

PRs: Ms Huma Arshad

Video Link: https://youtu.be/A1w_PgqdyQ



NARRATIVE REPORT

Pakistan needs major rethinking in defining climate change as existential threat: Dr Adil Najam
Experts for regenerative agriculture to ensure food security, address adaptation issue.

Stressing the need for expediting measures to initiate regenerative agriculture to ensure food

security, experts at a high-level plenary called for defining climate change as an existential threat to human civilization.

The was discussed at the plenary titled “**Climate Change & Food Security: Does Regenerative Agriculture Offer Hope in Despair?**” held in collaboration with Nestle, and Cargill, Pakistan.



SDPI's Executive Director, **Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri**, told audience that this plenary mainly discusses the regenerative potential of agriculture in Pakistan. He said climate change is a reality and in order to cope with it and adapt to it, digitalization, and use of AI in agriculture sector is now imperative.

In his keynote address, President of WWF International, **Dr Adil Najam**, started with three pertinent questions that what is the nature of climate in public mind, what should be the strategy to tackle environmental degradation in Pakistan's context, and how to live in the age of adaptation. He said the onset of climate change fundamentally changes the nature of climate policy and climate politics, as it is the age of adaptation. He warned that with the start of COP28, climate politics will become much more contentious.

Dr Najam revealed that the developed countries have spent \$100 billion under the global climate fund. "The floods in Pakistan last year incurred \$42 billion losses whereas less than \$1 billion was received as assistance. Rejecting the much-bragged global scientific jargon of limiting average world temperatures to less than 1.5°C, he said, there is no science in the world to limit it to 1.5°C, which was a lie at Paris.

"Indus river had sustained human civilization. It sustains 90% Pakistan that lives along it; 85% of its trade is done through it; eight mega cities inhabit 40km radius of Indus; our songs and love stories revolve around it," he narrated. He said that rethinking climate from energy to everything, minimizing bad climate behaviour and maximizing good was the key to shift from interest focused to outcomes focused approach. He said adaptation is not a problem but a solution.

Vice-Chancellor of Faisalabad Agriculture University **Dr Iqbal Khan** said that most of the major agriculture landscape in the region expanded from 1880 onwards where 60 per cent cropping intensity plan was designed at that time to leave arable land idle for half of the year for reviving its soil nutrients. Five crops, namely wheat, rice, cotton, and maize occupy 80 per cent of the cultivatable land and 60 per cent of crop water is used by paddy rice, he said, adding that "We have to enable farmer that the burning of organic matter doesn't take place and crop mix needs to be reviewed." There are no legumes in the four major crops that

are naturally a source of nutrition for soil which should be made part of agriculture mix, he said, adding that the injudicious use of water based on the water distribution of the 1870 system of irrigation should be replaced with demand-based irrigation system. After 2010, Dr Khan said, the country had faced recurrent floods and climate catastrophes. "We have developed heat resilient species of wheat that never shrivels in heat. We have to change wheat blood. This country can only be made food secure by heat tolerant crop seeds, redefining water usage, introducing new species,"

Ms Dipanwita Chakraborty, Regional Director, Corporate Responsibility & Sustainable Development, Asia-Pacific, Cargill, India (online) said Cargill has been learning through different experiences of partnerships for regenerative agriculture. "Engagement with agriculture communities is crucial whereas the farmer focused approach means "every farmer is unique," she said. She suggested incentivizing farmers' progress to achieve regenerative agriculture. It is necessary to hold the right kind of soil testing to inform the farmers to kickstart right interventions.

Dr Masoud Jarallah Al-Marri, Director-General,



Islamic Organization for Food Security, and Director, Food Security Department, Ministry of Municipality and Environment, State of Qatar said: "We should look for simple solutions like adaptation to address food security that is defined as availability, affordability, quality and safety of food. He said it is necessary to look at all the resources to ensure the production of commodities at the local level. "We need to focus on sustainability of crop production and regenerative agriculture is the key to achieve it."

Representative of Nestle-Pakistan, **Sheikh Waqar Ahmed**, said the company being a food and beverage conglomerate is engaged with farmers. In order to achieve its net zero target by 2050, he said, the company has initiated interventions to initiate regenerative agriculture and other less carbon intensive interventions. "Conserving water on farms can help achieve maximum impacts whereas regenerative agriculture is more important than it was before," he added.

Dr Van Nguyen, Deputy Resident Representative for Programmes, UNDP said climate change is a reality that has spiked up over the decades and regenerative agriculture has emerged as a significant intervention to ensure food security. "Shift to less water intensive food items is like changing eating habits, which demands a change in mindset. Regenerative agriculture is about farmers, who are not exposed to technology. We

have to be extremely patient while engaging with them," she said.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are geared towards improving agricultural sustainability and productivity, particularly in response to climate change challenges of Pakistan. They highlight the need for incorporation of technology, adoption of regenerative farming methods, diversification of crops, and the efficient management of water and energy resources:

1. Develop policies to seamlessly integrate technology and foster innovation in agriculture, enabling diverse and comprehensive approaches for societal advancement.
2. Implement a comprehensive strategy that begins with soil testing, followed by farmers.
3. Enact policies focused on regenerating agricultural practices to boost productivity in the agricultural sector.
4. Establish a policy framework that encourages farmers to diversify their crop mix, facilitated by government interventions to ensure the adaptation of a variety of major crops.
5. Re-evaluate the ecosystem approach for water conservation, with a specific focus on practices like 'warabandi' and integrate energy considerations into water management policies.



Evening Plenary 2.2: SDPI's Living Legend Series Award 2023

In Honour of Dr Parvez Hassan

Introduction of the Living Legend Series and Moderator: Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Moderator: Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Chief Guest: Dr Parvez Hassan, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of Pakistan

Opening Remarks: Ambassador Shafqat Kakakhel, Chairperson, Board of Governors, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Documentary Screening

Distinguished Speakers:

1. Tariq Banuri
2. Syed Babar Ali (Online)
3. Prof. Nicholas A. Robinson (Online)
4. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed
5. Mr Abdul Razak Dawood
6. Mrs Nasreen Kasuri
7. Senator (R) Javed Jabbar (Online)
8. Dr Adil Najam
9. Mr Shahid Kardar
10. Mr Shahid Malik
11. Mr Ahmed Bilal Mehboob
12. Mr Ali Kuri Khattak
13. Mr Farid Ahsanuddin
14. Dr Ishrat Husain
15. Dr Moeed Yusuf
16. Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah
17. Mr Omar Hassan

Plenary Organisers: Ms Saleha Qureshi & Mr Ubaid ur Rehman Zia, SDPI | Mr Asad Ahmad Ghani

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Zona Usmani

PRs: Muhammad Daniyal Masood

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/URlItCoJvD0>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Glowing tributed paid to Dr Parvez Hasan for his services in education and environment.

SDPI conferred Living Legend Series Award to Dr Parvez Hassan for his unparalleled contributions in the fields of environmental protection and education. The award was presented to him at the plenary session titled “SDPI’s Living Legend Series Award 2023”.

Dr Parvez has numerous achievements to his credit not only in Pakistan but also globally. He is internationally acclaimed and respected for his extraordinary contributions and commitment to the cause of environmental protection and conservation. It is to his credit and efforts that Pakistan got its first environmental protection legislation and is the pioneer of Pakistan Environmental Protection Act (PEPA).

“The history of Environmental Law would be incomplete without the work of Dr Parvez. He is the force behind the first environmental protection legislation in Pakistan, and he has set up Parvez Hassan Environmental Law Centre at the University of Punjab,” said **Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah**.

“There is a Chinese proverb when the wind blows, some people build walls, while others build windmills. Dr Parvez has been building windmills all his life,” **Justice Mansoor** remarked.

Dr Ishrat Hussain called Dr Parvez a man of great vision. “During the time when economists, including me, were sceptical about climate change, Dr Parvez believed that it was a serious issue and

felt the urgency to raise awareness.” Another admirable quality of Dr Parvez is his commitment to education; his firm belief that the future of Pakistan lies in investing in human capital, he said.

Mr Abdul Razzak Dawood, the former Federal Minister, said Dr Parvez Hasan is a man of exceptional character and true patriot. Recalling an incident of the past when a foreigner made some abusive remarks about Pakistanis, Mr Dawood said: “Dr Parvez Hasan responded to the foreigner in a way that the latter had to apologize.” He said Dr Parvez is one of the main brains behind setting up the charter of LUMS and Beaconhouse National University. He also established Law School at LUMS in the name of his father, and Razia Hassan School of Architecture at Beaconhouse National University in loving memory of his mother.

“Dr Parvez is a living embodiment of John F. Kennedy’s words: Ask not what your country has done for you, rather what you have done for your country. May he live long and continue to serve his people,” said **Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed**.



The President of WWF-International, **Dr Adil Najam**, while extending his respects for his mentor said Dr Parvez Hassan's role in the National Conservation Strategy was crucial and the first Pakistan-India Environmental Summit.

The Vice Chancellor of Beaconhouse National University (BNU), **Dr Moeed Yusuf** termed Dr Parvez Hassan the most meticulous person he ever met who possessed an esteemed personality. His hard work still at this age is commendable and he has been absolutely fair and on point in his professional dealings, Dr Yusuf added.

Dean, BNU School of Architecture, **Mr Omar Hassan**, who is the son of Dr Parvez Hassan, said his father considered integrity and a fair mind as the only quality for an individual.

Speaking on the occasion, **Dr Parvez Hassan** said in 2001, he had received the GC University Lifetime Achievement Award and today's SDPI award was a humbling moment for him. "The Living Legends Award demands stories and mine is the life fully blessed," he added. Shedding light on his lifetime achievements from his childhood participation in the world scouts league to his professional career as lawyer, he said: "The lawyering in 1970 was dominated by individuals

damaging general practice. I professionalized legal practice through my law firm where I started regular counselling of young lawyers at my office. My new approach was received well and got me national fame." He provided free of cost extended legal services to people and communities unable to afford legal services for public interest issues like environmental conservation or human rights.

Dr Parvez Hassan mentioned that his pro bono work was extremely rewarding for him as he spent almost 50 per cent of his professional life on pro bono work. "My parents would be proud of me and my family as well. I dedicated my environmental law book to my wife for supporting me throughout my life. Giving back is my overarching message to this gathering," Dr Parvez Hassan concluded.

Among the notable speakers were **Ambassador Shafqat Kakakhel** and **Ms Nasreen Kasuri**. **Syed Babar Ali** and **Prof. Nicholas A. Robinson** also shared their video messages at the occasion.

A documentary was played in honour of Dr Parvez Hassan paying tribute to his services. His friends and colleagues expressed immense gratitude to him saying that he was a man of his principles and of exceptional character.



Thematic Session C-1: Pakistan's SDGs and Polycrisis: How are we Faring?

In Knowledge Partnership with the Aga Khan University

Moderator and Host: Prof. Dr Zulfiqar Ali Bhutta, Founding Director IGHD, AKU, Pakistan

Chair: Dr Muhammad Amjad Saqib, Chairperson, BISP

Presentation: *Meeting SDGs in a City*

Guest of Honour: Senator Seemi Ezdi, Chairperson Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change, GoP

Speakers:

1. Dr Jai Das, AKU
Presentation: *Maternal and Child Health in Pakistan: How did Decentralisation Fare*
2. Ms Aisha Khan, MGPO (Online)
Presentation: *Introduction to the Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change*
3. Dr Sameen Siddiqi, AKU
Presentation: *Sehat Sahulat Program Evaluation*

Discussants:

1. Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, SDPI
2. Prof. Dr Zulfiqar Ali Bhutta, AKU

Closing Remarks: Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, SDPI

Panel Organisers: Dr Zulfiqar Ali Bhutta & Mr Jai Das, AKU | Dr Fareeha Armughan & Ms Anam Malik, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Anam Malik

PRs: Mr Maesum Abbas

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/JdkLgMsPg-U>



Mega urban centres, districts in Pakistan lack any SDGs model: BISP Chief.

Dr Amjad Saqib, the Chairman of Benazir Income Support Programme, said the despite the country's growing vulnerability due to climate change and weak social safety net, no city or province has replicated the Sustainable Development Goals. "Whether we really want to achieve the SDGs is a matter of political will," he said.

He was speaking at a session titled **"Pakistan's SDGs and Polycrisis: How are we Faring?"**.

Delivering a talk on 'Meeting SDGs in a City', Dr Saqib said: "I want to build a model city which will be an embodiment of SDGs. When I shared the idea with a friend, his response was that such a city would not be possible in Pakistan. To his comment, I said that it will be the real Pakistan we all dream of."

He further said: "Those nations, which do not practice self-accountability, then history does it for them. So, instead of criticizing, we should all play our part." "Even when we do achieve the goals, we have to ensure community participation to make them sustainable." He said waste management is the biggest issue at community level.

Senator Seemi Ezdi, the Chairperson of Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change, stressed the need for transformation in some sectors, including agriculture, urban development, etc. There was a dire need for sustainable green energy and climate resilience, she added. She called for reviving the National SDGs Implementation Plan.

Delivering a talk on 'Maternal and Child Health: How did Decentralization Fare?', **Dr Jai Das** from Aga Khan University, said there is a clear disparity among the provinces and the districts of Pakistan, regarding coverage of essential interventions. Moreover, the use of any contraceptive method had been declining annually, he observed. However, there was an improvement during the post-devolution phase as compared to pre-devolution phase in antenatal care. Likewise, improvement was observed in coverage of skilled birth attendance during the post-devolution phase. He said that the full immunization of children up to the age of two years also improved in the post-devolution phase.

Ms Aisha Khan, the CEO of Mountain and Glacier Protection Organization, said that health was often



forgotten in the climate discourse. "The adverse effects of climate change on health are many, and have been recognized at international forums. The first response to loss and damage is felt by the health sector. Although, health is seen as non-economic loss, it has financial implications. Health is one of the most underfunded area for climate change", she said.

Dr Sameen Siddiqi from Aga Khan University gave a presentation on 'Sehat Sahulat Program Evaluation'. He said his study revealed that 90% of the people were aware of the program, although there were some gaps in the knowledge about the facility. "As for the Financial Protection, the average medical expenditure for admitted patients using Sehat card was PKR 1,000, while for non-users it was PKR 30,000. "Among the beneficiaries, 50 per cent of the admitted women were aged 15-45 years, and 33 per cent of the hospitalized men were aged 60 years and above.

Dr Fareeha Armughan, SDPI extended the vote of thanks to the distinguished chair and guests.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Transition to a more advanced economic model that prioritises universal access to healthcare and education, essential for addressing the complexities of the polycrisis.
2. Focus on three key broad sectoral strategies:
 - a. Transform the agricultural sector.
 - b. Enhance irrigation and water management.
 - c. Promote renewable energy and low-carbon transportation, including the production of electric vehicles and expanding access to modern energy sources.

Thematic Session C-2: (Roundtable) Towards Plastic Circularity in Pakistan: Solutions and Way Forward

In collaboration with UNEP and COMSATS

Moderator: Ms Zainab Naeem, SDPI

Opening Remarks: Ms Adriana Zacarias, UNEP, Nairobi (Online)

Presentation:
Dr Rafi Amir-ud-Din, COMSATS, Islamabad

Special Remarks: Mr Khurram Shah, Director Public Policy & Government Affairs – Pakistan & Afghanistan, PepsiCo

Speakers:

1. Mr Charles Schneider, IFC
2. Ms Mehak Masood, Artistic Milliners
3. Ms Ayesha Aziz, Packages Limited
4. Mr Kashif Ali Tipu, Fr. DC Larkana
5. Ms Youngran Hur, UNEP
6. Dr Amna Farrukh, FAST NUCES, Lahore
7. Mr Umer Abdul Aziz, WSSC
8. Mr Hafiz Jawad Sohail, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network
9. Ms Aatekah Mir Khan, Nestle Pakistan
10. Muhammad Bin Shahzad, Tetra Pack Pakistan
11. Ms Rija Tayyab, Roshan Packages Limited
12. Ms Maha Kamal, TWB
13. Mr Sahib Alam Khan, WWF
14. Mr Ali Syed, Ouroboros Waste Management

Closing Remarks: Dr Asad Hussain, Director, COMSATS

Panel Organisers: Ms Zainab Naeem, SDPI | SDC Unit

Rapporteurs:

PR: Mr Huzaifa Rehman

PRs: Ms Dur E Nayyab

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/cWlnhdsulmg>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Experts call for behavioural changes to reduce excessive use of plastics.

Experts at a policy dialogue called for behavioural changes at individual level for a significant reduction in the excessive use of plastic material. The call was made at a policy dialogue titled



“Towards Plastic Circularity in Pakistan: Solutions and Way Forward”.

Ms Adriana Zacarias from United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP) stressed the need for negotiating with small and medium enterprises, private sector and industrial sector for producing the alternate and scaling up the circularity in businesses. She reiterated the UNEP’s commitment to continue its collaboration on plastic circularity with SDPI to eliminate the excessive use of plastic at all levels. She further said that plastic waste is polluting mountains, oceans and agriculture lands. Referring to a study, she said: “We are eating plastic about the size of a credit card every year, posing serious health hazards to mankind. The average use of plastic is highest in Pakistan,” adding that it was producing about 3.3 million tons of plastic every year. Hoping to overcome this challenge through circularity of plastic, she stressed on finding a way to end plastic pollution by involving the youth, and public and private sectors.

Mr Charles Schneider from International Finance Corporation (IFC) said that plastic material worth one billion dollars is wasted every year whereas, it has a big scope for circularity. He further said that a study conducted by the IFC had revealed that 16 sectors, including paper, tyres, glass, and batteries have yet to tap business potential. He called upon the private sector to develop business models to harness the potential of circularity to protect the environment as well as human beings.

Ms Ayesha Aziz from Packages Limited said that Packages industry is still manufacturing plastic items as the demand in the local industrial sector still exists. She stressed the need to develop proper infrastructure for the circularity of plastic waste to minimize its presence gradually and develop the alternate to achieve the SDGs targets.

Mr Khurram Shah, Director, Public Policy, Pepsi said that the company was planning to collect all its plastic waste in the form of pets and bottles.

Muhammad bin Shahzad of Tetra Pak called for developing linkages and cooperation among

different stakeholders, including plastic waste collectors, recyclers, and industry to help eliminate the problem and promoting the circularity. He suggested incentivizing the circularity industry on tax and customs duties for the growth of the waste management industry, particularly the plastic waste.

Mr Sahib Alam from WWF said that government should play a proactive role to promote plastic circularity and enhance financial allocation for research and development to find local sustainable solutions to overcome the issue.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

These policy recommendations propose a comprehensive approach for Pakistan to achieve plastic circularity, focusing on innovative economic models, corporate responsibility, inclusive strategies, and practical support for the recycling sector:

1. Shift towards a circular plastic economy by designing products for multiple uses, reparability, and recyclability.
2. Improve recycling practices by enhancing the recyclability of plastics and incorporating sustainable materials. This transition requires collaborative efforts from the government, businesses, and consumers, with support from organisations like UNEP.
3. Hold industries accountable for the plastics they produce by ensuring efficient collection and recycling systems. Establish necessary infrastructure and set recycling standards, especially for challenging plastics like multi-layer or flexible packaging.
4. Facilitate a just and inclusive transition to plastic circularity by providing clear guidelines, creating green jobs, and collaborating with the private sector and educational institutions for workforce development. Support entrepreneurial ventures in green industries.
5. Develop sustainable business models that capitalise on the untapped value in plastic waste. The government should play an instrumental role in creating a supportive environment for these circular economy models.
6. Offer support to the recycling industry by assisting with raw material inputs rather than tax breaks, considering Pakistan’s economic constraints.



Thematic Session C-3: Empowering Women Entrepreneurs through Financial Inclusion and Trade Participation

In collaboration with FNF

Moderator: Ms Mahnoor Arshad, SDPI

Chair: Ms Roshan Khursheed Bharucha, Member BoGs, SDPI

Opening Remarks: Ms Birgit Lamm, FNF, Pakistan

Special Remarks: Ms Romina Khurshid Alam, Former SAPM, GoP

Technical Presentation: Ms Faeyza Khan, World Bank

Speakers:

1. Ms Sonia Jahangir Seth, USAID
2. Ms Huma Fakhar, Social Activist & Entrepreneur, Lahore
3. Ms Amala Najeeb, FCDO

Closing Remarks: Dr Vaqar Ahmed, SDPI

Panel Organisers: Ms Mahnoor Arshad & Dr Vaqar Ahmed, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Mr Mohsin Ali Khan

PRs: Ms Naima Shehzadi

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/Tj4RdFu8QZI>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Empowering women entrepreneurs key to socio-economic development: Experts.

Empowering women is the key to socio-economic

development for which a range of policy measures and steps to economically empower the women are required through financial inclusion in the country.



This was the crux of a panel discussion titled **“Empowering Women Entrepreneurs through Financial Inclusion and Trade Participation”**.

Ms Birgit Lamm from Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) Pakistan said the issue of women inclusion in financial affairs of the country is more challenging than that of their male counterpart. Having CNIC, bank account and phone in own name are among some of the basic challenges faced by women that need to be addressed, she said. She highlighted that men should also realize the importance of women empowerment, as it would also benefit them as they would ultimately share earnings in their household expenditures.

Ms Roshan Khurheed Bharucha, member of SDPI Board of Governors, said women have been and are still being neglected especially in rural areas of Pakistan that require a lot of attention from the private and the government sectors. She suggested to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to offer three years’ tax holiday for those women who start their new businesses. “Let them earn for three years and then start collecting taxes from them.” She also called upon Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) authorities to provide training and loans to the women under the umbrella of the programme and empower them economically rather than making them into beggars.

Ms Romina Khursheed Alam, former Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM), said the women entrepreneurs should be imparted proper training to use the digital gadgets that will help their businesses to flourish more. “Women must know how to use the latest technologies, internet and artificial intelligence,” she added. She said that now women are no more the weak segment of the society. “They are quite normal human beings; what I want is to ensure gender equality rather than talking about women empowerment,” she said and called for providing equal opportunities to women.

Ms Faeyza Khan from the World Bank said according to McKinsey report if women are given opportunities to work as the men do, they could contribute \$28 trillion to the global GDP. She noted that gender disparities such as lack of proper documentation, social and cultural restraints, restricted mobility, decision power, etc., are the common constraints for women SMEs. She recommended to take holistic policy measures with the coordination of government bodies concerned, including ensuring freedom of movement, laws affecting women inheritances,

property, marriage, starting businesses, etc. Promoting digital and financial literacy is needed to foster growth and earning, she said.

Ms Amala Najeeb from FCDO said the government, civil society, and local and international organizations should collaborate to implement the policy measures to make women economically empowered. She said the religious scholar should also play their role in this regard.

Ms Sonia Jahangir Seth from USAID said a lot of capacity building programmes are needed to make women aware how to start and grow their businesses. She further said that connectivity, access to information and implementation of regulations are also required.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following additions are vital in order to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for women entrepreneurs in Pakistan, addressing barriers to financial access, market participation, and representation in decision-making processes:

1. Implement legal and regulatory frameworks that facilitate women’s access to digital and financial literacy programmes. This should include simplified access to banking loans tailored for women entrepreneurs.
2. Develop and reinforce gender-inclusive lending practices to support women-led Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). This will significantly improve women’s financial inclusion and access to necessary capital.
3. Create and nurture support ecosystems for women-led SMEs, providing resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities to foster growth and sustainability.
4. Set up business incubators and accelerators specifically focused on supporting women entrepreneurs, offering them tailored training, development programmes, and access to markets.
5. Facilitate greater market access for female entrepreneurs by integrating them into local and international trade networks. This could include creating platforms for showcasing their products and services and easing export processes.
6. Ensure women’s representation in decision-making bodies related to trade and finance. This representation can provide a more inclusive perspective in policymaking and create a more favourable environment for female entrepreneurs.

Thematic Session C-4: The Governance Approach

Moderator: Tariq Banuri, University of Utah, USA

Chair: Dr Ishrat Husain, Former Advisor to the Prime Minister on Institutional Reforms and Austerity, GoP

Panellists:

1. Dr Naazir Mahmood, Development Expert
2. Dr Ayesha Razzaque, Educationist
Presentation: Ailments of the Education Sector
3. Dr Moeed Yusuf, BNU, Lahore
4. Tariq Banuri, University of Utah

Panel Organisers: Tariq Banuri | Mr Syed Ali Wasif Naqvi, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Raja Taimur Hassan

PRs: Ms Javeria Malik

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/CYqE7lkqcO0>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Reforms agenda, policies' continuity can improve governance: Dr Ishrat.

Former Advisor to the Prime Minister on Institutional Reforms and Austerity **Dr Ishrat Husain** said the continuity of reforms and policies needs to be ensured amid community and youth ownership to achieve the objective of improved governance in the country. He was speaking at a panel discussion titled **"The Governance Approach"**.



In his keynote address, Dr Ishrat Husain said under the Civil Service Reforms, a six-pronged strategy focusing on aptitude, leadership, career planning and promotion, performance, incentives and direct retirement that helped in bringing a change in the conventional civil service to make it more proactive and in line with the developing world trends.

Discussing his report on Reforming the Government of Pakistan 2008 and Institutional Reforms Report 2008, he said reforms in the civil service were initiated by introducing MCQ (MPT) to link written test with gauging of the verbal and analytical competence of the candidate instead of his or her memory.

The reforms agenda also included learning and development for which different courses, mainly mid-career management course (MCMC), senior management course (SMC) and others were introduced that were generalized courses. However, one of its components was a general

leadership course and the second part was thoroughly specialized training. He added that there is no concept of career planning in the country, therefore, career planning and promotion was introduced as out of 26,000 federal employees, 20,000 are experts with the titles of economists, agriculture scientists, medical experts, engineers, IT experts and others, but they all lacked any career plans.

Prof. Tariq Banuri, from the University of Utah, said the system which helps in decision making is weak and is deliberately weakened whereas the lacunas in bureaucracy, lack of training and expertise for technical subjects was adding more to the governance issue. He added that globally there were experts for sensitive positions who were not available in the case of Pakistan as the state was not training people. The concerned department officials should be given training, education, and confidence, he added. Dr Banuri concluded that the youth would take the reform agenda forward by initiating evidence-based critique on the existing reforms policy.

Vice-Chancellor of Beaconhouse University, **Dr Moeed Yusuf**, said the binding constraint to achieve improved governance was the psychological barrier that either the nation wants to improve the country or keep the elite happy which was not possible to exist at the same time.

He pointed out that lack of resources, persistent disbalance of payments, the country's failure to provide a genuine positive proposition to the world and positive economic landscape further aggravated the crisis of governance in the country. He added that poor governance is a crisis of redistribution of resources from the rich to the poor and developed to under-developed cities. Dr Yusuf mentioned that responsible citizenry and civic sense had become elusive in a society which created a serious problem on social contract.

As a way out, he recommended that it was necessary to prioritize tasks and sustain them. However, predictability of the political system is important for long-term decision-making and continuity of policies was crucial for serious interventions.

Educationist **Dr Ayesha Razzaque** said that amid depleting state of education in the country, a whopping 20.3 million out of school children, 79% children below 10 have poor learning skills and 24% of degree holders being unemployed the critical decision in the education sector was done by tourists, referring to decision makers mainly politicians, bureaucracy and parliamentarians

as unskilled and non-professionals deciding education related policies.

She also highlighted the disconnect between major stakeholders, unawareness of the widely varying contexts in which public schools exist, no patience for delayed gratification among the core issues marring the education sector that is also driving the governance through cascading effect.

Dr Naazir Mahmood, Development Expert, expressed his views on the political side of the governance issues and underscored that the elephant in the room alluding to the powerful elites capturing the maximum resources and influence over core decision making processes was not part of the main policy discourse which should be included for a holistic and equity-based approach.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations would strengthen governance in Pakistan by focusing on capacity building, economic stability, policy continuity, transparency, accountability, and decentralisation, paving the way for more effective and responsive administration:

1. Implement a targeted capacity-building programme for public officials, with a focus on specialised training for sensitive roles. Link career advancement opportunities to educational achievements and successful policy outcomes to incentivise skill development.
2. Address Balance of Payments issues through structural economic reforms. Prioritise attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and subsequently implement fair and effective taxation policies to harness organic revenue for sustainable development.
3. Create a 'Charter of Economy' to ensure policy continuity, either as an independent agreement or integrated into the constitution. This would promote stable governance structures and facilitate long-term strategic decision-making.
4. Implement rigorous measures to enhance transparency and accountability in public service. This can involve establishing independent oversight bodies and utilising technology for monitoring and reporting on government activities and expenditures.
5. Encourage decentralised governance models to empower local governments. This approach can improve responsiveness to local needs, enhance service delivery efficiency, and foster community participation in governance processes.

Thematic Session C-5: Impacts of Climate Change on Food and Nutrition Security in Pakistan

In collaboration with WFP

Moderator: Ms Rabia Tabassum, SDPI

Introductory Remarks: Ms Coco Ushiyama, CD, WFP Pakistan

Chair: Mr Muhammad Sami Saeed, Caretaker Federal Minister, Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives, GoP

Speakers:

1. Ms Lynnda Kiess, Nutrition Division, WFP
2. Dr Friederike Greb, WFP
3. Dr Irfan Ullah, Nutrition International Pakistan
4. Dr Aneela Afzal, PMAS-AAU, Rawalpindi
5. Muhammad Daniyal Masood, NUST

Presentation: *Unravelling the Food Security Challenges of Pakistan*

Panel Organisers: Mr Qasim Ali Shah, Ms Rabia Tabassum, Mr Hassan Murtaza & Mr Salah Ud Din, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Mr Salah Ud Din

PRs: Mr Athar Akhtar & Mr Maesum Abbas

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/KKuAQRYcCGY>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Climate-smart agriculture to ensure food safety and security: Caretaker Minister.

Special Initiatives **Muhammad Sami Saeed** said that climate-smart agriculture development is on top of the government priorities to ensure food safety and security in the country.

Caretaker Minister for Planning Development and He was speaking at a high-level policy dialogue



titled “Impact of climate change nutrient and food security in Pakistan”.

The Minister highlighted that low crop productivity is a grave issue, and the government is striving to enhance the output of all major crops to ensure food safety and security in the country. The government is also planning interventions for the efficient use of water, soil, and fertilizers for the conservation of natural resources as well as protecting the environment, he added. He maintained that the government is promoting corporate farming to produce exportable surplus and has established Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to attract foreign investment in agriculture sector to bridge the financing gap in modernizing the sector. He said that the corporate culture in farming would bring innovation and mechanization, and the provincial governments have also allocated land for this purpose. He further said that the government has also introduced structural reforms to protect the most vulnerable segments in the country from inflationary shocks as well as interventions to curb smuggling and hoarding of essential commodities and food price monitoring mechanisms, for which a mobile App has also been developed.

Dr Irfanullah from Nutrition International said that half of the population is facing different deficiencies related to nutrition, which calls for a multi-sectoral approach on the pattern of food fortification initiatives launched in 2016. As a result, over 130 million people have access to fortified cooking oil and over 80 per cent of the population has access to iodized salt.

Ms Coco Ushiyama, the Country Director of the World Food Program, said that global hunger is exacerbating due to conflicts, climate change and COVID-19 that triggered economic downturn. Though current humanitarian needs seem small, it is crucial to take appropriate measures particularly in conflict and climate-hit areas. An intense rise in hunger has been witnessed due to extreme weather events, as 40 per cent of the population resides in vulnerable areas, and climate induced food insecurity affected over 57 million people in 12 countries in 2022.

Ms Lynnda Kiess, Senior Programme Advisor Nutrition at the World Food Program said that food prices hiked due to different conflicts, including Russia-Ukraine war and post Pandemic challenges. She said that armed conflicts between states recently have triggered forced displacement

of over 100 million people, who are at higher risk of hunger and malnutrition. She said that food inflation in Pakistan is still high as during October it was reported at 27 per cent.

Dr Friederike Greb from the World Food Program said that commodity prices are still high in 44 countries out of 163 countries. She further elucidated that out of the total 44 countries, 31 have inflation rate at 10 per cent, 9 at 50 per cent and 4 at 100 per cent.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below should be implemented to bolster Pakistan's resilience against the impacts of climate change on food and nutrition security, emphasising practical solutions such as risk insurance, early warning systems, community engagement, and innovative agri-technologies:

1. Incentivise climate-resilient agricultural practices with special focus on the use of drought-resistant crops, advanced irrigation techniques, and the development of climate-smart agricultural technologies.
2. Launch government programmes that motivate farmers to diversify their crops, thereby reducing the risk of crop failure due to climate events and enhancing food security through the availability of a variety of crops.
3. Develop and implement climate risk insurance schemes for farmers to safeguard against losses due to extreme weather events. This financial support can help maintain agricultural productivity and food security even in adverse climatic conditions.
4. Enhance early warning systems to provide timely information on climate threats to agriculture. This will enable farmers and communities to prepare and respond effectively to potential risks.
5. Implement community-based adaptation programmes that focus on local knowledge and practices. Engage communities in developing and applying locally suited strategies to manage climate risks and sustain food and nutrition security.
6. Invest in Research and Development (R&D) for new agricultural technologies that are specifically tailored to Pakistan's changing climate conditions. This includes the development of climate-adaptive crop varieties and sustainable farming methods.

Thematic Session C-6: (Podium Discussion) Ten Years of BRI: Lessons Learnt & Charting a Way Forward for Green Development

In collaboration with PCI and Embassy of China

Moderator: Dr Khalid Waleed, SDPI

Opening Remarks and Launch of Steering Committee on Agriculture: Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, SDPI

Speakers:

1. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Senate of Pakistan
2. Mr Wang Sita, Embassy of the People's Republic of China to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
3. Dr Shazia Ghani, Special Projects (CPEC), Prime Minister's Office, GoP
4. Mr Shakeel Ahmed Ramey, AIERD
5. Dr Zhang Jiangyu, BRIGDI
6. Mustafa Hyder Sayed, PCI

Panel Organisers: Dr Khalid Waleed, Mr Ubaid ur Rehman Zia & Ms Zona Usmani, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Zona Usmani

PRs: Ms Zainab Babar

SM: Ms Saleha Qureshi & Mr Ubaid ur Rehman Zia

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/II-ZsCFryQo>



NARRATIVE REPORT

China, Pakistan committed to speeding up work on CPEC: Senator Mushahid.

SDPI working on climate smart agriculture to enable farm sector more resilient: Dr Suleri.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed said China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has got a fresh impetus after the recent visit of the Pakistan's political and military leadership to China and new

initiatives have also been taken under this mega project.s

He was speaking at a podium discussion titled **"Ten Years of BRI: Lessons Learnt & Charting a Way Forward for Green Development"**. He said despite the lack of governance, bureaucratic incompetencies, and inconsistencies in certain areas, our all-weather friend China is still willing to support Pakistan. "We have not been fully able to utilize some of the things," he said, hoping that China and Pakistan together will take this project

forward.

Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI said the government has not yet fully realized the true potential of CPEC. The government has introduced the transshipment policy after nine years of construction of Gwadar Port, which shows how serious we are," he added.

"We need to get our house in order to get benefit of any cooperation or cooperation from our friendly country," he said, adding that the government never negotiated and finalized the tariff of power generation plant under CPEC. Dr Suleri informed the audience that SDPI is working on climate smart agriculture project to enable the country's agriculture sector to be more climate resilient. He said China imports \$100 billion worth of Soyabean annually and Pakistan could capture this huge market by producing the crop. He informed that in order to explore and tap the green opportunities under CPEC, SDPI has formed a 10-member steering committee with five members each from Pakistan and China.

Mr Wang Sita from Chinese Embassy said that CPEC is the landmark project of BRI under which \$35 billion of direct investment has so far been made in Pakistan that produced 36,000 jobs, generated more than 8,000 megawatt of electricity and 886 kilometers of power transmission lines. He said a total of 14 energy projects have been completed under CPEC including wind and including wind and hydro power. Similarly, he said, China has built Karot hydropower project that is promoting sustainable and green development with annual generation capacity of 3.2 billion kwp of clean electricity. The project, he said, is expected to save 1.4 million tons of standard coal and reduce carbon dioxide emission by 3.5 million tons each year.

Dr Zhang Jiangyu, Executive Director of BRI Development Institute, said Pakistan-China bilateral economic cooperation is going to turn into green cooperation.

Mr Shakeel Ahmed Ramay, the CEO of Asian Institute of Eco-civilization Research and Development, pointed out the idea of building green cities on new concepts and models to avoid emerging environment challenges such as smog. He said 78 per cent energy is consumed in cities and 60 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions come from cities, which needs to be lowered.

Mr Mustafa Hyder Sayed, Executive Director of Pakistan China Institute, said the BRI offers huge

opportunity to Pakistan to find new green energy projects under CPEC as China has announced \$100 billion financing for the green energy projects in the next 10 years.

Dr Shazia Ghani, team lead of Special Project CPEC, proposed to change the currency of transaction from dollar to RMB that will help Pakistan ease pressure of foreign exchange reserves. She also suggested including green projects in areas other than energy such as mass transportation.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations propose a collaborative and integrated approach to advancing green development in Pakistan, leveraging lessons from the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China's development models, with an emphasis on finance, training, planning, technology sharing, and partnerships:

1. The Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Government of Pakistan, should establish a comprehensive framework for green finance policies and reforms. This includes promoting green credit, developing green development funds, and establishing a green bond market in Pakistan. These efforts should be in collaboration with China's reforms commission to accelerate investment in sustainable infrastructure, particularly Renewable Energy (RE).
2. The Ministry should work in conjunction with China's National Development and Reform Commission to provide training programmes focused on energy planning and the integration of RE. These programmes should target energy authorities and the workforce to enhance skills and knowledge in sustainable energy solutions.
3. The Ministry of Energy should formulate an integrated Energy Expansion Plan, drawing inspiration from China's '5-Year Plan for a Modern Energy System.' This plan should involve continuous needs assessment and resource introspection to identify and capitalise on new investment opportunities in energy.
4. Strengthen technology-sharing initiatives with China, focusing on the adoption and localisation of green technologies in sectors like energy, construction, and transportation.
5. Encourage Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to facilitate the implementation of green development projects. This approach can mobilise additional resources and expertise, contributing to more robust and sustainable outcomes.

Thematic Session C-7: Gender and Climate Change in South Asia: An Intersectional Analysis

In Knowledge Partnership with UNESCAP SSWA

Moderator: Ms Sadia Satti, SDPI

Chair: Ms Mehnaz Akbar Aziz, CEO, Children's Global Network Pakistan

Speakers:

1. Dr Bishnu Raj Upreti, NCCR, Nepal
Presentation: Gender and Climate Change in South Asia: An Intersectional Analysis
2. Ms Bharati Chaturvedi, Chintan, India (Online)
3. Ms Li Stephanie Choo, UNESCAP, India
Presentation: Gender and Climate Change: Perspectives from South Asia and Beyond
4. Ms Aisha Khan, MGPO, Islamabad
5. Ms Rushati Das, CANSA, India
Presentation: Gender and Climate Change
6. Dr Amiera Sawas, Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, UK

Panel Organiser: Ms Sadia Satti, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Farwa Gohar

PRs: Mr Alamgir Khan

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/7f6j4DIldBI>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Education, and societal transformation crucial for women empowerment: Experts.

In patriarchal societies, women can be empowered

and positive social changes can be accelerated by focusing on female education, their reproductive rights, inclusion in decision-making power, and societal transformation.

This was the crux of a panel titled **“Gender and**



Climate Change in South Asia: An Intersectional Analysis”.

Former parliamentarian **Ms Mehnaz Akbar Aziz** remarked that understanding the intersectionality of issues impacting women is crucial for developing effective and comprehensive policies to empower women. For this, she said, women from the communities must be provided conducive environment and support to become a part of the policy making to ensure that policies are gender responsive.

Dr Amiera Sawas from Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, UK emphasized that women and girls often lack decision-making power in the face of climate-related challenges. The impact of climate change disproportionately affects vulnerable groups, including elderly people and children, particularly girls. Economic disparities further exacerbate these challenges, creating a gender equality blind spot in the current policy frameworks. Gender-responsive policies are critical to enhance food security by promoting sustainable agricultural practices and ensuring equitable access to resources. She called for integrating gender considerations into long-term infrastructure planning by investing in climate-resilient infrastructure that not only protects communities but also promotes gender equality.

Ms Bharti Chaturvardi, underscoring the pivotal role of leadership in advancing women's empowerment, advocated for a collective approach that addresses a spectrum of issues rather than focusing on a single isolated problem. Social security and fair wages are crucial components of a just and equitable society and addressing them is essential for comprehensive empowerment of women, she added. She highlighted that a 6.4 per cent increase in domestic and sexual violence has been recorded recently and systemic issues that contribute to violence against women must be addressed urgently.

Ms Li Stephanie Choo from UNESCAP called for an enhanced programme that may address the intersectionality of gender, climate change, and disaster risk reduction, particularly in South Asia and Southeast Asia. Highlighting the link between climate change and social issues, she said there is an alarming rise in child marriages and intimate partner violence, as environmental stressors contribute to negative social outcomes, particularly affecting the well-being of women and children. She said about 45 per cent women working in the agriculture sector lack ownership rights which exacerbates their economic vulnerability, limiting

their financial independence and autonomy. She stressed the need for policies that protect women in these fields and ensure their rights and safety.

Ms Aisha Khan, the Chief Executive Officer, Mountain and Glacier Protection Organization, remarked that systemic barriers, including the withdrawal of girls from schools and the adverse health effects of frequent pregnancies, limit the women's participation in decision-making. She called for the women empowerment through education, decision-making rights, and challenging societal norms that perpetuate vulnerability. Terming education as a strong means to empower women, she said, educational opportunities can break the cycle of vulnerability and contribute to the overall progress of women in patriarchal societies.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations aim to strengthen the role of women in combating climate change in South Asia, focusing on enhancing their participation, financial inclusion, and leadership in climate initiatives, as well as raising awareness about the intersectional nature of gender and climate issues:

1. Ensure active participation of women in climate-related decision-making processes by providing equal pay and establishing specific quotas for women in the workforce. Additionally, invest in capacity-building for women, particularly in rural areas, to enhance their resilience to climate change.
2. Use regulatory and legislative measures to promote financial inclusion for women, enabling them to invest in climate-resilient livelihoods. Ensure women have access to finance and technology, which are crucial for substantive change.
3. Incorporate gender perspectives into all climate change policies and programmes. This includes conducting gender impact assessments of climate policies to ensure they meet the needs of women and men equally.
4. Encourage and support initiatives led by women that focus on climate adaptation and mitigation. This can involve providing grants, technical assistance, and platforms for knowledge exchange.
5. Conduct widespread awareness campaigns to highlight the intersectionality of gender and climate change issues. These campaigns should aim to educate policymakers, stakeholders, and the general public on the unique challenges faced by women in the context of climate change.

Thematic Session C-8: (Panel Discussion) Addressing Pakistan's Inflation Woes

Moderator: Dr Waqar Ahmed, SDPI

Chair: Dr Waqar Masood Khan, Advisor to the PM on Finance, GoP

Panellists:

1. Prof. Dr Aliya Hashmi Khan, QAU
2. Mr Zafar ul Hasan, Planning Commission of Pakistan
3. Mr Saud Bangash, PBC
4. Ms Komal Shakeel, Economist (Online)
5. Ms Hiba Zaidi, IFC
6. Mr Ali Salman, PRIME Institute

Panel Organisers: Mr Asif Javed & Mr Yahya Gulzar, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Mr Mohsin Ali Khan

PRs: Mr Yahya Gulzar

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/RZRGANLzqo8>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Inflation transpired due to oil price hike after Ukraine war: Dr Waqar Masood Khan.

Dr Waqar Masood Khan, Advisor to Prime Minister on Finance, said that the inflationary situation started with the Ukraine war as the price

of oil and other commodities skyrocketed, and Pakistan cannot be singled out in this respect.

He was speaking at a panel discussion titled **"Addressing Pakistan's Inflation Woes"**.

He said normally our inflation stood at around 6 per cent to 7 per cent but during the past few



years it touched unprecedented levels, which should be debated. He said middleman's control has an exponential impact on inflation because there is a big difference between wholesale market and the retail market. "The IMF conditions have also rendered us helpless in the context of monetary policy," he said. He stressed the need for establishing a value chain as things are getting better and better.

Mr Ali Rehman from the Prime Institute touched the policy issues in his talk during the discourse and said inflation has remained primary concern of successive governments in Pakistan. He said policy and administrative measures to control inflation have proved counter-productive. Referring to Allauddin Khilji's rule, he said, as a result of such measures rural poverty multiplied, and farmers and merchants had to bear the brunt which gave birth to the concept of subsidy. Such policies, he said, have proved antiwelfare and stressed upon market forces to drive the prices.

Ms Hiba Zaidi from the International Finance Corporation said in each sector, including food and petroleum, there are different reasons for high cost or inflation. She said that with regard to food prices there are structural issues along with dysfunctional markets as there are about 50 per cent losses of perishables from farm to market. Moreover, she said, there are also poor seed quality as well as productivity issues. She also highlighted the adverse effect of high energy costs with respect to inflation and advocated digital solutions to maintain the quality of the produce.

Dr Aliya Hashmi Khan from Quaid-i-Azam University focused on monetary policy issues, saying that decision-making is very important to control the inflationary trends. In case of more backward-looking agents in the market as compared to the share of forward-looking ones, there would be a huge monetary policy contraction to bring inflation down.

Mr Saud Bangash, a representative of Pakistan Business Council, said we have to ascertain that whether the inflation is cost driven or demand driven. Our issue is primarily economic management while the issue of our economy is structural in nature. He said the prescription that has been applied to curtailing inflation relates to maintaining a stable industry and providing a stable exchange rate environment for businesses to function. He said when we have a boom bust cycle, there is a creation of money supply and

more cash is injected to the economy. As a result, the wealth that is created fuels higher prices, because it fuels more and more imports. He said we need to fix the fundamentals of the economy and bring more actors of the economy into the documented space so that we can track them, and they are unable to operate outside the scope of global economy.

Ms Komal Shakeel, Economist, said politically we have been segmented but motivation is required to bring all actors together to resolve the problem of inflation. She said it needs to be experimented how we can decentralize and how we can make sure that the local supply chain is governed by the local government.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations aim to address inflation in Pakistan through a combination of monetary policy adjustments, structural reforms, institutional improvements, supply chain management, and economic diversification:

1. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) should focus on establishing a stable monetary policy. This requires balancing interest rates and money supply to effectively control inflation without hindering economic growth. The Bank should adopt an inflation targeting framework with clear price stability targets, and tailor monetary policy tools to meet these objectives.
2. Address structural challenges in critical sectors such as agriculture and energy. Strategies might include upgrading irrigation systems, encouraging the adoption of modern technology in agriculture, and resolving inefficiencies in the energy sector.
3. Actively work to reduce corruption and inefficiencies within public institutions.
4. Create a more business-friendly environment that promotes investment and drives economic growth.
5. Improve supply chain management to reduce disruptions and cost escalations. This includes investing in logistics infrastructure and adopting technology-driven supply chain solutions.
6. Encourage diversification in Pakistan's economic activities to reduce dependency on a limited number of sectors. This diversification can help mitigate the impact of sector-specific shocks on the overall economy.

Thematic Session C-9: Advancing Strategies in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: Bridging the Gaps in P/CVE Research and Practice

In Knowledge Partnership with NACTA

Moderator: Dr Shafqat Munir Ahmad, SDPI

Chair: Dr Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Dean of Social Sciences, International Islamic University

Speakers:

1. Dr Dayab Gillani, NACTA
2. Dr Sadia Nasir, Bahria University, Islamabad
3. Ms Mossarat Qadeem, PAIMAN Alumni Trust
4. Prof. Dr Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi, University of Peshawar, Peshawar
5. Dr Syed Kaleem Imam, Former Fed. Sec, MNC, GoP
6. Mr Malick Shahbaz Ahmed Tahir, Sungi Development Foundation
7. Dr Tabasum Naz, Federal Directorate of Education

Panel Organisers: Dr Shafqat Munir Ahmad, Mr Ali Rehmat, Ms Ramsha Mehboob Khan, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Mr Ali Rehmat

PRs: Ms Ramsha Mehboob Khan & Mr Muhammed Jahan Zaib

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/aFehOSN4VsU>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Experts say a holistic framework is required to address P/CVE.

Violent response to violence not a solution:
NACTA Director.

Violence need not be responded through violence
and immediate response to violence should be to



understand the nature of violence, said **Dr Dayab Gillani**, Director (Research) at National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA). "...I would argue that even if it is violent extremism or for that matter even if it's terrorism, our immediate response does not have to be violence," he pointed out while discussing prevention and countering violent extremism.

He was speaking at a thematic session titled **"Addressing Strategies in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: Bridging the gaps in P/CVE Research and Practice"**.

Dr Gillani said during the last couple of years the focus has shifted from counterterrorism to preventing violent extremism because terrorism cannot be defeated through force, as we saw in the US-Afghan war. "The PVE-related research is essentially a product of war on terror, thus is treated as a mere driver of terrorism. Furthermore, there is a lack of clarity on what constitutes violent extremism," he said. Another issue is the lack of long-term commitment on the part of the researcher, he said, adding that in the context of Pakistan, access to affected areas also hampers research in this discipline.

Former Inspector General of Police, Islamabad **Dr Kaleem Imam** stressed the need for criminal justice reforms. "We are well aware that who the nonstate actors are and who is behind terrorism. But the real question is what are we going to do about it? Unfortunately, we are still heading in the wrong direction." Dr Imam said the only way forward is to establish rule of law, and there should be no discrimination when it comes to the implementation of law. He said there is no need for severity, but we must ensure certainty. "The more educated a person is, the more harm that person is doing to the country," he lamented.

Dr Zafar Iqbal, Dean of Social Sciences, Islamic International University, Islamabad said after this discussion, he has two takeaways: First, extremism is the mother of all evils; second, there is no short-term solution to violent extremism. "As my field is Mass Communication, I can say that media is creating extremist tendencies in Pakistan. Likewise, I find issues in our curriculum. Our education system needs to be revamped," he suggested. He sought to replace the Target Rating Point (TRP) model with the Impact Rating Points (IRP). He further sought to develop conflict index of media channels, Dr Zafar said.

Ms Musarrat Qadeem, the Co-Founder of Paiman Trust, said that Pakistan was the first country that

was affected by terrorism. "It is unfortunate that we failed to come up with a policy framework. Another issue is the exclusion of the local community from the discourse of Preventing Violent Extremism," she said, adding that "Without getting the local people on board, we cannot set the right direction."

Dr Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, the Chairman of Department of International Relations, Peshawar University, stressed the need to bring together various stakeholders involved in raising awareness as to how the violent and extremist groups perpetuate violence, and then seek ways to understand gaps in research and practice. Another point he raised was to involve the victims/survivors of violent extremism and linking them to practitioners in order to gain firsthand knowledge of the undesirable situation of being a victim of violent extremism. At the same time, it is important that the wellbeing and mental health of the victim is not compromised during their involvement in research. He also stressed the need for establishing a Primary Education Commission because training has to start from childhood.

Ms Tabassum Naz from Federal Directorate of Education stressed the need to understand the rights of a child. "Adverse experiences or trauma in childhood can cause physical changes, including shrinking of brain and cortex, and these changes are irreversible. Because of these physical changes, children tend to exhibit deviant behaviours," she said, adding, "The first 1,000 days in the life of a child are crucial as they have a lasting impact on the child." Stressing the need to provide training and counselling to both teachers and parents, Ms Naz said corporal punishment has a negative impact, and even ignoring a child fall in corporal punishment. She maintained that active listening on the part of parents and teachers is the way forward, since half the catharsis is done when a person is sincerely heard.

Dr Sadia Nasir from Bahria University said that excessive focus on violent extremism is the main problem, as it leads to a policy making that is militaristic in nature. Stressing the need for formulating a holistic policy in this regard, she said: "We have failed to address the root causes of Violent Extremism. "Violent extremism is easily identified, but the other forms of extremism are not so visible. The use of force on the part of the state has been counterproductive. It does not address the factors that actually lead to violent extremism or even terrorism. This is evident from the resurgence of Tehrik Taliban Pakistan (TTP)," she added. She further said that the state needs to reconsider its policies and should also

address the support bases of extremist groups. “A multidisciplinary approach coupled with multiple agencies that consider local grievances is what is required to overcome the challenge,” she said.

Malick Shahbaz Ahmed from Sungi Development Foundation said marginalization leads to extremism and hate speech is a consequence of marginalization. “Unfortunately, the community spaces have shrunk or are occupied by extremists, therefore it is necessary to understand what drives extremist behaviours,” he added.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations offer a unified strategy for combating violent extremism in Pakistan, focusing on addressing marginalisation, strengthening law and order, combating hate speech, and creating inclusive environments. Highlighting the importance of local context, community resilience, holistic and preventive strategies, the approach also highlights the need for clarity in policymaking and regional specificity. It advocates for tailored, ethical, culturally sensitive, and gender-aware strategies, including indigenous approaches and bridging research-policy gaps. Additionally, the strategy calls for reshaping media practices through impact-based media evaluations and regulations to positively influence society and reduce the spread of violence. It is vital for the state to:

1. Understand that Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) is a relatively new discipline still in its early stages. Careful nurturing and guidance are essential for its growth and maturity, preventing it from succumbing to the pitfalls associated with the discourse on terrorism.
2. Make concerted efforts to evolve PVE practices to address the root causes of violent extremism effectively. Without intentional support and development, the discipline risks encountering challenges similar to those in terrorism discussions.
3. Investigate and understand the communication behaviours and systems related to violent extremism, identifying their critical role in both the proliferation and prevention of extremist ideologies.
4. Fill the gaps in literature and research on violent extremism by dedicating resources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the field and its various facets.
5. Transition from a counterterrorism (CT) paradigm, which has shown limitations, to a more focused PVE approach. This shift involves moving away from strategies primarily geared towards war and terrorism to more preventive and root cause-oriented methods.
6. Recognise and address the issue of marginalisation as a key factor leading to violent extremism. This includes understanding the shift in societal dynamics, such as the transition from inclusive cultural festivals to more exclusive religious events, and how these changes are likely to contribute to feelings of alienation.
7. Focus on understanding and mitigating the underlying causes of marginalisation that can lead individuals towards extremism. This requires a comprehensive analysis of societal, economic, and political factors that contribute to alienation and radicalisation.
8. Develop platforms for open dialogue and address the lack of law and order, which are primary drivers of societal conflicts. These forums should facilitate constructive discussions and dispute resolution to prevent the escalation of conflicts.
9. Investigate and understand the specific factors driving hate speech in society. Implement measures to counteract hate speech and promote inclusivity and tolerance.
10. Work towards providing environments that foster social cohesion and inclusivity. This involves creating spaces where diverse groups feel valued and included, reducing the appeal of extremist ideologies.
11. Pay special attention to rural and conflict-prone areas, which are often neglected in mainstream efforts to counter extremism. Implement targeted interventions to address the unique challenges in these regions.
12. Involve local communities and leaders in efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism. Their involvement is crucial in developing and implementing strategies that are culturally sensitive and effective at the grassroots level.
13. Ensure that Counter-Extremism (CE) and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) strategies are grounded in local knowledge and languages to enhance their relevance and effectiveness.
14. Focus on building community resilience as a key component of CVE and PVE initiatives. This is currently overlooked as a state priority, though some civil society initiatives are addressing it on a small scale.
15. Embrace a holistic strategy that is not only multidisciplinary but also relies on collaboration across multiple agencies.
16. Redirect the excessive focus on Violent Extremism (VE) to broader, holistic issues. Develop policies with diverse directions that address the root causes of extremism in the country.

17. Develop and disseminate clear, standardised definitions of extremism that are universally understood by children, teachers, parents, healthcare workers, and other community members.
18. Consider the socioeconomic needs of the Pakistani people to prevent them from seeking support from non-state actors, especially in cases where the state fails to meet these needs.
19. Acknowledge that the dynamics of violent extremism vary across different regions in Pakistan and tailor strategies accordingly.
20. Enhance community resilience to extremism.
21. Address the gap between researchers and policymakers, stressing the need for longitudinal research to inform effective policymaking in the field of violent extremism.
22. Improve access to available information and address the sensitivity of data sharing. This step is crucial in understanding and utilising information to counter VE.
23. Acknowledge and study the root causes of radicalisation, particularly among children and youth, with an emphasis on factors like poverty.
24. Understand and incorporate the role of women in peacebuilding, addressing its current absence in initiatives like Paigham-e-Pakistan.
25. PVE is a gendered phenomenon. Therefore, there is a need to adopt softer, gender-sensitive approaches in strategies to counteract extremism.
26. Formulate a strategy that is human-centred, state-centred, and also considers cultural and religious contexts in addressing violent extremism.
27. Introduce Impact Rating Point systems in media to foster CVE/PVE awareness and knowledge among the public. This approach can guide media content towards being more responsible and educational.
28. Encourage media outlets to adopt impact-based rating systems. Such systems evaluate the broader societal impact of media content, promoting a more responsible, informed, and socially conscious media landscape.
29. Implement regulations to restrict media content that contributes to societal violence. Binding media to avoid content that exacerbates violence can help in reducing its propagation and influence in society.



Side Event 1: (Report Launch)

Pakistan's Geoeconomic Pivot: Strategies, Opportunities, and Challenges

In collaboration with FES

Moderator: Dr Vaqar Ahmed, SDPI

Welcome Remarks: Dr Niels Hegewisch, CD, FES

Keynote Speaker: Dr Moeed Yusuf, VC, BNU, Lahore

Panellists:

1. Ambassador Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry, Former Foreign Secretary, GoP
2. Mr Marc Saxer, FES
3. Dr Rabia Akhtar, UoL, Lahore

MoU Signing between SDPI & BNU

Panel Organisers: Dr Sajid Amin Javed & Ms Zarmina Aijaz, SDPI | Mr Hamayoun Khan, FES

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Zarmina Aijaz

PRs: Mr Alamgir Khan

Video Link: https://youtu.be/vO4jB_8N9YY



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is a need for continuity in policy, political stability, and independent foreign policy.
2. There should be an independent foreign policy for smooth flow of national economic security.
3. Economic diplomacy is the key to economic security of the nation.

Side Event 2: (Roundtable)

Pakistan's Transformative Digital Future: Growth Strategy and Roadmap

In Knowledge Partnership with ADB

Moderator: Mr Nasruminallah Mian, Senior Program Officer/ Lead Digital Sector Program, ADB

Welcome Remarks: Dr Vaqar Ahmed, SDPI

Opening Remarks: Dr Yong Ye, CD, ADB

Special Remarks: Mr Ali Asghar, Senior Joint Secretary, Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, GoP

Discussants:

1. Syed Aftab Haider, Pakistan Single Window
2. Mr Osman Nasir, Former MD, Pakistan Software Export Board
3. Dr Jordanka Tomkova, Innovation Bridge Foundation
4. Mr Parvez Abbasi, AdVenture
5. Ms Jehan Ara, Katalyst Labs
6. Mr Ibrahim Amin, PAFLA
7. Mr Muhammad Bilal Abbasi, Ignite
8. Mr Imran Jattala, NICAT
9. Dr Raja Ali Saleem, Former Civil Servant
10. Mr Muhammad Arif Sargana, PTA
11. Dr Nazim Latif, National Consultant on Export Coordination, ITC (ReMIT)/
12. Mr Aqeel Khurshid, Chief Technology Officer, Nayatel Pvt. Ltd.

Panel Organisers: Dr Vaqar Ahmed & Mr Abdullah Khalid, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Maheen Rehan

PRs: Mr Hammad Nadir

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/EYTp9PyWLI8>



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations for the Ministry

of ITT and S&T collectively focus on driving Pakistan's digital transformation by investing in digital infrastructure, developing digital skills,



standardising startup definitions, boosting private sector engagement, facilitating cross-sector collaboration, and simplifying regulations. Together, they lay a comprehensive foundation



for a robust digital economy, crucial for Pakistan's growth and innovation potential:

1. Prioritise significant investment in digital infrastructure, including high-speed internet connectivity, especially in underserved and rural areas. This infrastructure is the backbone of a robust digital economy, enabling widespread access to digital services and levelling the playing field for entrepreneurs and businesses across the country.
2. Implement nationwide digital skills and literacy programmes, focusing on both the current workforce and the next generation of digital users. Tailor these programmes to various skill levels, from basic digital literacy to advanced technological skills. This will ensure a well-equipped workforce ready to participate and innovate in the digital economy, addressing the skill gap in the rapidly evolving tech sector.
3. Establish a standard and inclusive definition of startup across all government agencies and organisations. This uniformity will ensure consistency in policymaking and support mechanisms for startups.
4. Reorient the role of government in technology projects from direct execution to oversight and facilitation. Encourage private sector involvement in the implementation and commercialisation of technology projects, enhancing efficiency and innovation.
5. Enhance collaboration and knowledge exchange between government entities, academic institutions, and the private sector. This collaborative approach is vital for speeding up digital transformation and fostering a culture of innovation.
6. Reform regulatory processes to be more streamlined and less burdensome for startups. Simplifying these processes will aid in the rapid growth and smooth operation of new businesses in the digital sector.



Evening Plenary 3.1: Reforms for a Brighter Future

In collaboration with The World Bank

Moderator: Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Keynote Speaker: Dr Luis Felipe López-Calva, Global Director, Poverty and Equity Global Practice, The World Bank

Technical Presentation: Mr Najy Benhassine, Country Director, The World Bank, Islamabad, Pakistan

Chief Guest: Dr Shamshad Akhtar, Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs, Government of Pakistan

Podium Discussion:

1. Dr Hadia Majid, Economics Department Chair, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan
2. Mr Ali Khizar, Journalist
3. Dr Van Nguyen, Deputy Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme, Pakistan
4. Dr Fareeha Armughan, Research Fellow & Lead-Center of Evidence Action, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Awards: WB Youth Challenge Awards

Plenary Organisers: Dr Sajid Amin Javed, Ms Arooj Waheed Dar & Ms Aqsa Naveed, SDPI | Mr Tobias Akhtar Haque, TWB

Rapporteurs:

PR: Ms Umber Azeem

PRs: Ms Aqsa Naveed & Ms Ayesha Ahmed

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/mewJgWOZZhU>



NARRATIVE REPORT

Pakistan exploring debt-for-nature swaps with global agencies: Shamshad.

Caretaker Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs **Dr Shamshad Akhtar** said that the country, amid growing international fiscal constraints, is exploring debt-for-nature swaps with global agencies to enhance its market competitiveness as it is hard to fetch foreign direct investment amid prevailing testing times. She was addressing a high-level plenary titled "Reforms for a Brighter Future".

Dr Shamshad Akhtar said after months of hard work, the interim leadership of Pakistan's Economic Affairs Division has successfully reached a staff level agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a standby \$3 billion loan grant. The interim regime, she added, is committed to taking care of the IMF programme, which should be a home-grown agenda of Pakistan. She maintained that the measures taken under the programme have helped us revive our economy and put it back on the track of positive trajectory. She further said that the interim regime could resolve the liquidity crisis and restore the market confidence after a lot of efforts. "Our GDP is projected to grow to 3.1 % in the fiscal year 2024 amid higher agriculture output and pickup in industrial production are positive signs. Macro economic stability has become more difficult due to delay in structural reforms, surge in global commodity prices, and tightening of financial restrictions," she said. Highlighting the country's rising vulnerability to climate shocks and temperature rise, the minister hoped to have a positive discourse at the forthcoming COP28.

SDPI's Executive Director **Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri**, in his opening remarks, said Pakistan's economic problems were diagnosed some 70 years ago and we all are aware of the problems and their solutions. He added that the challenge at present is to identify the responsible people for the implementation of the solutions and work out a mechanism for the process. He said the country stands resilient after facing a plethora of crises as the hope of a better future is very much alive among the people.

Dr Luis Felipe López-Calva, the Global Director of Poverty and Equity Global Practice, World Bank, in his keynote address, said to understand the prevailing crisis, the first thing is that the world has entered a structurally lower growth. In Pakistan, he said, the economic growth is insufficient to reduce poverty whereas the external elements

or partners could not bring about change in an economy. Only the local solutions and policy changes would work as change in the aftermath of agreements among elite and citizens. He said the polycrisis of COVID-19 Pandemic, floods and macroeconomic fiscal issues have affected the country's economic growth. In Pakistan, he said, the growth has slowed despite the progressivity increase as income growth is varying in different areas.

In his technical presentation, **Mr Najy Benhassine**, the Country Director of World Bank, said human capital crisis is a silent disaster that made news headlines, as 40% children under 5 years of age in Pakistan are stunted, which is the most pressing challenge for the long-term growth of Pakistan. "Economic difficulties are not new for Pakistan, rather the global shocks, COVID-19 crisis, and floods further aggravated the situation," he added. He suggested that it is time for Pakistan to change its development path, as collective realization is important to materialize this moment. He stressed the need to focus on reduction in child stunting, quality and availability of water, human capital crisis, energy sector (which is vital for RE transition and important for macroeconomic stability), water and agriculture nexus, low agriculture productivity, creation of fiscal space and private sector development.

During the podium discussions, **Dr Hadia Majid**, Chairperson of Economics Department at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), flagged the issue of gender and women neglect in development matrix and called for an inclusive approach towards addressing growth and development.

Mr Ali Khizar, a senior journalist from daily Business Recorder, stressed the need for improving taxation mix and imposing more taxes on the affluent class, as the propensity of paying income tax by the salaried class is very low.

Dr Van Nguyen, the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, and Dr Fareeha Armughan, SDPI Research Fellow, also spoke at the occasion.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations provide a roadmap for transformative reforms in Pakistan and the need for a holistic approach to address economic disparities, enhance public investment, and leverage the country's demographic potential for sustainable growth:



1. Focus on reducing vulnerability to economic shocks that push people into poverty, through comprehensive and equitable reforms.
2. Utilise an assets-based approach to understand and address disparities in human, financial, social, natural, and physical capital.
3. Invest in improving the productivity of the poor, transitioning from pro-poor growth to fostering pro-growth equity.
4. Mobilise domestic resources by broadening the tax base in a progressive manner, without increasing poverty in the short term.
5. Enhance public investments in physical, social, and human capital, especially for the benefit of the poor, to stimulate long-term growth.
6. Forge coalitions among domestic and external actors for inclusive and sustainable growth, involving elite bargains, citizen engagement, and understanding international/global influences.
7. Encourage virtuous cycles by incentivising productive behaviours and entrepreneurship.
8. Capitalise on Pakistan's young and growing population to potentially achieve higher growth rates.
9. Implement enrolment campaigns, address multi-grade teaching challenges, improve teacher accountability, and progressively increase budget allocations to health, education, and social protection.
10. Strengthen revenues by expanding the tax base, harmonising GST and reducing tax expenditures.
11. Utilise targeted taxation specifically for direct beneficiaries of poverty alleviation programmes.
12. Intensify skills development programmes for women, including vocational training targeted specifically towards them.
13. Draw lessons from global best practices, particularly neighbouring countries like Bangladesh in human development and digital domain strategies.
14. Redirect funds from subsidies towards healthcare and education sectors.
15. Establish a solid theory of change before implementing policy programmes, with a focus on evidence-based policies that target results.
16. Concentrate on improving learning outcomes over simply increasing enrolment in tertiary education and include digital and financial literacy for women in policy designs.
17. Perform detailed cost-benefit analyses for each policy project to ensure effective and result-oriented implementation.



Closing Plenary 3.2: Pathway to Recovery, Hope and Resilience

Master of Ceremony: Dr Fareeha Armughan, Research Fellow & Lead-Center of Evidence Action, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Introductory Note: Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Chief Guest: Dr Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) & Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan

Guest of Honour: Dr Ishrat Husain, Former Advisor to the Prime Minister on Institutional Reforms and Austerity; Former Dean and Director, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, Pakistan

Book Launch: *Development Pathways India, Pakistan & Bangladesh, 1947 – 2022* by Dr Ishrat Husain

Awards Ceremony:

SDPI's Outstanding Award in Research: Mr Ubaid ur Rehman Zia, Senior Research Associate, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan

SDC 2023 Recommendations: Dr Vaqar Ahmed, Joint Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Vote of Thanks: Ambassador Shafqat Kakakhel, Chairperson, Board of Governors, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan & Dr Vaqar Ahmed, Joint Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Plenary Organisers: Mr Hassan Murtaza & Mr Asim Zahoor, SDPI

Rapporteurs:

PR: Mr Salah ud Din

PRs: Mr Maesum Abbas

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/H8lenVvrWs4>



SDPI's 3-day Sustainable Development Conference concludes.

Sustained action a must to control situation in Pakistan: Dr Jehanzeb.

'Light at the End of the Tunnel' aimed to give hope to the depressed society: Dr Suleri.

Dr Jehanzeb Khan, Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) and Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission, said that in recent past, the caretaker government was able to mend things to a certain success which reflects the importance of an effective administration but now our problems are so huge and complicated that a sustained action is imperative to control the situation.

He was speaking at the closing plenary titled "Pathway to Recovery, Hope and Resilience".

Regarding the standby arrangement with the IMF, the SAPM said, "We are fulfilling our commitments that have also helped in stabilizing some of the indicators, that means we can do it." To him institutions of economic decision-making have more significance as compared to the institutions of governance, as the provinces are very meaningful partners in the country's economy. He said the first thing that needs to be done and efforts are on to do it, is to bring the provinces to a consensus in the Economic Coordination Committee of the government. He said the role of the National Economic Council being a constitutional entity, is also paramount, as it is mandated to take care and pay attention to the economic, social and commercial well-being of the country. "The provinces are equal partners in it, he said, emphasizing the need to make National Security Council more active. Talking about Pakistan's huge population and the related issues like stunted growth, evolving partnerships and strengthening fiscal federalism, he stressed the need for dedicated and honest civil service for the implementation of policies in letter and spirit.

Former Governor of the State Bank **Dr Ishrat Hussain** said development patterns in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh are based on solid evidence. Recollecting the critical success factors, he told the audience how these countries could continue their journey of development and growth during the period of 75 years. He said he did not believe in growth for the sake of growth, but "We all should aspire to have sustained, sustainable, and inclusive growth where we care for the planet,

and the prosperity of the majority population." It is quite a difficult task, especially in the light of technological advances and in the face of risks of climate change. Till 1990, Dr Hussain said, Pakistan was a star performer despite having a poor infrastructure. In the first 40 years after its inception, Pakistan was among top 10 economies of the world, ahead of India, and its poverty level had declined from 75 per cent to 35 per cent. The standard of living was good despite five major shocks, i.e. the migration of eight million people from India, 1965 war, separation of East Pakistan, nationalization, and Afghan war."

He said since 1990, we have been sliding downwards as India and Bangladesh grew by 6-7 per cent whereas our growth rate reversed to 3-4 per cent. "The reason behind is that our institutions were earlier strong, and the civil servants were competent, honest, and dedicated with success models like Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation, Agriculture Development Corporation, WAPDA and PIA, but now all these institutions have become dysfunctional, and the calibre and competence of the civil servants has gone down. Moreover, he said, Pakistan's economic vows unlike India and Bangladesh have also multiplied due to its reliance on external borrowings.

SDPI Executive Director **Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri**, in his opening remarks, painted the gloomy picture of scenario Pakistan in particular and the world in general. Pakistan, since July 2023, has been facing severe economic challenges with the risk of default taking the centre stage. Referring to Ukraine War and the Middle East conflicts, he said, these conflicts have challenged the world peace involving two nuclear powers. About climate change, he said global warming has now turned into global boiling and with increasing temperature the livelihood options for masses are freezing; therefore, we have to think out of the box. He said a great debate is going on in technical circles whether the use of artificial intelligence should be regulated or let it go unabated because technology would evolve its own solutions. Referring to the theme of this year's conference, Dr Suleri said the basic idea behind "Light at the End of the Tunnel" was to give hope to the depressed Pakistani society. He went on to say that climate change is the talk of the town today and a lot of hopes are attached to it. He said present challenges like climate change, trade deficit, economic uncertainty and most importantly trust deficit demand improvement in our preparedness and readiness and this can only be done through a collective and holistic approach.

SDPI Joint Executive Director **Dr Vaqar Ahmed**, taking stock of the three-day Conference proceedings, told the audience that over 200 delegates from Pakistan and 18 other countries participated in this year's discussions with a focus on balancing geo strategy and economic diplomacy. "We discussed the need to cultivate a non-zero-sum relationship with emphasis on collaboration rather than competition in prioritizing national interests independently." In addition, he said, we also focused on climate change and held dedicated sessions on circular economy, taking up the case study of textile industry. Besides, the European Union and global standards on environmental and labour practices, quality of regulations in Pakistan, importance of more active role of local governments and local administrations, sustainable regenerative agriculture, foreign direct investment and the need for creating opportunities for Pakistan with a green transition, building risk assessment studies were also among many other subjects, which were deliberated upon while the potential of AI largely focused on the applicability of generative AI in education systems across the country, and how AI could also be used to forecast potential disaster related threats.

Chairperson of SDPI Board of Governors, Ambassador **Shafqat Kakakhel** presented the vote of thanks to the guests, delegates, and panellists for presenting their views in line with the theme of the conference.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Focus on enhancing human capital through female education and financial inclusion, vital for sustained economic growth.
2. Alongside domestic needs, produce goods and services for the international market to bolster economic growth.
3. Prioritise sustainable and inclusive growth, ensuring environmental well-being and equitable opportunities for all.
4. Maintain a stable economic policy regardless of government changes to foster investor confidence and long-term stability.
5. Emphasise realistic and practical strategies to address immediate challenges and promote sustainable growth.
6. Encourage savings within the country to reduce reliance on external funding and avoid dependency on institutions like the IMF.
7. Develop a robust state that works in tandem with efficient markets and encourage NGO participation for a balanced approach.
8. Shift towards a global perspective by attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), promoting worker exchange, and facilitating technology transfer.
9. Acknowledge and support the crucial role of women in economic, social, and political spheres for national development.
10. Delegate decision-making to local governments for region-specific solutions and to cultivate local ownership and responsibility.
11. Ensure institutions are capable, transparent, and politically neutral to promote good governance and accountability.
12. Accept the necessity of technically qualified personnel for progress and development.



Food Security Hackathon

Introduction

The extreme climate conditions and supply chain disruptions after the Pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict has led to external price shocks and a deteriorating food security outlook in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the region. Floods in Pakistan have affected millions who are also now facing malnutrition. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) projected that around 73 per cent of households in flood affected areas have inadequate resources to afford basic nutrition which means that Pakistan's progress towards achieving SDG-2 target is not satisfactory. In case of Afghanistan, 95 per cent of the population does not have enough food and this percentage increases to 100% in female-headed households. According to the United Nations, 28 out of 34 provinces in Afghanistan face acute malnutrition where 3.5 million children require nutrition treatment support. Trade-based linkages between the two countries and the region, which could increase the supply of food and reduce prices, are also weak. To address these issues, the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) organized a two-day Food Security Hackathon on 17 and 18 November 2023 in Islamabad in which sector experts from the region participated and engaged in a discourse to present practical solutions in all aspects of food security.

Outputs:

The Food Security Hackathon focused on the following themes:

1. Ensure access to food for all; reduce most forms of malnutrition.
2. Double agricultural and livestock productivity and incomes of small-scale farmers.
3. Strengthen capacities in agriculture and livestock for adaptation to climate change.
4. Maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and animals.
5. Increase investment, through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks.
6. Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in agriculture markets.
7. Facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility.

Key takeaways:

1. New and innovative solutions to food security and agriculture trade challenges.
2. A stronger network of startups and businesses in the food security and agriculture trade space.
3. Increased exposure to potential investors and partners.
4. Improved knowledge and skills in food security and agriculture trade space.
5. Strengthen the ties between startups and businesses in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the region.
6. Attract investment and support for food security initiatives in the region.
7. Raise awareness of the importance of food security in the region.
8. Create a sense of community and collaboration among stakeholders in the food security space.



SDC - Sustainability Investment Expo Awards Plenary Fostering Partnerships for Sustainable Development

Moderator: Ms Zainab Naeem, Associate Research Fellow, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Welcome Remarks: Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan

Guest of Honour: Mr James McNee, First Secretary, Canada's High Commission to Pakistan

Special Remarks: Mr Joshua Setipa, Senior Director, Strategy, Portfolio, Partnerships and Digital Division, Commonwealth Secretariat

Awards Ceremony:
Sustainability Awards 2023
Awards for Food Security Hackathon Winners

Book Launch: Sustainable Development in Unusual Times: Building Forward Better

Plenary Organisers: Ms Zainab Naeem, Mr Asif Javed & Dr Vaqar Ahmed, SDPI

Rapporteurs:
PR: Mr Huzaifa Rehman
PRs: Dur E Nayyab

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/74-ibNBWEpU>



PRESS RELEASE

Sustainability Investment Expo recognises research, policy and innovation achievements.

SDPI concluded its first-ever Sustainability

Investment Expo with an awards ceremony to recognise research, policy and innovation achievements at the Marriott Hotel, Islamabad. The Expo brought together both the public and private sector players in the design, production, and management of sustainability products,



services, and initiatives.

Mr James McNee, First Secretary, Canada's High Commission to Pakistan, highlighted their partnership with the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), in hosting a successful Food Security Hackathon. He emphasized the event's role in fostering innovative solutions for regional food security challenges. The Hackathon, part of Canada's long-standing collaboration with SDPI, showcased groundbreaking ideas addressing issues from GMOs to national security. Winners were announced, highlighting the potential of technology and youth in solving complex problems. The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives continues to support such initiatives, reinforcing Canada's commitment to sustainable development and international cooperation.

Mr Joshua Setipa, Senior Director, Strategy, Portfolio, Partnerships and Digital Division, Commonwealth Secretariat, emphasized the critical impact of climate change on global trade and the unique challenges faced by its 56 member countries. He highlighted the necessity of leveraging technology and innovation, particularly for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), to adapt to these changes. Mr Setipa stressed the importance of climate finance, detailing the Commonwealth's initiatives to assist member countries like Pakistan in accessing these vital resources. He underscored the role of partnerships and regional cooperation in addressing climate challenges and building resilience, especially in the private sector, to foster a level playing field and support innovative solutions for climate adaptation and mitigation.

Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI, stressed the importance of the private sector's role in addressing climate challenges. He praised innovative AI solutions in agriculture and food security showcased at the Expo for their potential in enhancing Pakistan's climate resilience. Looking ahead to COP28, Dr Suleri highlighted Pakistan's commitment to a transformative carbon market policy and fostering sustainable business practices. He also announced the Sustainable Development Conference, featuring prominent speakers like Dr Jeffrey Sachs, to further dialogue on global climate cooperation and the necessity of unified action against climate change.

Moving forward, the Sustainability Awards were given in 10 different categories. HDF got the water conservation category award for their project "Afaf Dam". Green Balochistan Organization won the award in biodiversity preservation for their project "Green Balochistan Tree Plantation

Campaign". Similarly, Packages Group won the award in the climate action category for their project "Climate2Equal". NDRMF's "Climate Risk Investment" project was awarded the climate risk insurance category winner. Two winners shared the award for the circular economy category: PepsiCo Pakistan for their project "rPET" and Concept Loop for their project "Concept Loop". Similarly, two organisations received the award in the gender equality category: K-Electric won the award for their project "Roshni Baji", and Nestlé Pakistan Limited got the award for their project "Nestlé-BISP Rural Women Sales Program". Unilever Pakistan got the award for their "Empowering Lives through Better Livelihoods" project in the labour rights category. Mehmood Group got the award for their "Solar Ventures in Textile Industry" project in the renewable energy category. Two companies got the award in agri-tech and food security category. Nestlé Pakistan Limited was awarded for their "Smart Soil Moisture Sensors: Every Drop Matters" project and BHAAN was awarded for their "The Innovative Carbon Bio-Capture Solution" project. Lastly, three awards were given in the social impact and community engagement category. PepsiCo Pakistan was awarded in this category for their project "Developing Pakistan's Youth Through Amal Career-Prep Fellowship" program, Artistic Milliners was awarded for their project "Alternative Livelihood Program", and Sapphire Finishing Mills Limited got this award for their "Empowering Deaf Talent at SFML" project.

Winners of the Hackathon were also announced at the plenary. **Mr Muhammad Farz and Mr Qasim Siddique**, representing The Natural Fiber Company, got the first position at the hackathon. Second position was given to **Mr Malik Usman Sajid**, representing Four Engineers Private Limited. Ms Nayab Raza, representing BHAAN, came third in the hackathon. **Mr Ubaid ur Rehman Zia** was awarded SDPI's Outstanding Awards in Research, Policy Engagement, and Innovation. Finally, the event was concluded with the launch of the book "Sustainable Development in Unusual Times: Building Forward Better" by the speakers.

Sustainability Investment Expo's Narrative Report

Pakistan, like many other countries in the region, faces profound impacts of climate change, including erratic weather patterns, water scarcity, and environmental degradation. These challenges threaten agriculture, biodiversity, and overall societal well-being. Moreover, the region faces interconnected challenges such as poverty, food insecurity, and unequal access to resources.

The complexity of these challenges emphasizes the need to develop innovative and sustainable solutions by both the public and the private sector.

Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) held its first-ever Sustainability Investment Expo (SEI) on 19 and 20 November 2023 at the Marriott Hotel Islamabad bringing together both public and private sector players in the design, production, and management of sustainability products, services, and initiatives. The Expo served as a platform to foster dialogue, collaboration, and innovation, aiming to catalyse sustainable practices and inspire a united commitment towards a resilient and sustainable future. Senator Sherry Rehman, former Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (GoP), formally inaugurated the event and visited the exhibition booths showcasing different sustainability initiatives of various public and private entities.



The Expo was held in collaboration with multiple partners, including German Development Cooperation, National Disaster Risk Management Fund, Human Development Foundation, Packages Group Limited, Tetra Pak, Roshan Packages Limited, METAGOOD, Oil and Gas Development Company Limited, Pakistan-China Institute, US Soybean Export Council, Canada Fund for Social Initiatives - Pakistan, Punjab Social Protection Authority, and Energy Update Magazine. Over two days, the key highlights of the expo include: 1) exhibition display stalls 2) fireside chat sessions, and 3) sustainability awards.

1. Exhibition Display Stalls:

Various public and private companies highlighted their sustainability products, services, and initiatives through the exhibition display stalls. Leading packaging companies in Pakistan, including Packages Group Ltd., Roshan Packages Ltd., and Tetra Pak, displayed their sustainable packaging products at the event. National Disaster Risk Management Fund highlighted their water



conservation and climate risk insurance initiatives. Similarly, the Human Development Foundation displayed their recent project of the Afaf Dam at the Soon Valley. Oil and Gas Development Company Ltd. shared its sustainability initiatives in the form of case studies. METAGOOD, an agri-tech startup, shared its soil health solutions. Finally, the Private Financing Advisory Network (PFAN), shared their recently funded startup, Rapidev, in Pakistan. The display stalls included publications' booths from SDPI's Ahmed Salim Resource Centre (ASRC), National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), Roshan Auditory Verbal Institute (RAVI), Oxford Press, and the National Book Foundation. There was also a dedicated exhibition stall for SDPI's Food Security Hackathon. These display stalls, along with the promotion and marketing of these initiatives, raised public awareness about sustainability and encouraged widespread adoption of sustainable practices among the stakeholders.

2. Fireside Chat Sessions:

Speakers from diverse backgrounds, including public, private, academic, think tanks, and international organizations, participated in the fireside chat sessions covering various themes of sustainability. The themes covered in the fireside chat sessions included sustainable consumption and production, green jobs and entrepreneurship, climate resilience and diplomacy, disaster risk financing, women empowerment, and green energy transition. The idea behind these sessions was to provide a collaborative platform where experts and stakeholders could share knowledge and explore innovative solutions in a casual setting. A panel discussion on harnessing the private sector's role in climate-resilient development was also held in collaboration with the German Development Cooperation. It highlighted the need for the private sector to step up and hold the reins of advancing the climate agenda. The policy recommendations from all these sessions are available on the Expo's webpage and can be accessed here: Sustainability Investment Expo 2023-Policy Recommendations.

3. Sustainability Awards:

SDPI held the sustainability awards to recognize and celebrate the achievements of various organizations and companies in the realm of sustainability. SDPI received over 60 nominations from various stakeholders about their sustainability initiatives. An external panel of judges, including Ms Vardah Malik, CEO, Profectus Advisory Services (Pvt) Ltd, Ms Nargis Khan, O.B.E, Resident Program Director, IRI, Asia Division, Ms Sobiah Becker, Advisor, Pakistan-German Climate & Energy Partnership, and Mr Ahmed Qadir, Director General, Competition Policy, Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) judged the case studies across various rubrics. The winners of the sustainability awards across 10 different categories are as follows:

1. HDF got the water conservation category award for their project "Afaf Dam".
2. Green Balochistan Organization won the award in biodiversity preservation for their project "Green Balochistan Tree Plantation Campaign".
3. Packages Group won the award in the climate action category for their project "Climate2Equal".
4. NDRMF's "Climate Risk Investment" project was awarded the climate risk insurance category winner.
5. Two winners shared the award for the circular economy category: PepsiCo Pakistan for their project "rPET" and Concept Loop for their project "Concept Loop".
6. Similarly, two organizations received the award in the gender equality category: K-Electric won the award for their project "Roshni Baji", and Nestlé Pakistan Limited got the award for their project "Nestlé-BISP Rural Women Sales Program".
7. Unilever Pakistan was awarded for its "Empowering Lives through Better Livelihoods" project in the labour rights category.
8. Mehmood Group got the award for their "Solar

Ventures in Textile Industry" project in the renewable energy category.

9. Two companies got the award in agri-tech and food security category. Nestlé Pakistan Limited was awarded for their "Smart Soil Moisture Sensors: Every Drop Matters" project, and BHAAN was awarded for their "The Innovative Carbon Bio-Capture Solution" project.
10. Lastly, three awards were given in the social impact and community engagement category. PepsiCo Pakistan was awarded in this category for their project "Developing Pakistan's Youth Through Amal Career-Prep Fellowship" program, Artistic Milliners was awarded for their project "Alternative Livelihood Program", and Sapphire Finishing Mills Limited got this award for their "Empowering Deaf Talent at SFML" project.

At the Expo's Award Ceremony were also announced the winners of the Food Security Hackathon on Food Security. Muhammad Farz and Qasim Siddique, representing The Natural Fiber Company, got the first position at the Hackathon. Second position was given to Malik Usman Sajid, representing Four Engineers Private Limited. Ms Nayab Raza, representing BHAAN, secured third spot in the hackathon.

Featuring a wide range of activities, including exhibition display stalls, fireside chat sessions, sustainability awards, demonstrations, interactive displays, collaboration corners, and marketing promotions, the Expo created a dynamic and engaging environment for the companies to display their sustainable products, share innovative approaches, and discuss initiatives with attendees, government representatives, and development partners. It marked a significant milestone in addressing global sustainability challenges and promoting SDPI's vision of inspiring a collective commitment to a sustainable future.

