Social Accountability refers to the concept of public involvement towards building a mechanism where common citizens of a state can participate in demanding accountability from the public officials responsible for ensuring the efficient delivery of services. Aimed at triggering collective action for change, in a broader context, the concept of social accountability (SA) is all about gathering information on rights and service delivery.

Some of the tools and mechanisms employed to ensure social accountability are comprised of Citizen Report Cards, Participatory Budgeting, community score cards, citizen charts, public expenditure tracking, social audits and people’s right to information acts. Though the concept of SA is a relatively newer one, the areas where it has been practiced has marked significant achievements in improving governance and ensuring quality service delivery. However, it has also been realized that the efficacy of the concept towards achieving the desired goals can only be enhanced if additional measures are taken to link up the supply and demand side of services, capacity of staff is upgraded and an effective Monitoring and Evaluation system is put in practice. Moreover, the entire idea of SA must revolve around civic engagement, where common citizens and social organizations could directly participate in demanding accountability of the respective authorities.

The foundational idea behind the SA initiative is to achieve the broader goals of reducing poverty, increasing the effectiveness of development works and to empower marginalized sections of society.

The mechanism of Social Accountability is usually misunderstood as a mere practice that is confined to the voting process only, using which, the communities exercise their rights to hold their representatives in assemblies accountable, however, in reality, the idea stretches far beyond that and besides the ordinary citizens, invites the participation of civil society organizations as well. Together, they not only provide their input in public policy making and participatory budgeting, but also play a vital role in public expenditure tracking, monitoring of public services delivery and if needed, in lobbying and conducting advocacy campaigns.

There are no two opinions about the fact that active citizenship is one of the prerequisites of effective democracy. Here, by active citizenships we mean the form of citizenship where people are not only aware of their fundamental rights, but also vigorously opt for an active engagement towards demanding transparency and holding government institutions accountable.
capacity building, lobbying and monitoring accountability.

While completely in practice, Social Accountability can yield the following results to a state or society:

- It empowers marginalized and neglected segments of society by engaging them in constructive dialogue with bureaucratic and political administration and resultanty improves the quality of services being provided to them.
- It augments the capacities of government offices to institutionalize the tools of social accountability and form their policies while keeping in view the needs of marginalized families and to plan and execute their activities accordingly.
- It builds up the capacities of civil society organization by engaging them into the activities that ultimately promote democratic practices at all government levels.
- Finally, it plays a pivotal role in forming people friendly national policies based upon lessons learned from the SA practices promoting the participation of the marginalized.

The realization for the importance and implementation of social accountability is in its infancy stage in Pakistan. However, acknowledging the efficacy and need of the concept in highlighting and promoting the essence of democracy and improving the quality of service delivery in the country, some of the development organizations, with the financial cooperation of the donors, are implementing social accountability in their area of interest.

An affiliated Network for Social Accountability South Asia Region (ANSA-SAR), is a World Bank (WB) initiative, which is aimed at promoting transparency, curtailing corruption and resultantly ensuring good governance, poverty reduction and empowerment of the marginalized sections of the societies in South Asia region. The countries that are a part of this programme are comprised of Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan.

In order to work out and implement social accountability in South Asia, ANSA-SAR has also kicked off with its efforts in Pakistan. A few months, the IGS department of BRAC University Bangladesh had called for detailed proposals from development organizations of the region, through which it had solicited 22 regional partners by a thorough process considering the institutional capacity of the organizations.

The organizations that were selected from Pakistan were comprised of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and the Centre for Peace and Development Initiative (CPDI) in Islamabad and Shehri and Hisar foundation in Karachi. All four organizations are aimed at employing the tools of Social Accountability in diverse fields, such as SDPI in Education, Shehri in Land, Hisar Foundation in Water, and CPDI in the Right to Information, which, in the long run, will lead to achieving the essence of democracy and good governance in the country and will improve the quality of service delivery in Pakistan. The social accountability tools these organizations are implying respectively are Citizen Report Cards, CSS tools, Mutual accountability tools and Right to information Index.

The fact of the matter is that the world around us is changing rapidly, and to ensure the sustenance of our society we must realize the fact that democratic governance and accountability will have to be put into practice. We would like to conclude with the words of Donald A. Adams, who said, “To give real service you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity.”
Countries in the South Asia region have a population growth rate higher than the world average however about 40-50% of the people do not have access to electricity. A growing population has given rise to enormous energy consumption and a ballooning demand-supply energy crisis. Although the region is resource rich having an immense power generation potential, the exploitation of these resources has till date remained sluggish and unimpressive. This may be attributed partly due to the oil monopoly that exists in many of these countries. Oil prices are subject to considerable fluctuation and price spikes have negative repercussions for the competitiveness of exports and dents the national exchequer. In order to advance economic development objectives, South Asian countries are increasingly seeking the diversification of their energy mixes so as to reduce their reliance on the import of fossil fuel to meet their energy needs and explore potential avenues of collaboration. South Asian countries are increasingly looking at working together on energy security, as this would entail devising a strategic framework of cooperation, which is anticipated to culminate in mutual benefits of all countries involved. Energy Security is a term used to describe the capacity of a nation to meet its energy needs at all times and at affordable prices. Traditionally, South Asian countries relied on biomass to meet energy needs. However, for long term sustainable growth, this is being phased out and is being replaced by commercial energy sources. Many countries are looking into exploiting indigenous resources for meeting their needs and the prospects of exporting surplus power.

Regional energy trade needs to be viewed as a means to boost energy security of the region’s nations. The growth in electricity demand in some of the countries is higher than their economic growth. The demand for electricity is projected to grow from 43.3 mtoe (million tons of oil equivalent) in 2005 to 165.6 mtoe in 2030, with an annual rate of increase at 5.5%. In light of the natural resource distribution and the demand constraints that exist, energy trade is a viable means to increase energy security, which can in the long run be instrumental in consolidating regional peace. There are varying energy situations in the different countries that comprise the region. In Nepal and Myanmar, for instance, the potential to exploit hydro sources for power quite significantly exceeds demand. There are large gas reserves in the Bangladesh and Myanmar regions. Currently, existing energy trade is restricted between India, Bhutan and Nepal whereby there is immense potential of intra-regional trade. The Central Asian regions have significant gas reserves and hydropower potential, which can be tapped into. Energy exports would benefit all countries; with particular beneficiaries being the transit countries, as this can potentially spur considerable economic growth. Trade can include electricity transfer in addition to the transport of gas through pipelines from one region to another. In order to boost the energy trade, governments need to strengthen the power sector reforms that have been initiated, utilities are made more financially viable and improving the regulatory structures in place.

Pakistan’s economic growth in recent years has been affected by declining productivity in all national sectors. The demand supply gap in Pakistan is touching about 6000 MW, and is set to widen in the absence of development of substantial power generation capacity. In 2009-10, Pakistan’s economic growth was 4.1%, which was greatly constrained due to the debilitating energy shortfall. In order to ease the country’s energy situation, efforts can be expended in encouraging the liberalizing of intra-regional energy trade and this would in turn be a means to enhance energy security. The share of intra-regional trade comprises less than 5% of the overall trade, and totals less than US$6 billion. Intra-regional trade is confined between the economies: India-Bangladesh, India-Nepal, India-Pakistan and Pakistan-Afghanistan. The structure of trade is commodity

The Central Asian regions have significant gas reserves and hydropower potential, which can be tapped into. Energy exports would benefit all countries; with particular beneficiaries being the transit countries, as this can potentially spur considerable economic growth.
based, with petroleum products as the third main intra-regional export. It is evident that trading in energy products already exists; however, the trade structure necessitates greater diversification. This may include the export of power machinery such as wind turbines, and greater liaison on technology transfer. Regional trade can help boost greater regional integration, by infusing interdependency between trading nations. The geographical situation of Pakistan is advantageous from a transit standpoint; whereby the country is at the vantage point for energy trade between the Central Asian, Middle Eastern and South Asian markets. Regional integration can be spearheaded by enabling an environment conducive to joint resource management under a socio-economic and environmental framework.

A coherent institutional and regional approach is required to allay the energy security risks. As South Asian countries are heavily reliant on oil imports, it is necessitated that they are cushioned against the price hikes that are a frequent occurrence in recent years. According to the Regional Energy Security Report for South Asia, it is proposed that an oil price contingency fund should be created, whereby taxes levied on the sale of oil can help fund the cost burden due times of high fuel prices. Additionally, the building up of a strategic petroleum reserve can be relied upon during times of fuel shortage and high prices. The ambitious goal of power trading merits the setting up of a regional electricity grid, which would facilitate the transfer of power from power surplus areas to areas where it is needed. A regional gas grid is plausible however the gas reserves of many countries are fast depleting and may compromise national priorities. These would be contained in the region’s energy sector blueprint, which would stress on joint collaboration and development of institutional mechanisms to encourage funding and research on resource development. Furthermore, as rural areas in South Asia are often remotely connected to the grid, they are economically stifled due to the lack of electricity provision. However, the extension of the grid to these areas is severely undermined by monetary concerns and the failure to address the question of how an increase in power demand from these areas would be met. The challenge is not only for nations to meet the national power demand but to consolidate power exchanges and setting up of grids across borders to help save the costs associated with grid extension done from national parameters. Furthermore, cooperation on what is essentially the promotion of energy security between the states may entail learning from best practices in neighboring countries; joint procurement of fuel; transfer of technology and training of manpower, etc.

Regional trade in energy can also merit the construction of large hydropower projects, and the power infrastructures that would support the transport of electricity between countries can be made to be financially feasible/cost effective. There needs to be development of a political awareness about the importance of regional energy trade as a means to boost peace and stability in the region. Important transit countries are Pakistan and Bangladesh, whereby they will help cater for north-south and east-west supply routes. The cooperation between regional nationals would cover exchange of energy related knowledge, establishment of a regional grid and exploitation of renewable sources for power generation. Driving factors behind expanded energy trade in the region include reforms favoring exports and an impressive economic growth rate in the past few years. In order to enhance the energy trade between countries, development of storage hydropower projects needs to be expedited. It is envisaged that an expansion of trade leading to the formation of a well integrated regional energy market. The driving force behind the opportunity for trade stems from supply exceeding demand in some of the smaller countries. On the other hand, in other countries the demand for energy is far surpassing the existing supply.

Pakistan’s unique geopolitical situation makes it a watershed point for the transit of energy between the Central Asian Region and South Asia. It also presents an excellent location for transit of energy to western China. For there to be a credible expansion of South Asian intra-regional energy trade, the main prerequisite however is the normalization of relations between India and Pakistan. Political tensions have a tendency to overshadow and hijack any positive development that accrues in this regard.

Heat waves, global warming and drastic climate changes are causing catastrophes in the world. Havoc is being created over the decades by non-renewable resources, as energy shortage, acid rain, global warming, pollution, and wars to control resources continue to plague the world. This is exacerbated by energy wastage and unsustainable lifestyles. The scenario prevails most predominantly amongst developing countries like Pakistan.

Previously buildings were built without taking into consideration their negative impacts on the environment. The building sector in general accounted for over 40 per cent of carbon dioxide emissions, which is the principal global warming gas. Buildings were liable to over 50 per cent of energy use and, nearly 90 per cent of the electricity consumption. However, the buildings that are being planned now are being planned with a conservative approach to reverse negative impacts.

Green buildings are all about environment-friendly and resource efficient construction and sustainable operations. They are site specific and appropriately designed buildings, using efficient water and energy technologies, renewable, recycled and recyclable building materials, and minimize the negative impact on the natural environment. According to a rough estimate, an average-sized green building can lead to the annual emission reductions of around 1,200 pounds of nitrogen oxides, 150 pounds of particulate matter, 1,300 pounds of sulfur dioxide and, 585,000 pounds of carbon dioxide. Incorporating green building materials and methods can ensure that sustainable buildings can be built that would be healthy, non-toxic and long-lasting. Solar, wind and other renewable energy sources are our future and, instead of continuing to derive energy from non-renewable sources, we need a course correction immediately to transition to these renewable energy sources.

The current energy crisis in Pakistan is intolerable and calls for an urgent need to introduce and promote green ways of harnessing renewable energy, refraining from non-renewable energy sources and ultimately waging a war against temperature extremes and climate change. The implementation of comprehensive short and long-term strategies for not only overcoming the current energy crisis but also leveraging Pakistan’s abundant natural resources remains the need of the hour. A paradigm shift in architecture and designing in order to combat our crippling dependence on fossil fuels especially in the face of skyrocketing oil and gas prices, thus shifting towards the utilization of green technologies in buildings, is desperately required.

Energy efficient and environment-responsive design, natural light channeling and automated ventilating systems as well as utilization of alternative energy sources should be introduced as an integral part of green buildings.

Continued on page 8
The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) is holding its Fourteenth Sustainable Development Conference (SDC) from 13—15 December 2011 in Islamabad, Pakistan. This year’s Conference is titled ‘Redefining Paradigms of Sustainable Development in South Asia’. Each SDC is designed as a forum for sharing and exchanging dialogue on sustainable development (SD) with academia, practitioners, civil society, legislators and policy-makers. The SDC series has been established as a prime Conference in South Asia on development issues attracting leading intellectuals, development practitioners, communities and policy-makers working in or on South Asian issues. In the previous conference, over 100 delegates participated from 12 countries including Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Germany, India, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, USA and the UK. The Conference also received extensive coverage both in print and electronic media. An anthology (a critical outcome of each Conference), based on peer-reviewed papers, titled Fostering Sustainable Development in South Asia: Responding to Challenges jointly published by the SDPI and Sang-e-Meel was also launched at the occasion. This year’s anthology, Peace and Sustainable Development in South Asia: The Way Forward, presently in the publication process, will be launched at the Fourteenth SDC 2011.

Rationale and Background

The paradigm of sustainable development became fashionable in developing countries after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), in Rio de Janeiro, 1992. While Rio is being revisited in the Rio+20 Conference, there are many dangers to the efficacy of the paradigm of sustainable development. However, Rio does not stand alone in failing to deliver on sustainable development in the world generally and in developing countries particularly. In 2000, the UN adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) after a decade of exalted UN summits and conferences to substantially reduce poverty and set time-bound goals for governments around the world. The deadline for the MDGs is 2015. The eight goals are: end poverty and hunger, universal education, gender equality, child health, maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, environmental sustainability and global partnerships. The developing world is less than four years short of the deadline of MDGs and South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa have largely failed to realise these global dreams of the well being for the majority of world population while East Asia, Latin America and Middle East are much closer to achieving their targets. Weak implementation of the Rio Conference and MDGs raises a larger question: Is the paradigm of sustainable development defunct in South Asia?

The Fourteenth SDC aims to critically challenge the paradigm of sustainable development. Even if the paradigm is not dead, it has largely failed to deliver on most counts. Does the void lie with the concept or with its implementation? Or can one blame malfunctioning of governance due to which sustainable development might have failed the developing world in the last 20 years? The forthcoming SDC aims to analyse how the celebrated concept of sustainable development could not be implemented in letter and spirit in the areas of environment, human development, economy, eradication of poverty, gender rights, governance, food security, peace and conflict, and energy.

The emerging debate on sustainable development policies beyond the MDGs and Rio 20+ is expected to play a crucial role in shaping future development interventions by northern donors and the states in the South, as well as question the existing development paradigm. This debate touches upon the experiences of development interventions and on the ideologies and theories underpinning its guiding policies.

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute has vast empirical insights into development realities – ranging from the livelihood struggles of people in Pakistan, the practices, consequences and contingencies of development interventions, politics, to counter-narratives, contestations and resistance. At the occasion of the Fourteenth Sustainable Development Conference, we want to challenge the discourse of sustainable development as it has evolved in the last two decades. Fancy models of sustainable development do not deliver unless the prevalent structures of governing the economies, societies, and states align themselves with the cher-
ished goals of sustainable development. Dreams of climate change adaptation and freedom from food insecurity, gender discrimination, low levels of literacy, conflict and militancy, poor governance, corruption, poverty, malnutrition, crumbling social services, malfunctioning judiciary and police do not materialise as soon as they ought to be or with as much effectiveness as critically needed. The high road to sustainable development has not delivered. There is a need to challenge, redefine and reclaim the paradigms of sustainable development to bridge the chasm between the concept and its implementation. There is a need to contextualise and make it relevant to people’s struggles for fair and decent lives in the states and societies in South Asia. It can only be done through dispassionate and critical appraisal of its “failure” and how can it be revisited so that it can actually deliver rather remaining a mere occupant in the ivory towers of theoretical frameworks.

The Fourteenth SDC will give voice to Southern perspectives on development interventions and try to assess what worked and what did not work in developing countries. The Conference will also analyse how roadblocks such as flawed policy frameworks and implementation processes; funding constraints; and, governance challenges have hampered the achievement of just, sustainable and equitable development.

The analysis of the apparatus that steers policy reform will include an in-depth look at past and present concerns with a view to redefining the issues as well as their possible solutions. The Conference will discuss issues such as peace and security, the reciprocal relationship between food security and militancy, climate change, individual security through social sector development for a secure state and region, etc. Crosscutting issues such as governance, gender, education, the integration of religious minorities, health, etc., will also be a focus of dialogue. The Conference will revisit the debate on the apparatus that steers policy reforms in order to analyse whether the development tools were flawed, could not be used properly or whether new ones are required.

As a part of the larger agenda of think tanks and academic institutions across South Asia, SDPI aims to continue to engender debate on all of the above-mentioned issues at the upcoming SDC and respond to changing concerns in a dynamic environment where the need of the hour remains challenging. The main focus of the Conference will remain on challenging existing paradigms and redefining the development agenda.

**Dates to Remember**

Submission of abstracts: 26 August 2011
Submission of documents by Indian passport holders: 1 September 2011
Submission of Conference papers: 1 November 2011

**Conference Format**

There will be one main plenary each day in which prominent keynote speakers will be invited to address significant areas as highlighted in the overarching theme. The plenary each day will be followed by two to three concurrent sessions / panels on sub-themes listed below. The plenary will last for one hour and 30 minutes while the duration of each panel will be two hours and 30 minutes with three to five presentations.

**SDC 2011 Sub-themes**

Some of the broad sub-themes to be covered under the overarching theme of Redefining Paradigms of Sustainable Development in South Asia include environment and climate change; conflict, peace and national security; judicial reforms and good governance; energy sector; gender; education and literature; trans-boundary natural resource management; and post 18th amendment issues.

**SDC 2011 List of Panels**

The following panels are being organised during the forthcoming SDC:

1. Livelihood Options in Conflict-Affected Situations
2. Governance Challenge: Is There a Way Out?
3. Lower Judiciary Reforms Revisited
4. Revisiting Social Security for Agricultural Workers in South Asia
5. Literature in South Asia: Building Bridges through Fact and Fiction
7. Climate Change: A Threat to Ecosystem in South Asia
A New Road to Success and the Way Forward

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building’s electricity demand. Insulation or light-colour painting of roofs and the use of plantations and trees can save about 10 per cent of electricity. Thus, nearly 60 per cent of electricity can be saved. Waste reduction rates in green buildings are typically 50 to 75 per cent.

Four attributes are associated with a green building design: ventilation, temperature and lighting control; and day-lighting. While there would be about two per cent increase in construction costs of green buildings, the operation and maintenance costs would be reduced by 20 per cent. Minimal increases in upfront costs of about two per cent to support green design would, on average, result in life-cycle savings of 20 per cent of total construction costs – which is more than ten times the initial investment.

Luckily, there is a simple way of overcoming the electricity crisis. All that is required is a change in the mindset, a rational strategic policy framework and a green building code. The government of Pakistan needs to develop a green buildings code for initiating a new area of green buildings. Energy conservation measures and new lighting technology should be adopted. The campaign could be run by the relevant ministries for converting government owned buildings to green buildings which would set the benchmarks for the private sector and motivate the general public to adopt the idea. Special technical as well as financial assistance should be extended to run this campaign.

Promoting education in this field would ensure a future generation of professionals that would design these types of eco-friendly buildings as a natural and internalised ethic and, which, subsequently, would substantially reduce building energy use without sacrificing comfort.

We are a nation of 170 million people, at an average if each one of us saves One Watt we can save 170 Mega Watts, If we replace existing incandescent Fluorescent and Energy Savers with LEDs (Light Emitting Diodes), we can save 80 per cent of the light load resulting in a saving of 3500 Mega Watts which is the total current shortfall. Hence the need of the hour is to develop an optimistic approach which holds “One watt saved is one watt produced”.

Picture Source: www.2desktop.com
Seminars at SDPI

Role of Men and Gaps in Law to End Violence against Women (research based seminar under the GJP Project) 4 April, 2011

The first point that was made was that legislation is required to curb crimes of violence against women. Experts shared various legislations in the Pakistan Penal Code regarding violence against women. They said that there is ignorance prevailing in society regarding these issues and that there needs to be social change and not just legislation to curb violence. There are still gaps in providing justice to women, which indirectly condones acts of violence allowing a free hand to perpetrators with the belief that they will not be punished. Women continue to face social, cultural, political and institutional barriers in attaining justice, due to lack of education, information and awareness. Institutional factors such as male domination, patriarchal biases in the criminal justice system and law enforcing agencies hamper access to justice. They pointed out that it was important to engage men not just through gender sensitization trainings but to involve them actively in programs related to violence against women.

Mini Parliament on Education (Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and PM’s Pakistan Education Task Force (PETF) joint round table) 14 April, 2011

The parliamentarians representing various political parties, education experts and civil society representatives while discussing the education situation in Pakistan, appreciated the inclusion of clause 25-A in the constitution under the 18th amendment, which gives a constitutional right to every child to receive free and compulsory education up to the age of 16 years and urged the need to incorporate it into provincial laws as well as raise the education allocation to at least 4-5 percent of the GDP. They also unanimously agreed to have an in-camera session of parliament on education.

Experts were not in favor of issues relating to education becoming a provincial matter. They said that all the commitments of the federal government such as NFC etc before the passing of the 18th Amendment (under which 300 billion rupees are given to provinces), should be fulfilled. Experts also urged that education cannot be improved in isolation rather a holistic approach was vital in this process which takes into account the nation’s historical, social, cultural, economic, political and environmental realities. They highlighted the need for addressing mis-utilization and under-utilization of educational funds and to ensure that there is a particular focus on teachers training.

Climate Change and Gender: Prospects and Challenges (research based seminar) 18 April, 2011

Women should be sufficiently represented in the decision-making processes on climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. This was unanimously agreed on by speakers while discussing the absence of a gender perspective in the policy framework on climate change in Pakistan.

Speakers of the seminar said that throughout the world, there are gender-specific differences in consumption patterns, lifestyles, access to and control of resources and power, and vulnerability to climate change. They said that women are not sufficiently represented in decision-making processes on climate change, or adaptation and mitigation strategies. Experts stressed that women must be included, not because they are “more vulnerable” but because they have different perspectives and experiences to contribute.

While discussing climate change policies on gender speakers of the seminar, informed that ironically there is no policy framework on climate change addressing gender issue on the national as well as international level. The UN framework on climate change does not talk about the gender perspective. The only reference to women was found in National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA). They highlighted the need to take all stakeholders including women on board to change the discourse on climate change by giving more resources and choices to women and most importantly to inculcate the social acceptability of women’s role in society.
The Role of Media in Addressing Violence against Women (research based seminar under the Gender Justice Project (GJP) 25 April 2011

Speakers of the seminar applauded and appreciated the positive role of the media to generate public awareness addressing Violence Against Women (VAW). They further highlighted the fact that the media is playing an important role in shaping of perceptions around women and their role in society. They said that we all recognize that the media is also a key player in transforming negative stereotypes around women, and perceptions around gender-based violence, but at the same time, this is also balanced by depictions that provide positive role models. There was a general consensus that the media has helped to generate public awareness of the multiple problems facing women, such as women facing violence of various kinds. They further added that the media has influenced opinion makers in the past by promoting democracy over dictatorship, and has been instrumental as a driver of the judicial movement. The influence of the media has also been reflected by the fact that an act has been passed on sexual harassment at the workplace bill. It has been instrumental in breaking the silence on a number of social evils, like gender violence, discriminatory traditions and practices, etc.

The Arab Intifada: Military Rule or Peoples’ Power (Special Lecture), 27 April 2011

Experts and analysts termed the current uprising in the Arab world ‘a refreshing development’ because of years of deprivation, oppression suffered by economically marginalized people who are now taking their destiny into their own hands by fighting against autocratic regimes that are generally backed by the western world. Earlier, it was military that provided a vehicle for the uprisings but now it is the people who are the agents of change. While giving a detailed presentation on history, politics, uprisings, foreign interventions and evolving internal dynamics of the Arab Word, experts said that the current uprising in that part of the world was an eye-opener for those western orientalists and others who believed that Islam and democracy are incompatible with each other. These protests have shattered Arab stereotypes that are portrayed by the western media as dictatorial regimes that cannot exist as democracies.

Some speakers said that the intense feeling of national humiliation, economic deprivation and brutal suppression played a pivotal role in the uprisings of the Arab world. They said that some form of representative government is always better than an autocratic regime. They lamented that Arab people have no history of representative governments as monarchs and dictators took over the region in the post-colonial era involving the dominancy of France, Italy and Britain. They further said that foreign powers are only interested in changing faces not systems adding that representative governments have to be nurtured and strengthened over time and the recent revolts were a positive beginning to those changes.

Climate Change Adaptation through Promotion of Alternate and Energy Efficient Technologies in Pakistan (research based seminar) 2 May 2011

Experts and speakers of the seminar while highlighting the importance of alternate energy efficient technologies in climate change adaptation stressed the need to create awareness about changing climate scenarios, use of energy efficient devices, a cut in fossil fuel consumption, reduction in green house emissions, promotion of sustainable consumption and implementation of the mitigation and adaptation of strategies to cope with climate change and its negative impacts.

Speakers described various impacts of climate change including surface warming, frequency/intensity of heat waves, drought, storms, floods and salinity. These impacts create vulnerabilities to ecological and human systems. They stressed the need to focus on the much overlooked area of climate change impacts on the environment and also how enhanced evaporation and volatilization of chemicals, results in increased air pollution and a rise in airborne diseases. They suggested ways to combat climate change by cutting short green house emissions, reduction in reliance on fossil fuels and incorporating mitigation and adaptation strategies, with a particular focus on energy (alternate and its efficient use). They strongly recommended developing a “National Adaptation Program of Action,” specific to all focus areas including energy.

Workers Memorial Day “Remember the Dead and Fight for the Living” The Global Union Campaign Day for Safer, Healthier, Better Work (Special seminar) 4 May 2011

Speakers of the seminar strongly demanded the effective enforcement of labour laws in securing safer
workplaces for workers. They highlighted the workers plight and their right for a safer, healthier and better quality of life. They highlighted the importance and history of Workers Memorial Day, celebrated on 28 April every year as an international day of remembrance and action for workers killed, disabled, injured or made unwell by their work. Quoting form statistics provided by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) they said that more than two million women and men die as a result of work-related accidents and diseases across the world every year.

They suggested various reforms such as giving contract letters to the workers, ensuring minimum wages, restoring labour inspection teams and making sure they visit regularly and devising a management framework order on labour. They explained that only a revisiting and firm implementation of these steps is required as most of them are already part of the existing labour laws. They expressed the opinion that most of political elite represses labourers through various means and denies them their basic rights. The reason is that most of them are industrialists and don’t want to have any sort of regulation undermining their interests.

The Military and Economic Development in Pakistan
(Special Lecture) 9 May 2011

Pakistan military’s constitutional role is “defense” not “enterprise development” said one speaker. The military’s deep intervention in the country’s economy has led to social injustice, inefficiency and unequal economic and political development. Speakers of the seminar said that “development is a collective social action and only social justice keeps people in a collective project where the benefits are proportionate”. They gave a detailed background of the military’s interference in politics and the internal affairs of the country mainly through four military coups. “Pakistan’s army is counted among the most powerful and biggest armies of the world which consumes tremendous resources and avoids any accountability to the civilians” they added. Talking of various countries of the world including China, they said that a strong economy needs good administrative and management skills and the military always gives the false impression to the people that it is best at management and administration.

Talking of foreign debt and loans, they said the beneficiaries of those heavy loans have been the country’s ruling elite while the poor people will have to repay those loans. They said that the only sustainable solution of the problem is that the democratic process persists and the country is given a chance to practice democracy which will subsequently strengthen civilian rule over the military.

They said that even the democratic process in the United States of America and United Kingdom took a long time to become strong and representative of the common people adding that corruption and political victimization were rampant in these countries if we look at their history but that they have eventually succeeded in developing a strong democracy and democratic structure free of military inferences like in Pakistan, so with time and perseverance Pakistan too can succeed in this regard.

In Retrospect

In Retrospect

A speaker expressed his view that Pak-US relations are at cross-roads and Pakistan’s policy-makers should adopt an honest and truthful approach and accept their mistakes to gain the trust and confidence of people of Pakistan and subsequently the international community. There was a unanimous agreement amongst the speakers and participants that Pakistan’s military establishment and intelligence services should be brought under civilian control. Parliament should make foreign and defence policies of the country and parliament’s resolutions should be implemented. Experts urged that the parliament should be independent and sovereign so as to make national policies whereas and the army and intelligence agencies should abide by those policies. They said that the concept of ‘Troika’ must be redefined in the context of the people’s point of view and that the political leadership should not look for policy guidelines from the army. Moreover the defense budget should be presented and debated in parliament and intelligence agencies should raise their level of tolerance towards genuine criticisms of the way the defense budget is spent and decided upon.

Experts lamented that the Osama incident was unprecedented in Pakistan’s history and now the country stands as isolated, humiliated and embarrassed. They forecasted that there were deep and multiple repercussions of this incident for the country. On the internal front, a speaker said the country faced the complex question of whether Pakistan was incompetent or complicit during the incident. It was generally agreed that after the incident a lack of trust had emerged within the armed forces of the country, whereas they should be united.
In Retrospect

Forthcoming Budget 2011-12: Opportunities and Challenges (SDPI-Actionaid joint seminar) 23 May 2011

An opinion was expressed that fiscal resources are not the real challenge but their appropriate utilization is. The country is facing the worst financial crisis of its history and the nation is looking at the budget as to whether it will alleviate the burden on people adds to their financial problems. Speakers maintained that the country had never before experienced such a grave economic situation as the country faces numerous challenges simultaneously while few options are available to policymakers to pull the economy out of danger. They recommended widening the tax regime instead of focusing more on the current approach of reinforcing rigorous taxation on existing tax payers.

Experts said that there was no shortage of resources but the key challenge was the efficient use of available resources which has not been taking place in this country due to bad governance and unnecessary expenditures. Talking of estimated costs of bad governance, they maintained that over 700 billion rupees can be collected through widening of the tax regime, 330 billion rupees can be saved by addressing leakages and irregularities in public sector expenditures and power sector crisis was also costing 3.5 percent of GDP. One participant said, “we have no fiscal constraints but we have an institutional and governance crisis”

Mortal Threat to Journalists: The Price of Writing the Truth in Pakistan, 6 June 2011

Speakers of the seminar said both the journalist community and intelligence agencies should adopt professional ethics to carry out their duties as per the rule of law, standard legal practices and procedures. Lamenting over frequent killings and torture of journalists, they said the intelligence agencies should enhance their tolerance level and not unilaterally declare journalists as agents of enemies rather they should expose any such unethical journalistic practice through a legal course with substantive evidences. They said that journalists should also adopt professional standards in writing stories to provide a safeguard for their protection by covering all point of views in their stories. They added that there is no excuse for torture or killing a citizen for speaking the truth. It was emphasized that it is a matter of concern that many well known journalists in the world and human rights bodies have declared Pakistan a dangerous place for journalists. 35 journalist bodies that met in Beirut recently have decided to write a letter to Pakistani authorities on security threats to journalists in Pakistan and would support PFUJ in holding worldwide protests.

Mirani Dam: Development or Disaster? (issue based seminar) 13 June 2011

A speaker began by saying that the Mirani dam in Balochistan is not a development but a major disaster for the local areas because it has failed to deliver and all the government assessments and forecasts have proved drastically wrong. The speakers demanded an early compensation for the 2007 Mirani dam flood-affected population besides a post-project evaluation report consisting of a technical, financial, social and environmental third-party audit.

Experts said that the local people had strong reservations about the design, assessment reports and claims of the then General (r) Musharraf government including the cultivation of over 32,000 acres land through this dam but unfortunately the dam is just irrigating 3-4 thousands acres. The vast lands between Turbat and Pasni have become uncultivable due to this dam. They lamented that there have been powerful evidences of corruption of those who

Rethinking National Security: Lapses, Threats and Strategies, (issue based seminar) 30 May 2011

The experts demanded that the security establishment should broaden their definition of security while taking into account human security. They said that the military’s intervention in the country’s affairs should end and the military should focus more on defending the country against the worsening internal and external threats. They said that the economic dependence of the country has been at the centre of state policies so far and added that the time has come for this nation to think beyond this persistent dependence. Speakers of the seminar said it is very difficult for the military establishment to abandon the obsession of geo-strategic relevance which have bled the country and led this nation to an irreparable and dangerous situation. Experts urged that the security establishment should stop labeling militants “good” and “bad” militants and their use in the region including Kashmir. They used the example of Osama Bin Laden hiding in Abbotabad as a major sign of the army’s incompetence. They further added that an incapable and incompetent military still insists that it can run the country better than a democratic system.
exercised power with regard to the construction of this dam. They further said that the Mirani dam is a classic example of design failure as the upstream population was affected due to floods and back water flow from Mirani dam in 2007. They lamented that no Commission or settlement plan has been announced by the government despite heavy damages to the local population and passage for four years.

Looming Dangers of Climate Change on National and Human Security (research based seminar) 20 June 2011

There was a general consensus that climate change is a serious threat to the human and national security of Pakistan and that comprehensive policies and concerted efforts are necessary to deal with the complex and devastative effects of climate change: Experts of the seminar were of the view that Pakistan faces many problems simultaneously such as financial and food challenges amid worsening issues of climate change. They said that the biggest manifestation of climate change in Pakistan was the 2010 floods which led to damages of over 10 billion dollars. Experts added that anthropogenic influences since the industrial revolution, spiraling population, high pace of industrialization, increased use of fossil oils in industry and transportation, and deforestation for agriculture and urbanization have led to the process of climate change. They said that climate change included global warming, increased precipitation and its uneven distribution, melting of glaciers and snow, sea level rise, increase in frequency and sensitivity of extreme weather events while the impacts were apparent in the shape of uncertainty in water availability, decreased in crops yields, loss of bio-diversity, increased health risks, and newer perspectives for sources of energy.

They further said that climate change is a major threat for Pakistan and as it severely affects the country’s food, water and energy security, human health, coastal areas and also has a potential to lead to human migration.

A Celebration of Fifty Years of Writing: A Tribute to Ahmad Salim 23June 2011

Ahmad Salim is a living legend and his intellectual contributions are an asset for the nation and country. This thought was expressed by Abid Suleri who opened the seminar. “People are generally known by the institutions they work in but in this case the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) is known by Ahmad Salim.” He went on to say that progressive nations and societies respect and celebrate their heroes when they are alive, and Ahmad Salim who is the recipient of the Presidential Pride of Performance Award by Government of Pakistan and Bangladesh’s highest civil award, Bangladesh Freedom Award, is a living legend and his services and contributions will be remembered and cherished for times to come.

Giving a detailed and interesting account of his life speakers took the audience on a journey of Ahmad Salim’s evolution of thought and intellectual process beginning with his school days when he used to write in numerous literary magazines and newspapers such as Anjam and Bang-e-Haram.

“Salim has a masterly command over intellectual, economic, social, political, historical and literary subjects and he is not an individual but an institution that has produced over 200 hundred books” said one speaker. Talking of his archival contributions, speakers of the seminar, described Ahmad Salim as a person with complete dedication to research and publications. Terming him as ‘liberal humanist’ and his work ‘extremely rare’ in literature, sustainable development, women and human rights, the rights of the oppressed, and history, they said Ahmad Salim had worked not only with passion and dedication but with physical and moral courage who stood against oppression and opposed military operations in East Pakistan and more recently in Balochistan.

Ahmad Salim’s work was described as not only historic and literary but also full of courage and bravery. “He is a rebellion who has paid a price for his rebellious intellectual work in the form of imprisonment, sacrifices and hardships but he has led a life full of courage and dignity.”
The Center for Capacity Building (CCB) is working with the aim of providing high quality trainings to the public, private and NGO sector organizations and individuals to strengthen institutions and build capacities for sustainable development. From April to June 2011, CCB conducted the following trainings:

**Workshop on Project Management – Using Microsoft Projects – April 12-14, 2011**

This workshop was part of CCB’s annual training calendar. The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Understand the basics of project management
- Plan Projects in MS Projects
- Monitor Projects with MS Project
- Relate M&E framework in MS Project
- Check Deliverables’ status
- View and analyze Critical Path and resource conflict

**Workshop on “Administrative & Secretarial Skills” April 19-21, 2011**

This workshop was part of CCB’s annual training calendar and was conducted at SDPI.

It was a 3-day workshop focusing on the following objectives:

- Develop an understanding of the nature and structure of organizations
- Segregate important tasks and priorities them
- Learn how to identify the stress factors and techniques to minimize stress

**Workshop on Data Analysis With Excel -2007 – May 17 - 18, 2011**

This workshop was part of CCB’s annual training calendar and was conducted at SDPI. Twenty participants attended the workshop.

**Workshop on “Project Financial Management” May 24-26, 2011**

Conducted in Murree, the workshop was attended by thirty three participants who belonged to various organizations in the private, public and development sectors.

The objectives of the workshop focused on enabling the participants to:

- Understand financial management terminology and techniques.
- Read and interpret key financial statements.
- Understand budgetary techniques and selecting the most appropriate approach.
• Understand the importance of internal controls and means of implementing it.
• Understand the risks faced by their projects and be able to manage them.
• Understand Financial strategies
• Institute and effectively use a management reporting system to monitor
the performance of various segments of their projects

The third meeting of the Training Forum, Islamabad Chapter held on 08 June 2011
Topic: Emotional Intelligence
Speaker: Mr. Mohsin Lodhi, (Trainer, Business Coach, Ex-President of the Islamabad Toastmasters Club, Faculty Member at NUST, LUMS, FAST)

In-house workshop on Interpersonal Skills (for SDPI staff) - June 09, 2011

This training workshop was designed for the SDPI staff; Forty One staff members attended the workshop.

The objectives of the workshop were:

• To strengthen communication skills.
• To learn how to handle difficult situations

Workshop on Managerial & Administrative Skills, June 14-16, 2011

This three-day workshop was a part of CCBs annual training calendar. The workshop was attended by twenty participants who belonged to various organizations in the private, public and development sectors.

The aim of the workshop was to help participants to meet the demands of skills, knowledge, performance, responsibility and integrity.

The main objectives were to help the participants:

• Learn the techniques of setting achievable goals
• Enhance their knowledge of team building and conflict resolution
• Understand the importance of leadership in management and
• Enhance their skills in decision making and negotiations

Workshop on MS Office - 2007, 24 June, 2011

This training workshop was specially designed for SDPI staff.

The aim of the workshop was to help participants in overcoming everyday problems they face while using different software applications and to overall sharpen their computer skills.

Workshop on Data Analysis Using SPSS & MS Excel, June 20 - 24, 2011

This workshop was exclusively designed and conducted for the Directorate of Monitoring, Home Department - Lahore Twenty one members of their staff attended the workshop. The workshop focused on collection of data and its detailed analysis for reporting purposes.

Workshop on Managerial & Administrative Skills (TARAQEE Foundation – Quetta) June 28 - 30, 2011

This workshop was exclusively designed and conducted for TARAQEE Foundation – Quetta. TF’s own staff and some people from their partner organizations attended this training.

Up Coming Trainings

• Communication & Presentation Skills
  4-6 October 2011, Islamabad
• Project Management
  11-13 October 2011, Islamabad
• Performance Management
  18 -19 October 2011, Islamabad
SDPI is one of the recipients of the Affiliated Network for Social Accountability-South Asia Region (ANSA-SAR) grant award and therefore is instrumental in promoting social accountability in South Asia and particularly in Pakistan. ANSA-SAR has been conceived to incubate and strengthen social accountability in the region. It has successfully completed its second phase with a grant award to 22 selected organizations, sharing context specific approaches and strategies. The key challenges to the pilot phase that it is known in are how to design a structure and approach to institutionalize the dividends from the pilot phase. The key objective of this consultation is to share emerging experiences from different contexts that may inform and influence future work on social accountability, and identify approaches/strategies to sustain, widen and deepen the network. The World Bank team was also the part of the consultation.

The consultation started with a session on stocktaking social accountability practices in each country as interesting initiatives have recently started in the region. Pakistan was represented by myself from SDPI on behalf of the partners in the country. CPDI, HISSL Foundation, SDPI and Shehri were the organizations from Pakistan participating in the consultations. Questions were raised by the participants and the World Bank mission members to identify key challenges in the country. In the end, the WB mission presented the Communities of Practices (CoP), appreciative inquiry and horizontal learning mechanisms to create a solid network of the organizations in the region. The plenary and group presentations from the participants convinced the WB team to develop and promote CoP in social accountability in different sectors. Local governance, RTI and Social Security Benefits and entitlements are the three thematic areas around which the communities of practices will be evolved.

The remaining three days focused on a workshop on building key stakeholders engagement in social accountability interventions. The overall objectives of the workshop were to:

- Familiarise participants with emerging experiences, core concepts, and essential building blocks on negotiation and advocacy through interactive sessions.
- Strengthen the capacity of participants to assess, design and implement strategies for negotiation and advocacy in different contexts.
- Help participants explore options for effective advocacy, partnerships and engagement with multiple stakeholders.

During the workshop days, there were numerous group presentations on different aspects including consensus building, coalition, engaging different stakeholders in dialogue and creating important messages.

The overall objective of the trip was achieved in the following ways:

- Networking with the key 22 organizations was developed for further collaborations and research within the ambit of social accountability in South Asia.
- SDPI is now a member of Local Governance-CoP and I from SDPI have been tasked with coordinating the group activities for next 6 months. Local Governance-CoP will develop a base paper on “Social Accountability”, database of existing social accountability tools and approaches, and document success stories while learning from failures as well. The group will remain in contact through Skype, Gmail and Facebook.
- The WB and ANSA-SAR are ready to fund the panels on social accountability in the upcoming SD conference.
- Contributed by highlighting important aspects of social accountability and convinced ANSA-SAR for funding training on social accountability tools and approaches.