SDPI'S SPECIAL E-NEWSLETTER CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN A DIGITAL SOCIETY 3-5 DECEMBER, HOTEL MARGALA ISLAMABAD

Inaugurals of the conference on "Sustainable Development in a Digital Society" at Presidency

President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi inaugurated SDPI's 22nd Sustainable Development conference at presidency today. Diplomates, media, academia, and civil society attended the event. While addressing opening ceremony of the conference president emphasized on the needs of quick decision making in digital age. President Alvi said the Fourth Industrial Revolution had started making information and communication technology an integral part of routine life, like never before. In view of gearing up for future challenges, he said, the Presidential Initiative for Artificial Intelligence and Computing had been started to train the youth to effectively utilize technology for their personal good as well as for the collective interest of the country's economy and society. He mentioned the importance of Artificial Intelligence in healthcare provision, agriculture, and waste reduction in industrial and commercial operations. The president urged the private sector, universities and independent researchers to bridge the communication gap of policies and implementation to enable Pakistan face the coming revolution confidently.

Executive Director Sustainable Development Policy Institute Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri informed the audience that this year too, we have got delegates from 18 countries. In alphabetic order these include, Afghanistan, China, Finland, France, Germany, India, Iran, Italy, Kenya, Maldives, Nepal,

Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, UK, USA and Pakistan. In 29 panels, and 6 plenaries our 244 speakers------ (comprising of one third women speakers------we aim to improve this ratio next year) would express their opinions and share their experiences on challenges, opportunities and level of preparedness of societies for sustainable development in digital age. The digital society in which we are living today seems to be impacting our politics as well, making politics both more personal and more interactive than it already is — Twitter diplomacy, for instance, may lead to unforeseeable outcomes which can both be fatal and an advantage to governments and states.

Dr. Sania Nishtar, special assistant to the Prime Minister on poverty alleviation said that, in her opinion, it is possible that women living in Thar would be having access to digital health systems by 2025. She informed audience that under Ehsaas program they have introduced online payment systems and also carrying out digital surveys.

Mr. Haroon Sharif, **former chairperson of board of investment** said that the digital revolution is well under way and is transforming jobs and skills. It is also impacting the parameters of large-scale manufacturing, retail, banking and logistics businesses. The digital transactions are increasing rapidly and have already reached at twenty percent of overall transactions in the developed economies.

A study conducted by McKinsey Global Institute in 2017 predicted that one third of the US work force is likely to be go through a job reprofiling by the year 2020. We are entering a new marketplace of smart phones, robotics, i-clouds and artificial intelligence. There is no turning back now at the digital technology is expected to accelerate its pace in the coming years. He emphasized that special skill mix is required and we need to shift from efficiency-based skills to knowledge-based approach in this digital era.

SDPI team with President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi

Plenary on "Better Businesses Regulatory Environment: Way forward for Pakistan"

Advisor to Prime Minister on Institutional Reforms and Austerity, Dr. Ishrat Hussain said the government with the help of Board of Investment (BoI) was not working on improving Ease of Doing Business (EODB) but also working on the modernizing the whole regulatory environment to help provide the enabling business environment.

Executive Director, SDPI, Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri said that the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is an opportunity as well as challenge for Pakistan. He said that in the past Pakistan was lagged behind on economic growth because our society was not prepared for the third Industrial revolution. The cost of non or ill-preparedness would be much greater now in terms of losing jobs and growth amid competitiveness in the world, if we fail to keep up our pace with the fourth industrial revolution, he added.

Mr. Patchamuthu Illangovan, Country Director, World Bank, Pakistan said that though the Pakistan has improved on EODB index but the country still has a lot of potential to improve further. He said a semi sector company in Pakistan has to file 60 different General Sale Tax

(GST) returns and the country is functioning like five different markets at federal and provincial levels. Such business environment discourages the investors to invest and do businesses in a country, he added. There are around fifteen hundred licensing, permits and regulations administered by 60 different authorities at federal, provincial and local levels. He stressed the need for a holistic approach to addresses these regulatory issues.

Mr. Zubair Gilani, Chairperson Board of Investments (BOI) while stressing the need for adopting the new technologies said that the modern-day challenges cannot be addressed with traditional approaches. He said that the institutions are not having the enough resources to tackle the modern-day challenges, which need to be looked at.

Huma Fakhir, CEO, MAP Services Group said that in this era of digital society we have to change our mindset towards digital economy and must prepare for reforms and embraced the change. Ahsan Zafar Syed, CEO Engro Energy lamented the government on lack of focus on regulatory reforms, as the country is far behind the e-governance model.

Policy recommendations from Day-1

- Pakistan urgently need industrial policy linked with digital technology
- We need to produce skill based labour in this digital era
- Students should be given latest education and should be familiar

- with digital technologies after their graduation
- Regulatory authorities need to sit together to remove redundant regulations in order to increase the ease of doing business in Pakistan.
- Govt. of Pakistan need to focus on regulatory procedural reforms in order to reduce the paper work and increase the effectiveness.
- We have to change our mindset in order to enter in the digitization world.
- Government needs to improve and transform our foreign policy in order to prosper as a technological country.
- Regulatory authorities should change their attitude in order to increase the confidence of business community.
- Govt. and people of Pakistan combined have to make an environment where business processes are engineered by specialists.
- Regulatory authorities are required to coordinate with each other and harmonize the processes.

- Govt. of Pakistan should adopt modern technologies in order to deal with modern day challenges.
- We as nation are needed to mobilize our woman in order to bring boost our economy.
- Govt. of Pakistan should involve people of Pakistan in reforms process as the reforms of reforms process are required.

- Govt. of Pakistan, private sector, international partners, and academia all need to work together for Pakistan in order to cope up with the pace of 4th industrial revolution.

Our conference in mainstream media

Urdu point

[Pakistan's Digital Revolution Linked with Trained Human Resource: President](#)

ARY News

[We need to improve quality of teaching': President Alvi](#)

PTV News

[President Arif Alvi at #SDC2019 said that SDGs in digital age respond to what people want.](#)

Geo News

[SDPI's conference #SDC2019 is bringing scholars from more than 18 countries having 35 sessions](#)

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President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo at the Conference "Sustainable Development in a Digital Society" at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.

SDPI'S CONFERENCE DAY-1

Agenda for 3rd December 2019

	Day 1 3 December 2019 Introductory Plenary Sustainable Development in a Digital Society
Time	**Margala Hall**
3 December 2019 **9:15am – 11:30am**	**Welcome Address:** Ambassador Shafqat Kakakhel, Chairperson BoG, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan **Introduction:** Dr Abid Q Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI, Islamabad, Pakistan **Keynote Speaker:** Mr Haroon Sharif, Former Chairperson, Board of Investment **Special Remarks:** Mr George Gu, Managing Director, StarTimes Communication Network Technology, China **Chief Guest:** Mr Asad Umar, Minister for Planning and Special Initiatives, GoP **Guest of Honour:** Dr Aisha Ghaus Pasha, MNA, GoP **Launch of SDPI Publications** 1. SDC-SAES Anthology: 'Corridors of Knowledge for Peace and Development'

	Day 1 3 December 2019 Concurrent Sessions			
	Margala Hall	**Sangam Hall**	**Board Room**	**Consulate Hall**
3 December 2019 **12:00pm – 2:00pm**	**Concurrent Session A-1** **Managing Our Water: Collective Action in the Digital Age**	**Concurrent Session A-2** **Youth and Peace Building in the Digital Age**	**Concurrent Session A-3** **Emerging Technologies and Regional Stability**	**Concurrent Session A-4** **Technology and Labour Market: Preparing Pakistan for the Future**

	Margala Hall	**Sangam Hall**	**Board Room**	**Consulate Hall**
3 December 2019 **3:00pm – 5:00pm**	**Concurrent Session A-5** **Scope of Quality Education in a Digital Society**	**Concurrent Session A-6** **Women Entrepreneurs in a Digital Society**	**Concurrent Session A-7** **Strengthening the Use of Evidence in Policymaking for Development Impact**	**Concurrent Session A-8** *Roundtable* - Air Pollution: **Addressing Data Challenges and the Way Forward**