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## SDPI's Nineteenth Sustainable Development Conference 6 - 8 December 2016 Islamabad, Pakistan

### **Sustainable Development: Envisaging the Future Together**

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) is pleased to announce its Nineteenth Sustainable Development Conference (SDC) from 6 - 8 December 2016 in Islamabad, Pakistan.

This year's overarching theme of the SDC is '**Sustainable Development: Envisaging the Future Together**'.

### **Overarching Theme:**

SDPI's flagship series of Sustainable Development Conferences has primarily been focusing on South Asia. Going beyond, the Nineteenth SDC will dilate upon North-South and South-South collaboration and togetherness as highlighted in the UN Secretary General's Synthesis report 2015 on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### **It would focus upon:**

- Cooperation between developed and developing countries for sustainable development
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Human centeredness

### ***Cooperation between developed and developing countries for sustainable development***

The global partnership between developing and developed countries for development cooperation has been set as a corner stone in the 2030 development agenda with a clear understanding that the Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved until the global development finance architecture embeds inclusivity, integration and universality.

Keeping the failures of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in view, the SDGs indicators have been made stringent which ultimately call for improving upon effectiveness, quality and impact of development co-

operation backed by inclusive partnerships, innovative approaches and principles of country level ownership, transparency and accountability. The UN Secretary General's Synthesis Report (2015) describes that global partnership would strengthen cooperation between the developing and developed countries for achieving the goal of sustainable development. This multi-stakeholder partnership would bring together key development players to pool financial resources, expertise and knowledge to achieve the SDGs.

Starting from Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) in March 2015, to Addis Ababa Finance for Development Conference in July 2015, SDGs in September 2015 and COP21 in Paris end of 2015 -- the global platforms and frameworks -- have emerged as a common call urging for a more result oriented development cooperation between developing and developed countries to build resilience of systems, infrastructures and communities in under developed, least developed and developing countries.

Though the developed countries did not commit any new funding targets to achieve the objectives of the four global processes for development and resilience building, they did agree for a meaningful global partnership for development cooperation that increases effectiveness of development, accountability and the developing country-led process for monitoring of the quality of partnerships. Amid this background, in a sense, the responsibilities of developing countries have increased in terms of maximizing the benefits of would-be global partnerships and financial assistance to make their development resilient to all kinds of shocks, be they disasters, climate risks, economic, socio-political and in terms of breach in global commitments.

The Nineteenth Sustainable Development Conference (SDC) this year with its overarching theme 'Sustainable Development: Envisaging the Future Together' would raise the level of discourse as how to maximize the global

## Contents

1. SDPI's Nineteenth Sustainable Development Conference
2. Pakistan should be no more apologetic .....04
3. Waste Management in Pakistan... Mahmood A. Khwaja .....05
4. Bridging the Communication Gap between Students and Teachers... Mohammad Yasin.....07
5. People First – a New Concept in Development...Atif Rao .....08
6. Asian NGOs' Summit on Mercury Free Dentistry .....09
7. One Budget, Different Accounts... Abid Qaiyum Suleri .....12

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partnership for development cooperation between developing and developed countries using SFDRR 2015, SDGs 2015, COP21 (Climate Change Paris Agreement) and other frameworks as lens to make the developed world realize that 'no one including, women, elderly and marginalized communities, should be left out' (as promised especially in SDGs) while achieving the overall goal of sustainable development and resilience building across the region. This is only possible when we envisage the future together.

### *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*

The new global Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations 2015)<sup>1</sup> aim "to end poverty and hunger, to protect the planet from degradation; to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives; to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence; to mobilize the means required to implement this 2030 Agenda through a revitalised Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focussed in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.

Weighing the significance of each of the Goal, the Conference will address questions such as how would donors and development partners re-invent and reimagine their roles? How would the public-private sector be engaged particularly in case of climate change, curb emissions and take actions on mutual understanding as stressed in the COP 21 vision?<sup>2</sup> How would resilient infrastructures be built to cope with climate and disaster risks to make development sustainable?<sup>3</sup> How challenges facing gender equality, access to education, clean energy and food security could be addressed?

### *Human centeredness*

The global discourses on rising inequality (social, economic,

gender, etc.) despite recorded development, mantra of economic growth failing the poor to come out of poverty trap and similar other dichotomies forced development practitioners and researchers to track growth and development processes that led them to believe that development minus the poor could not be sustainable. Amid this discourse, Joseph E. Stiglitz and Amartya Kumar Sen in their recent works have called for inclusive development to make it sustainable. *The notion of human right builds on our shared humanity. These rights are not derived from the citizenship of any country, or the membership of any nation, but are presumed to be claims or entitlements of every human being* (Sen 2009)<sup>4</sup>. The focus of the continued discourse is on human centeredness.

The Nineteenth SDC will look at human development with holistic approach and from the people's perspective. People being the fundamental block of any country, their development – i.e. financial, economic, educational and social -- will result in overall growth and development of a country. The experts at the Conference are likely to come up with proper strategies for people centric development.

In a peaceful and democratic society, multilateral dialogue and negotiations are pivotal in promoting mutual understanding. These bonds developed between countries stand as flagship undertakings to address and remedy the deep political, economic and cultural divide, both within and without. But once again these corridors can only be seen as an opportunity, unless the national policies take into account the consideration of the most deprived population in decisions regarding public amenities and investment in the capabilities of people in order to reduce socioeconomic inequalities (Sen 2013)<sup>5</sup>.

### **Conference Sub-themes:**

Some panels of the Conference will highlight the importance of investing in people while others on human development. Under the overarching theme, the Conference will have a wide variety of sub-themes including recovering from conflict, the SDGs, trade, economic growth, environment, sustainable energy, education, governance, women's economic empowerment, minority rights, disaster management and preparedness, climate change, youth employment, gender and demography, gender and democracy and so on.

Many countries are going through conflict or adjusting to post-conflict situation. This Conference will especially showcase sessions on this sub-theme. The Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC) will bring in studies on livelihoods, services and social protection in post conflict-affected situations from Afghanistan, Congo, Nepal, Pakistan, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, and Uganda.

The policy recommendations coming out of the sessions will specifically be presented to policy makers, government

officials, civil society members, academicians, private sector and researchers.

#### Conference Outcomes:

A peer reviewed conference anthology based on papers presented at the occasion will be launched at the succeeding Conference. Keeping up with this tradition, the Nineteenth SDC will showcase launch of the SDC 2015 anthology titled '*Securing Peace and Prosperity*', a peer reviewed publication, along with other publications.

As done so in earlier SD Conferences, SDPI will compile the policy recommendations from the 20 plus panels which will be communicated to the respective Ministries and at regional level institutions.

The Conference will provide an interactive forum to meet with experts and to find relevant ideas and solutions in an atmosphere of sharing and exploring.

SDC keynote plenary sessions and selected panels will be broadcast live on SDPI's web-based TV ([www.sdpi.tv](http://www.sdpi.tv)) for wider dissemination.

Last year, SDPI had the privilege to host two back-to-back mega-events, the Eighteenth Sustainable Development Conference (SDC) and Eighth South Asia Economic Summit (SAES) 7 - 10 December 2015. The mega events hosted a total of 225 panellists of which 152 were from Pakistan and 73 from 16 other countries. Panellists came from Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Canada, Germany, India, Italy, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, UK and the USA. A total of 3,422 people attended the sessions of the four-day mega events consisting of 4 plenary sessions.

#### Nineteenth SDC: Conference Format

There will be two to three keynote plenary sessions 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 concurrent sessions / panels on sub-themes. The plenary will last for one hour and 30 minutes while the duration of each panel will be two hours with three to five presentations followed by question-and-answer session.

#### Dates to Remember:

Submission of abstracts: 1 August 2016

Submission of documents by Indian and Bangladeshi passport holders: 1 September 2016

Submission of Conference papers: 1 November 2016

Nineteenth Sustainable Development Conference: 6-8 December 2016

#### Call for Abstracts:

Under the overarching theme, a number of panels based on sub-themes will be organized. Panel write-ups will be uploaded at the Conference website. Speakers are requested to submit their abstracts corresponding and suitably associated to the panel sub-theme objectives addressing the questions specifically being addressed in that particular panel. For details of the panels, authors' guidelines, submission deadlines, etc., please visit our website [www.sdpi.org/sdc.php](http://www.sdpi.org/sdc.php)

All abstracts will go through a software review for originality and if cleared will be reviewed by an editorial committee. Only those speakers with short-listed abstracts will be informed and will be requested to submit their papers by the deadline. Kindly specify the panel title while submitting an abstract.

#### List of Panels:

Over 20 panels will be organized at SDPI's Nineteenth Sustainable Development Conference. Potential speakers are requested to review and visit the website [www.sdpi.org/sdc.php](http://www.sdpi.org/sdc.php) for updated information which will be uploaded from time to time.

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United Nations 2015, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', United Nations, New York, <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld/>> accessed 8 June 2016.

UNFCCC 2015, 'Historic Paris Agreement on Climate Change: 195 Nations Set Path to Keep Temperature Rise Well Below 2 Degrees Celsius', UNFCCC, Paris, 12 December 2015, <<http://newsroom.unfccc.int/unfccc-newsroom/finale-cop21/>> accessed 8 June 2015

Under this umbrella fall the efforts for mitigation - reducing emissions, a

transparency system - accounting for climate action; adaptation - strengthening ability of countries to deal with climate impacts; strengthening ability to recover from climate impacts and support for nations to build clean and resilient futures. (Ibid)

Sen, A. 2009, *The Idea of Justice*, Allen Lane & Harvard University Press, London, UK

Sen, A. 2013, *An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradictions*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, USA

## Pakistan should be no more apologetic ...

By Shakeel Ahmad Ramay

Global power dynamics are changing briskly with the realignment of friends and foes of the past. Unexpected incidents are happening in different regions of the world. Rise of emerging economies is accelerating this change. Developed countries are moving away from their stated positions to the new ones like the chessmen. The alliances, emerged after the World War-II, are being re-emerged. The US is also trying to mend its relations with its worst enemies likes Vietnam and Cuba, giving Iran the chance to re-integrate in the world economy and politics. This turn around in global diplomacy is primarily due to re-emergence of Russia and emergence of China as the major global powers.

One of the interesting developments is the increasing influence of non-state actors on international scenario. Al-Qaeda, Taliban, Boko Haram and ISIS are silently contributing to changing global diplomatic norms and values. Diplomacy has poisoned through blame game which ignited in the world politics due to these non-state actors, and Pakistan is the main victim of it.

As a frontline ally in the war on terror for the last four decades, Pakistan fought against USSR on behalf of western world and is now fighting against Taliban, Al-Qaeda, ISIS and other interest groups. Despite all its sacrifices, it is still darling to world criticism. Apparently, terrorism is being used as a tool to blame Pakistan, but the hidden facts are somewhat different.

The US fears China's emerging power status and re-emergence of Russia. This fear demonstrates in desperate US actions in the region. Recently, we have witnessed major shifts in the US foreign policy and new strategic tactics to strengthen its weakening power. President Barak Obama visited Cuba and Vietnam, the foes of cold war. They revisited their relations and now they have reached the consensus to build strong economic and security ties. Iranian deal is another way to look for new avenues of influence in Asia. India has succeeded to pitch a special place and focus in the US foreign and security policy. This is evident from the recent visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the US and the former's efforts to induct the latter in the Nuclear Suppliers Group so that India could expand its role in the region. This will also tantamount to enhance the role of India in Afghanistan, which means a more strength and space for India to perform as a major US partner.

In this changing dynamics, Pakistan is faced with multiple challenges. On the one hand, the US and its Western allies are distancing themselves from Pakistan's policy and

cooperation and on the other, they are pressurizing Pakistan to do more without facilitating it with their concrete help and support. Prominent example is the Afghan peace process wherein Pakistan brought Taliban leadership to the negotiation table. As soon as the process started, divergences started to appear. The process bore the first major setback by the announcement of Mullah Omer's death and most recently Mullah Mansoor's death in a reported drone attack on May 21 that finally sabotaged all the efforts for Afghan peace.

Pakistan, being charged for supporting terrorists, denies providing any such support. Both the political and military leadership say the country is fighting terrorism in the best possible way by successfully conducted different military operations. The most recent one is Zarb-e-Azb, which is continuing for almost two years. During this operation, Pakistan is not only fighting against hard core terrorists but also their sympathizers. Moreover, their financiers are also countered.

Still the world is harping on the same tone that Pakistan had created these Taliban in past. If past is the only criteria then the USA, Saudi Arabia and all the western countries are equally partners in this fiasco since Taliban were created with help and connivance of all of them. Why does only Pakistan suffer?

Indian propaganda that Pakistan is promoting terrorism has no evidence. India presents the case of Kashmir that Pakistan is supporting Mujahideen and freedom movement in the Valley. It is not true; Kashmiris are fighting for their right of self-determination which the world community had promised with them. Failure of the UN system and the world community has compelled Kashmiris to indulge into an armed struggle. India is also propagating on the basis of its failure to control other domestic terrorist organizations.

The world is giving weightage to India to just provoke it against China. However, India must understand one thing that regional imbalance and conflict would also badly affect the Indian dream of economic prosperity.

Pakistan is also under severe criticism of Iran and Afghanistan on different grounds. Iran puts blame on Pakistan for supporting Sunnis and Balochis against it within its territory. On the contrary, Balochis and Sunnis say they are faced with Iranian oppression. Sunnis have never been given permission to build mosques. Balochis, majority of them is Sunni, have deprived of availing economic opportunities. Their sufferings have compelled

them to wage an armed struggle for their rights. Rather during the 1970s, Pakistan helped Iran to curb bad elements in Baloch groups.

Independent observers also see Iranian hand in sectarian divide in Pakistan. Iran denies this, but there are some evidences, which Iran cannot deny. For example when the present Supreme Leader of Iran came into power, he invited only ISO activists from Pakistan.

Afghanistan blames Pakistan for all ills in Afghanistan. History tells us a different story. From the day one, Afghanistan showed enmity towards Pakistan. Sardar Daud was preparing to launch an armed struggle against Pakistan in 1962. Again in 1970s, he and his predecessors interfered in Pakistan and worked for the 'Greater Pakhtoonistan'. When they started interfering in Balochistan, the government had to take action.

After the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, Pakistan helped Afghan nation in many ways. Pakistan has been hosting a largest population of refugees from Afghanistan for almost four decades providing them the facilities from economy to education. This led to the exacerbation of the already skewed economy of the country and putting pressure on provincial infrastructure.

Despite all these facts, Pakistan has been criticized, which seems unfair. Pakistan must present these facts to the world

and let them narrate the true story. Now, it's time for Pakistan to come out of an "apologetic foreign policy" rather it should opt for a policy demonstrating a blend of self-respect and an independent nation's approach. For that purpose, our leadership needs to consult Quaid-e-Azam's vision:

"Our foreign policy is one of friendliness and goodwill towards all the nations of the world. We do not cherish aggressive designs against any country or nation. We believe in the principle of honesty and fair play in national and international dealings and are prepared to make our utmost contribution to the promotion of peace and prosperity among the nations of the world. Pakistan will never be found lacking in extending its material and moral support to the oppressed and suppressed peoples of the world, and in upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter".

Pakistan has showed a strong commitment to this principal and contributed generously for promoting peace and prosperity under the banner of the UN. As one of the major contributors to the UN peace missions, the country should not adopt an attitude which is self-apologetic, but self-explanatory.

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## Waste Management in Pakistan

Mahmood A. Khwaja\*

Waste management is a rapidly increasing issue and a complex problem in more ways than one. First and foremost, it relates to environmental and health issues. Waste sites pollute all segments of environment, including soil, water and air. The waste problem gets more complicated and serious, as the residents of the surrounding waste areas are most often very poor, uneducated, lack awareness and also with have no health care facilities nearby. Children of all ages are seen playing around at waste dump sites and are exposed to disease causing bacteria, viruses, etc. posing a great risk to their health. Waste is a valuable resource if collected, segregated, re-used and recycled. Waste from one industry could possibly be used as raw material for another industry. A study by Pruss-Ustun et al.(2012) estimates, 12.6 million deaths globally, representing 23% of all deaths, could be attributable to the environment.

According to Pakistan's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) study, around 20 million M/tons of solid waste/annum is produced in Pakistan (47,000 MT/day. In Karachi alone, around 47,000/day) most of which is thrown around in open, nearby water bodies, agriculture land, markets, etc. There is a dire need to work out the specific

quantum of waste generation from the industry, health care sector, agriculture and household/office waste, to help develop information based controlled measures, and strategy and action plan towards environmentally sound management of the same. Huge quantities of municipal solid waste, waste water and industrial releases (liquid and solids) are not treated or recycled. This is another fast emerging waste management issue.

Level of any waste management (collection, segregation,



All time open burning of mountains of city's medical and municipal wastes

transport and disposal) varies from area to area and site to site. In Islamabad, in most cases mixed waste is collected from houses in a wheel barrow by the CDA employees. In Peshawar, residents throw at a designated spot (centre of the town/street/road side), from where it is collected by the municipal disposal staff in municipality vehicles. In most cases the waste carried from the town is dumped in open in the outskirts a few miles away from the city/town. At places like Talhad (situated between Abbottabad and Haripur), there are huge mountains of municipal and medical waste (piled up over the years) which are just set on fire daily and its burning continues almost 24 hours a day, with continuous emission of odour and smoke which is injurious to the health of the residents. Designated waste disposal spots/sites are few in the country and environmentally sound landfills even fewer. In rural and other areas, small heaps of waste (including used plastic shopping bags) are burnt resulting in air pollution.

Some private companies in Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad are offering waste disposal services on payment and some of these even undertake segregation of wastes and its recycling and taking to selling the recycled items (paper, glass, metal cans and compostable organic waste) to relevant buyers/industries. Individual waste pickers are also seen working on waste thrown outside the homes and at waste dumps, picking/collecting recyclable items, without any self-protection from the unhygienic surroundings and risking their health. Like Egypt, there is a dire need to regularize waste management in the country and take measures for the safety of the waste pickers/recyclers who are mostly below teen age children. Waste-pickers association may be constituted by the government in consultation and with support of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) and provincial Chambers of Commerce & Industries (CCIs). Such measures can help boost the recycling industry and enhance its contribution towards national economy, as well as safeguarding workers/public health and their well-being.

Research and development institutions, academia and civil society organizations/NGOs need to carry out studies and collect data to show the economic losses from "Waste of Waste" as a resource and economic loss (enhanced medical bills) due to deteriorating health of residents, especially those of growing children, living in the surroundings of waste dumps. Economic losses are also due to prolonged unused hundreds (if not thousands) square meters of land which turns waste (zero fertility for crop growth) because of disposal of wastes spread on it or due to standing waste water chemically contaminated because of discharge of industrial effluents (land in the surroundings of Kasur and Sialkot in Punjab, and Nawab Shah in Sindh). Waste management programme further helps in creating jobs/employment, thus minimizing unemployment and helps poverty alleviation in the country.



Pool of industrial waste water containing hazardous chemicals

Waste management sector needs to be regularized as an industry, with appropriate no objection certificate (NOC) requirements for issuing permit. Like many other countries, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) needs to be introduced and promoted in the country, to sensitize the products producers (polluters) and make them also partly responsible (taking back their end of life products/products waste) in waste management. Product consumers and public need to be educated to support such EPR programme. Waste reduction at source needs to be practiced with process efficiency improvement, employment of best environment technology and best environment practices. Waste management awareness and education needs to be introduced at the school levels and interest of the students for the same be enhanced with practical activities for them at designated sites.

Foreign companies from Turkey, Malaysia, Korea and other countries can share their country experience and success stories and provide useful inputs and support towards development of national waste management strategy/plan and implementation of the same in the country. Such companies, on expression of their interest may be allowed to work under appropriate terms and conditions on a commercial basis. However, projects like "Waste to Energy" need not be encouraged and most carefully looked at. Most of such proposed projects are based on "Waste Incineration" which (i) need energy inputs first, and (ii) it not only means waste of a valuable resource by burning it but also promotion of waste generation (rather waste reduction) to keep such project/plant running to their full capacity. Incineration of wastes at below standard operating temperatures produces hazardous chemical gases like dioxins, furans and others (in addition to climate changing carbon dioxide) which are persistent in nature and injurious to public health. Their online monitoring demands installation of expensive technology and enhanced use of energy.



Children playing at the waste dumps

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Obsolete and extremely hazardous wastes in leaking/broken drums left in the open

## Bridging the Communication Gap between Students and Teachers

Mohammad Yasin\*

The special relationship between students and teachers which the parents, the society and the religion so vehemently emphasize is non-existent these days. There are serious communication gaps between students and teachers, which are barrier to effective learning.

In olden days, teachers taught because they loved to share knowledge. Students travelled long distances to be in the company of teachers. This was so because they had passion for learning. Teachers had great intellectual affinity with their students. Students had great respect for teachers. Unfortunately, today we are facing a situation where students instead of acquiring knowledge use unfair means to get through examinations. What to talk of giving respect to teachers, they even display aggressive behaviour. The teachers on the other hand not only shirk responsibility, but also treat students most unfairly. They even torture them both mentally and physically.

What are the communication barriers between students and

teachers? First, it is the difference in the intellectual level, the faculty of reasoning and objective understanding. Often times, a teacher fails to bring himself / herself to the mental level of the student. He/she forgets to take the student along with him in the intellectual pursuit. If a teacher is able to assess and analyze mental capability of both intelligent and weak students, he/she would be able to take the whole class with her/him.

Second, it is the difference in the length of experience. Students are afraid to engage in discussion thinking that they may be wrong and would be ridiculed by the teacher. Inflexibility and rigidity of the teacher does not encourage different views. Teaching should be inter-active and discussion - oriented interspersed with the "Socratic - interrogative" technique. Then there is our culture in which it is impolite to argue with elders. This psychologically bars students from entering into arguments with teachers.

Third, there are times when students and teachers have

different expectations. A teacher may be wanting to guide her/his students in the intellectual pursuit of knowledge, but the students may be expecting the teacher to tell him/her a short cut or tips to pass the examination. If there are incongruent expectations, they would hinder teaching and learning. Such differences are difficult to resolve.

Fourth, there are incongruent ambitions of parents and their children for selecting career by the latter. When such ambitions are forced on the children they result in passive behaviours of students when it comes to learning. Such students are unlikely to pursue their studies with zeal and curiosity. These students fail to interact with teachers because they think they are following the direction set by their elders. Parents would do well not to force their choice on the children.

How can teachers enhance their effectiveness? Ronald Cartey (1996), the Chairman of Advanced Training Group, UK, suggests that a trainer [teacher] must “match the image”. The students have an image of the teacher in their minds. How their teacher would look like when she/he comes to the class? How she/he would treat us? “The trainer [teacher] should try to answer the questions: Do I look the part? Do I give the impression of being a teacher? Am I respected by the students? Do I model a positive behaviour? (pp. 6-7)

It's not only important for a teacher to match the image. Cartey (1996) says, “It is equally important to maintain the image... Throughout his/her presence in the class or when he/she is with the students, the teacher must refrain from any action that distorts his/her image in the students' eyes” (p. 7). A teacher must never indulge in vulgar jokes with students. He/she must always remain graceful and dignified. At the same time he/she must create a friendly environment in the classroom and encourage students to engage in interactive discussion. A teacher must be an emphatic listener and keep students busy and engaged.

A teacher's credibility is an important factor which will enable him/her to be trusted by the students. Any unfair practice used by them will very adversely affect their dynamism, creativity and brilliance. Experience shows that teachers who are honest and credible are respected even though they may be very strict in the class room and give low grades.

What are the indicators of a teacher's effectiveness? Ronald Cartey (1996) says, “It is the esteem gained by him in the eyes of students. What methods does he/she use in teaching? Are these techniques innovative, creative and interrogative? Does the teacher have supportive communication skills? Does he/she demonstrate enthusiasm and create passion for learning in the students? How does he/she motivate the students for learning?” (p. xiii)

To reduce the communication gap/barriers, all teachers

must be students of human psychology. They must understand why students behave the way they do. They must develop leadership traits. They must stimulate students' minds by adopting interactive and Socratic interrogative techniques because the students learn through the use of critical thinking, reasoning, logic and finding holes in their own theories and patching them up. A teacher must develop endearing, captivating and cheerful attitude. He/she must use interpersonal and supportive communication skills. He/she must be a role model in integrity and moral worth which, in Greek philosophy is called the “ethical proof”.

The Socratic method of teaching can be used to close the communication gap between teachers and students, because, the Socratic teacher is a participant in the discussion. The following points (some verbatim) have been taken from the lecture delivered by Professor Rob Reich (2003) and published by the Stanford University:

- The leader of Socratic inquiry is not the purveyor of knowledge, filling the empty minds of largely passive students. He is not a “sage on the stage”. There are no lectures and power point slides. There is no rote memorization. The Socratic teacher is a “guide on the side”.
- The classroom experience is a shared dialogue. The leader asks probing questions to expose the values, principles and beliefs of the students. It focuses on moral education on how one ought to live.
- The method demands a classroom characterized by “productive discomfort”. There is real tension among the interlocutors. The stakes are high. Will one be called on to account?
- It is better used to demonstrate complexity, difficulty, and uncertainty than eliciting facts about the world.
- The Socratic professor plays the devil's advocate. He does not know all the answers.
- There is no personality cult and no deference to authority. (pp. 1-3)

Akif Abdulmir (2012), a renowned Oman-based freelance columnist in his article, *Navigating the Academic Boat*, wrote, “A teacher is a showcase and a reference to his students and I always remind myself of the awesome responsibility. I cannot help likening myself to a preacher delivering a sermon where every word-on and off the record-might be disastrously misinterpreted--Teaching is, indeed, fun and can be very enjoyable, but only if you never let the wind take over the sails of the ship.” (p.7) Following this saying by the teachers will go a long way in bridging the communication gap between them and the students.

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## People First - a New Concept in Development

Atif Rao\*

"People first" is an important phenomena in the development sector initiated through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The world is extremely concerned about the quality of life, focusing more on health and education. However, it is not possible without the citizens' participation in the budget making processes.

Generally, development budgets bring about direct impact on the life of individuals in terms of health and education that are the integral parts of human development and social justice indexes. According to MoF (2015)<sup>1</sup>, there is only one doctor and dentist for 1073 and 12,447 persons, respectively.

Further, Alif Ailaan report's (2016)<sup>2</sup> stated that 24 million children are out of schools in Pakistan. One of the main obstacles behind this poor governance is lack of citizens' input in public budgets.

In 1989, the famous Citizen Participatory Budget (CPB) experiment was conducted in Porto Alegre, Brazil. CPB is a practice in which ordinary citizens present their demands and priorities. Besides, real decisions are made at the domestic level through negotiations and discussions in collaboration with the government. CPB experimentation yielded impressive results. For instance, Brautigam (2004)<sup>3</sup> reported that access to clean water increased from 80% to 98% for households, number of children enrolled in public schools doubled, and government tax revenues increased by 50% from 1989 to

1996. However, the Government of Pakistan has yet to show any interest in the implementation of CPB.

Unfortunately, budget making process is still a residue in the domain of technocrats and bureaucrats in Pakistan. It is strange that budgets are made for the people but without their consent. Further, a large percentage of this budget remains un-spent due to lack of citizens' participation. For instance, the news (2015)<sup>4</sup> reported that Punjab and Balochistan spent only 43.4% and 43.8% of their development budgets respectively from July 2014 to March 2015 whereas the spending percentage in terms of Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) was 34.6% and 32.2% respectively.

The major reasons behind this under-spending are: a) inadequate identification of priorities, b) top-down decision-making, and

c) lack of capacity and poor governance on the part of government officials and civil society organizations.

According to MoF (2015), Pakistan is consuming almost 3 to 4% in health and education out of the total GDP, but unfortunately still remains un-spent. The first step is to overcome the un-spent budget through the involvement of citizens' participation. Through the proposed intervention of CPB, priorities and demands of citizens would be adequately identified followed by the proposed solutions over negotiations and discussions with the government



MoF 2015, 'Economic Survey of Pakistan 2014-15', Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad, <[http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters\\_15/11\\_Health.pdf](http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters_15/11_Health.pdf)> Accessed 07 May 2016.

Alif Ailaan, 2016, 'Pakistan District Education Rankings 2016', Alif Ailaan and Sustainable Development Policy Institute, <[https://d3n8a8pro7vhnmx.cloudfront.net/alifailaan/pages/537/attachments/original/1465895662/District\\_ranking\\_2016.pdf?1465895662](https://d3n8a8pro7vhnmx.cloudfront.net/alifailaan/pages/537/attachments/original/1465895662/District_ranking_2016.pdf?1465895662)>, Accessed 13-05-2016

Bräutigam, D. 2004, 'The People's Budget? Politics, Participation and Pro-poor Policy', *Development Policy Review*, vol. 22, no.6, pp. 653-668.

The News 2015, 'Most of development budget unspent by provinces', the News, published on 15 May 2015, <<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/12482-most-of-development-budget-unspent-by-provinces>>, accessed 03-05-2016

McEwan, C. 2003, 'Bringing government to the people': women, local governance and community participation in South Africa', *Geoforum*, vol. 34, No.4, pp.469-481.

collaboration.

Unfortunately, the development expenditures have had no trickle-down effect on the poor citizens because of the top-down decision-making structure. Bottom-up approach, through the involvement of citizens in budget making, is considered as a much better option in a democratic society.

Poor governance and lack of capacity prevailing in our society since decades is regarded as one of the main hurdles in the progress and prosperity of the country. Successive governments, however, made policies but adopted ad hoc ways to implement them. To make progress in the decision-making process in a social framework, three actors that need to be involved are: a) government, b) market, and c) civil society. Performance of this equation is dependent on their balance for better governance.

CPB practices are regarded as *sine qua non* for making an inclusive and pro-poor policy. Moreover, the government needs to ensure citizens' participation in the budget making process because it is in fact the 'participatory' governance that leads to prosperity and ultimately improves the life standards of the society. Therefore, citizens' participation

practices, as implemented in Porto Alegre, will bring positive and effective changes in Pakistan as well.

The Government of Pakistan, with the collaboration of think tanks such as the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT), should play a significant role to boost the standards of community life. Think tanks conducting research on development issues should focus on increasing the capacity of citizens and government officials so that the dream of "bringing people to the government and government to the people"<sup>5</sup> can be achieved. Ensuring CPB, particularly in development budget, is essential to effectively gain the benefit from SDG regarding "People first".

Source of the photo:

[http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/styles/blog\\_post\\_header\\_image/public/HandsRaised.jpg?itok=szjTxMIJ](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/styles/blog_post_header_image/public/HandsRaised.jpg?itok=szjTxMIJ)

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## Asian NGOs' Summit on Mercury Free Dentistry



Asian NGO Summit and workshop on "Successful Strategies to Phase Down Amalgam use towards Mercury Free Dentistry," was held from 31 May 2016 to 1 June 2016 at the UNEP Regional Office for Asia Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand. Besides several Asian NGOs, representatives of governments of China, Pakistan, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, Nepal, India, Bangladesh and officials of the UNEP ROAP participated in it.

Dr. Mahmood A. Khwaja, Senior Adviser, Chemicals, Hazardous Wastes/Sites & Sustainable Industrial Development, represented the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).

The Asian Summit and workshop were jointly organized by the World Alliance for Mercury Free Dentistry, Asian Center for Environmental Health and UNEP. Two presentations, one each in the Asian Summit and the workshop, on status of dental mercury amalgam use in the country, were made by Dr. Mahmood A. Khwaja, highlighting SDPI led research work in AP region on dental mercury amalgam issues.

Declaration on Mercury-Free Dentistry in Asia 30 May 2016, Bangkok, Thailand

1. We the Asian NGOs request to the government/countries to declare that the women and

- children of Asia and all the people of Asia have a basic human right to mercury-free dental care and a mercury-free environment.
2. Being the most populated continent, the largest in land mass, and the most densely populated (all three), Asia fully intends to address the environmental health damaged inflicted daily by the use of dental amalgam, a primitive product from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, composed 50% of mercury, and whose placement often requires removal of good tooth structure, and which has no role in the 21st century dentistry in Asia.
  3. We urge the governments and dentists to promote and encourage use of alternative restorative materials that are easily available, effective, and comparably priced, it is time to stop the use of amalgam immediately in children and phase out its use on a timetable.
  4. We hope and believe that the Asian nations will adopt effective amalgam reduction strategies that have been proven in nations that have already phased out or significantly reduced dental mercury use by:
    - a. Raising awareness about dental mercury to parents, consumers, dental workers, health professionals, and educators.
    - b. Promoting the benefits of non-mercury dental restorative materials,
    - c. Encouraging government programmes and insurance policies that favour non-mercury dental restorative materials,
    - d. Training dental professionals to use non-mercury dental restorative materials and techniques,
    - e. Stopping amalgam use in milk teeth (primary teeth),
    - f. Stopping amalgam use in pregnant mother and nursing women.
    - g. Protecting dental workers from mercury vapours and exposure in the workplace,
    - h. Developing and implementing a national plan setting goals for minimizing and eliminating amalgam use,
    - i. Updating dental college/school curriculum and training to prioritize mercury-free dentistry, and
    - j. Moving hospitals to mercury-free health care services.
  5. We request the Government/Asian countries call upon both exporting and importing nations to cease the toxic trade of dental mercury into Asia, call upon international and private funding sources to cease actions which fund the toxic trade, use of, or continuation of amalgam, and call upon interest groups lobbying for continuing amalgam use to cease operations in or affecting Asia.
  6. We urge the Asian countries reject the double standard mentality which infers or accepts that Asians must accept toxins that the rest of the world rejects. We believe Asian Governments should form a united front for mercury-free dentistry in Asia, while, as should Civil Society Organizations.
- Because some mercury-free dentistry techniques can operate electricity-free outside of traditional clinics, mercury-free dentistry is plainly a route to expanding oral health care for children. Asian Countries priorities in the phase out of mercury amalgam will be to;
1. Build strong public awareness and networking among Asian Countries in coordination with dental societies and associations, dentists, students, private sectors, government ministries and civil society organizations.
  2. Make it an immediate priority to stop the use of mercury amalgam in the treatment of children and pregnant women by 2016-2020 as per country situation.
  3. Develop an alternative dental curriculum which prioritize the alternative materials and which phase out the teaching of amalgam, and which include a specific chapter on the dental restoration process of amalgam and its harm to dental staff, patients and the environment by 2016-2020 as per country situation.
  4. Pass national regulation to ban the use, import and sale of mercury amalgam by 2016- 2020 as per country situation.
  5. Promote alternative restoration materials and ensure they are affordable and accessible.
  6. Develop database on country perspective and the region.
  7. Pay special attention to expand mercury-free dentistry to public programmes affecting the poor and to residents of rural areas.

## One Budget, Different Accounts

### Abid Qaiyum Suleri\*

The federal budget is being interpreted differently by different stakeholders. The ruling party claims it to be a pro-people, pro-growth budget. The opposition parties find it an "anti-poor" budget. Whereas, the masses feel that the things which hurt them the most (i.e., electricity tariff, petroleum prices, cost of living, cost of education, cost of food, and cost of transportation etc.) are not part of any budget. The cost of these items is determined by external factors ranging from market forces to hoarders.

Due to the peculiar nature of government revenue generation in Pakistan which predominately depends on indirect taxation, higher revenue targets means increased taxation irrespective of the income level. However, middle income groups and lower middle income groups feel the maximum brunt of indirect taxes. The poor, unfortunately, have nothing left to lose, whereas the rich are immune to price-hike shock.

Credit must be given to the PML-N Government for meeting its tax revenue target of Rs 3.1 trillion in the outgoing fiscal year. However, a detailed look at the budget document reveals that this increase was achieved through reliance on indirect taxes, mostly customs duties and sales tax. The taxes on income target were missed by Rs 231.6 billion.

The FBR taxes target for the next fiscal year has been increased by another Rs 500 billion. As there is not much increase in the number of tax payers so one worries that the target would yet again be achieved either through indirect taxation or by exposing existing tax payers to the new regressive taxes. Both measures would increase the miseries of common masses.

On the expenditure sides, the government is trying to invest in sectors which would boost growth in the country. After realising that poor performance of agriculture and exports were the two major factors hitting the GDP growth target last year, the federal government laid special emphasis on agriculture and exports in the budget.

Exporters complain about their sales tax refund with the FBR. While the finance minister has promised to clear all backlog of such refunds after following a certain procedure, accumulation of new refunds has been controlled through providing a zero rating regime for five major exports sectors

(textile, carpets, cutlery, sports goods, and leather). It means neither the exporter would have to pay sales tax nor will they claim any refunds. This is a step in the right direction. However, it is not enough as our exports have suffered from a chronic policy neglect, most of which is beyond the control of the Ministry of Commerce.

Exporters, for example, perceive Pakistani rupee to be overvalued against US dollar. They complain against high electricity tariff compared to the regional competitors. They also complain that Pakistan's trade tariff regime is not very export friendly and needs to be reviewed. They hope things would get better after the import of LNG. However, till the last winter they were deprived of gas supply during the winter months. Unless the above mentioned issues are addressed in a holistic way, one should not expect an overnight change in export performance. Unfortunately, many of these things did not get addressed in the federal budget.

The PML-N is historically known as an urban centred party that often ignores rural development. Special emphasis on agriculture in the budget speech reflects that the PML-N wants to change this perception and it should be appreciated that the Government brought agriculture to its focus of attention. Subsidies on agricultural tubewells would reduce the cost of irrigation. Likewise, the subsidy on fertilizers would reduce the cost of input.

However, the federal government would require a strong cooperation from the provincial governments to make sure that tubewell subsidy is not misused and the benefits of fertilizer subsidy do not just stop at fertilizer dealers. Like exports, the measures taken to revive agriculture are not sufficient.

Agriculture is getting affected from climate change. Climate change is about water, either there is too much water over a short period of time (leading to floods) or there is no water at all (drought). In both the cases, we have to rethink our water management strategies and plans, which do not seem to be there in the federal budget. – Courtesy The News, Islamabad

*\*Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri is the Executive Director of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).*



Dear Readers,

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) has moved to Taimoor Chambers, AK Fazal-ul-Haq Road, Block D, Blue Area, Islamabad.

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