Local Government Summit on Sustainable Development Goals
March 9, 2017
Sustainable Development Goals

Transforming Lives Through Local Government
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Foreword

The Local Government Summit on Sustainable Development Goals is an exemplary initiative taken by the Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform to localize the Sustainable Development Goals at the grass-roots level. Implementation of the SDGs aim to overcome problems related to poverty, hunger, food security, health, education, safe drinking water & sanitation, gender equality, promoting innovation, provision of decent jobs, environmental sustainability, strong institutions and creating safe and resilient cities. These goals cannot be achieved without effective partnership and coordination with all the stakeholders; we need to develop local and global partnerships to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Every nation needs a comprehensive roadmap that addresses its development needs, and ensures that available resources are not wasted and are spent effectively and efficiently. We have developed a comprehensive agenda, Vision 2025, which has a slogan of “Putting People First”. Furthermore, the Vision states that there is a need for more collaborative governance, with the involvement of national, provincial and local governments, civil society, and the private sector in all stages of policy making. Vision 2025 has seven pillars and all the pillars are aligned with the goals of the SDGs. The SDGs are not just a part of a top-down international agenda, but are also essential for Pakistan’s prosperity, development and the well-being of its people.

Fortunately, Pakistan is the first country to endorse and adopt the SDGs in Parliament as part of its national agenda and now these Goals are known as National Development Goals. Whilst most of the SDG related sectors have been devolved to the provinces after the 18th constitutional amendment, the federal government is committed to take the coordination role to bring all stakeholders together. In this way, we can share the best of practices from the world as well as from the other regions of Pakistan which would help us in developing a national framework of SDGs with a plausible implementation strategy to achieve them.

It was in this spirit that the Ministry of Planning, Development & Reforms spearheaded the consultation process at the local level with this summit. Another objective of this summit was to discuss problems faced by the elected representatives and try to address them in policymaking. I would like to express my appreciations for Dr. Asma Hyder, Member Social Sector & Devolution, Mr. Zafar ul Hassan, Chief Poverty and project director SDGs, and the entire team of Federal SDGs support Unit, Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform for taking the lead on implementing the SDGs. I also highly appreciate the efforts of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in supporting the SDG agenda and the organization of this summit.
Acknowledgments

This report is developed as an outcome of the “Local Government Summit on Sustainable Development Goals” held in Islamabad to develop an agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Vision 2025 and local development priorities. Here, I would like to thank all those who contributed to this summit. Notably, I want to express my gratitude to Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister, Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform for his leadership role and support to the Sustainable Development Goals. I extend my appreciation for his highly knowledgeable Keynote Address, expert inputs and invaluable suggestions, which helped us to conduct the summit in the best manner possible.

I would especially like to thank all Mayors, District Council Chairmen and District Nazims who came from all the four provinces to participate in the Summit, gave their valuable suggestions and showed commitment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in their respective constituencies.

Special thanks to the respected speakers of technical sessions including Maj. Gen. Dr. Azhar Mahmood Kayani, Executive Director, Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology, Ms. Shahnaz Wazir Ali, President SZABIST, and Mosharraf Zaidi, Campaign Director of Alif Ailaan who led with insight, wisdom and knowledge on different aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Appreciation is also due to the core committee of the summit; Mr. Zafar-ul-Hasan, Project Director SDGs, Mr. Najam-us-Saqib, Deputy Chief, Poverty Section, Dr. Haroon Sarwar, Assistant Chief, Poverty Section, Ms. Nigar Anjum, Assistant Chief, Poverty Section, Mr. Nadeem Ahmed, Social Policy Advisor, SDGs Support Unit, Mr. M. Ali Kemal, Economic Policy Advisor, SDGs Support Unit, Ms. Schanzah Khalid, Research Analyst, SDGs Support Unit, Mr. Azfar Ali, IT and Data Analyst, SDGs Support Unit, Mr. Khalid Mushtaq, Admin and Finance officer, SDGs Support Unit, Mr. Husnain Agha, Logistics Support, SDGs Support Unit, Young Development Fellows, staff of Minister’s office, and staff of Poverty Section who helped to make the summit successful.

In addition to the above, I am also grateful to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for their continuing support which was a significant factor in the success of the Local Government Summit on SDGs.
# Team for Local Government Summit on SDGs

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We, the elected heads of Districts/ Mayors of Metropolitan Corporations, and members of local governments, gathered in Islamabad on 09 March 2017, celebrate the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which is in line with Pakistan Vision 2025 and the acknowledgement of the role that local governments need to play.

We welcome that the 2030 Agenda calls for transformative change and is “of the people, for the people, and by the people” – and that it needs to be implemented and fully realized at the local level.

We, the local leaders, are convinced that, by giving specific attention to the localization of all goals, the new agenda will trigger an important transformation in our joint actions. We stand fully committed to deal with the issues, particularly with climate change, achieving gender equality, better health and education, and fostering peace and inclusive societies, convinced that this will reduce inequalities as means to improve life for future generations.

We, the local leaders, call for effectively empowering to local governments (administrative and political) and resources (human and financial) require to carry out our acknowledged role in implementing the SDGs.

We call for strengthening local institutions and processes and to make it more participatory and inclusive by involving all relevant stakeholders including local communities/citizens.

We call for the national and provincial governments, international organizations, civil society and the academia and our development partners, to join us and to foster new partnerships with local political leadership.

We welcome the constitution of the LG Committee on SDGs to take forward the resolution from today’s summit to our respective constituencies.

We declare our whole-hearted support for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which have been adopted by National Assembly of Pakistan as National Development Goals and commit ourselves to devote all our energies and resources towards the realization of these goals.
Sustainable development is development that improves the living conditions in the present without compromising the resources of future generations. Development is NOT sustainable when we spend or use all our resources now, leaving future generations with nothing. Sustainable development is growing together, improving the thinking of others and respecting the environment.

After the completion of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015, the world has adopted a new set of universal goals after several consultations over the years. These goals are known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), officially known as Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an international development framework that offers a unique opportunity to transform the national, regional and local development planning objectives and outcomes. It has 17 goals and 169 targets which demand theoretical and conceptual clarity to design a plausible implementation plan for the next 15 years. The progress on these goals and targets will be monitored through a set of indicators for each goal. Out of the 241 SDG indicators proposed by UN Statistical Commission, Pakistan’s SDGs progress will be reviewed on 230 unique indicators at the national, sub-national and local levels.

Pakistan has hardly achieved any MDG target due to several reasons, among which lack of planning, lack of political will and considering it a donor driven agenda are foremost. Contrary to the MDGs, the SDGs have been adopted as a national development agenda in the Parliament, which evades the problems of considering them a solely UN agenda. Nevertheless, political will can be enhanced if the local government system is enforced and they are empowered to implement SDGs in their areas.

The history of local governments in Pakistan is marred with conflicts over political dominance of different power structures. Instead of strengthening this important tier of government, it has been used to achieve vested objectives. The attempts to revamp local government structures are lackluster; be it a systematic transfer of powers and/or gradual shift of responsibilities to local institutions. There were two types of models implemented in the local government in Pakistan, i.e., the ‘scanty power model’ for local governance and the ‘absolute power model’. The former model has proved disastrous for the local development process as it has created an intense development divide on a regional basis. Whatever limited development occurred, it was in urban areas. Therefore, urban areas were developed at the cost of rural underdevelopment. Rutted and unjust urban development further intensified class divisions in society. On the other hand, the latter model overloaded the nascent local structure with power and authority without transparency and proper accountability that resulted in elite capture and corruption. Despite all the shortcomings in the structure of the two models, both have partially delivered the mandated responsibilities and functions to the people.

The return of democracy in 2008 and smooth political transition in 2013 was a landmark achievement for democratic forces in Pakistan. However, the process has been very slow in strengthening the local governments all over Pakistan. It is noteworthy to mention that a crucial milestone was attained in 2010 when provincial autonomy was ensured through the 18th constitutional amendment with decentralization of power and authority of important ministries, historically part of the concurrent list. For the first time, the constitution of Pakistan upholds the ‘principle of subsidiarity’ that is defined as “a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level.”
Local Governments in Pakistan - A Historical Context

After independence in 1947, local government institutions have not made any substantial progress in terms of gaining autonomy, despite government policy to strengthen this institution. The primary reason for this failure was political instability and the absence of a constitution that obligates institutions and people to act according to certain laws. The first decade after independence was the ‘lost opportunity’ that had greater implications for the evolution and development of the local government institutions in Pakistan.

In 1959, the ‘Basic Democracies Model’ was promulgated through the presidential ordinance in General Ayubs’ regime. In 1960, the municipal administration ordinance was issued which defined four tiers of local governance, with union council as the lowest tier. The members of the union council were elected through direct voting, and then a chairman was elected. Ironically, the higher tiers of that local structure had members from both direct elections and official members nominated by government. Later, instead of legitimizing the rule of law at the lowest level, i.e. union council, the constitu- tion of 1962 gave powers to union council members to elect the president and members of the national and provincial assemblies. Though local governments were instituted under military rule in 1959, the intent was to legitimize the rule of a military dictator. The model was similar to the British colonial local government model, where deputy commissioners, commissioners and important government functionaries were the controlling authority. They often suspended the resolutions and orders made by local bodies and created hurdles in basic service delivery and development projects initiated. Due to lack of administrative authority and financial constraints, local bodies could only perform limited functions.

The period of political government of Z. A. Bhutto from 1971 to 1979 was radical in terms of proposed changes in the composition of the elected local representatives that ensured participation of women, minorities, peasants and workers. However, these reforms were never implemented and no local body elections were held during the political government of Z.A. Bhutto.

The Local Government Ordinance (LGO) of 1979 was another attempt to legitimize military rule in the country when General Zia ul Haq promulgated presidential ordinance for local body elections. A new structure of local government was suggested, which was primarily based on General Ayubs’ model, with limited financial and administrative powers. The distinguishing feature of the LGO 1979 was that it eliminated the direct involvement of bureaucracy as members or chairmen and ensured that all tiers of the local body, including chairmen, would be selected through direct voting. In 1985, local body elections were held on a non-party basis which resulted in the elite capture of local governments instead of strengthening of the institution. General Zia’s intent was to restrict mainstream political parties from local politics, but non-party basis elections further intensified the politics of patronage, even at the grass-roots level. Another catastrophic impact of the new local body structure of 1979 was the deepening of the rural-urban divide in the country. Urban areas were divided into towns and municipal committees, municipal corporations and metropolitan corporations, while rural areas had only district councils and union councils. The urban local bodies were given powers to levy taxes, such as octroi, that substantially increased financial resources of urban local councils. On the contrary, rural district and union councils were dependent on provincial governments for financial support, which created intense tension between the urban-middle class local representatives and politically strong rural elites. Lack of financial capacity of rural local councils restrained them from providing basic service delivery functions.

In 1988, party based elections were held and a new political government was instituted, but nothing was changed in the local government structure. The rivalry between urban local representatives and the rural political elites increased and resulted in the suspension of local bodies in 1993.

The Devolution Plan (2001) of General Musharraf was a mix of genuine devolution of power to local government and overloading of administrative and financial powers to nascent or relatively vulnerable local government structures in the country. Following the tradition of his predecessors, General Musharraf also pretended to believe in democratic principles and instead of holding general elections on party basis, opted to institute local governments for political legitimacy. However, the devolution plan of 2001 was the first genuine attempt to build and consolidate local governance in Pakistan. The distinguishing feature of the devolution plan was a) devolution of political power; b) decentralization of administrative authority; c) de-concentration of management functions; d) diffusion of power-authority nexus; and e) distribution of resources. There were three different levels of local government, namely union government (lowest tier), tehsil government (middle tier) and district government (highest tier). All levels of the local government had administrative and fiscal powers to perform functions outlined in the plan. The roles of the bureaucracy in local government affairs were abolished and role, functions and powers related to local development were transferred to the District Nazim (Mayor).

Secondly, it appeared that district government was the most powerful entity in the system that promoted politics of patronage and elite capture. Though devolution plan catered to the rural-urban divide by giving functional responsibilities to tehsil municipal administration of urban and rural areas alike, the capacity of tehsil government was limited to fulfill such a huge development task. The devolution plan of 2001 was instrumental in the evolution of local governance system in Pakistan, but it was not designed to systematically devolve power and authority to the incapacitated or dysfunctional institution.

After a prolonged dictatorship rule, political governments viewed local governments as pseudo political structures that destabilized the political system in the country and legitimized the rule of military dictators. In 2008, soon after assumption of powers by the political government, the local government system stood in abeyance. After the 18th constitutional amendment, the local government ordinance of 2001 was abolished and replaced by the local government acts, with constitutional backing. Each province promulgated its own LG act; Balochistan in 2010 and Punjab, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2013. The common feature of all LG acts is the curtailment of administrative authority and fiscal powers of local governments as opposed to the LGO of 2001. Under the new system, provincial governments can suspend or remove elected local representatives and the financial power rests with the provincial finance department. Once again, rural and urban areas have different local administrative setups, as rural areas of Punjab, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have union council and district councils while urban areas have union council/committees and municipal committees. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the structure of local governance is similar to the devolution plan of 2001, with the additional administrative layer of tehsil council and village council in rural areas and neighborhood council in urban areas.
Pakistan has failed to achieve almost all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and targets due to several absolvable reasons, such as poor institutional capacity; financial constraints both at federal and provincial levels; flawed policies; lack of political will; absence of monitoring mechanisms; and lack of human resource capacity. In addition, there was no comprehensive understanding of the MDGs, from their conceptual significance to their tangible benefits to the economy and the people. This lack of comprehensibility and awareness culminated in the dismal performance of Pakistan. In comparison, the SDGs have the potential to change the fate of the people as the elected representatives in both national and provincial assemblies have shown their firm political commitment by passing a unanimous resolution to term SDGs as the “national development agenda”. The Speaker of the National Assembly constituted the Parliamentary Task Forces at the federal and provincial levels to oversee and support legislation for the SDGs and assigned an SDG Secretariat to provide support. Another important step was the incorporation of the SDGs in the national planning document, Vision 2025, that is also ratified by all federating units.

After the 18th constitutional amendment, the responsibilities and functions of the provincial governments have increased substantially, especially in the social sector. Since the SDGs mandate is huge from a planning, resource allocation and implementation perspective, provincial governments therefore need to develop meaningful coordination mechanisms with federal and local governments and other relevant stakeholders such as private sector, international development agencies and local NGOs and civil society organizations. From the SDGs implementation viewpoint, the provincial government should work closely with local governments to develop a comprehensive implementation strategy with clearly delineated roles and responsibilities. The experience of the MDGs suggests that local governments should be used as a core instrument of the implementation process, which would increase the outreach of the provincial government. Thus, the role of local governments has become critical in SDGs achievement, especially from the perspective of identification, planning, implementation, monitoring and oversight mechanisms. The participation of the local people is essential from the identification of local needs to planning and execution of projects, as well as monitoring their impact. The local communities ought to be the “real beneficiaries” of the SDGs, and concrete steps are needed to increase their voices in the development of the SDGs framework, both at federal and provincial levels.

Realizing the pivotal role of local governments in the achievement of goals and targets of the SDGs, the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform convened a “Local Government Summit on SDGs” with the theme of “Development for All”. The primary objective of this summit was to initiate a dialogue on the prospects of the SDGs at the local level and to develop coordination and support mechanisms for the SDGs among all three tiers of government. The identification of local development issues that are likely to impede SDGs achievement was another objective of the summit, along with a discussion on existing local government initiatives (success stories or lesson learned). In addition, elected local government representatives were provided ample opportunity to discuss local issues with each other in Focus Group Discussion (FGDs), where provincial diversity and level of development was a key group composition factor.
Event Proceedings

The Local Government Summit on SDGs was convened by the SDGs Support Unit at the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform in collaboration with the United Nations, on March 9, 2017 at The Marriott, Islamabad. The summit was chaired by Federal Minister Professor Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Planning, Development and Reform. A diverse range of participants attended the summit, with 75 elected local government representatives from the four provinces of Pakistan being present.

The summit was comprised of three main sessions. The opening session included a welcome address by Dr. Asma Hyder, Member Social Sector and Devolution, Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform, and opening remarks by Mr. Indrika Ratwatte, United Nations Acting Resident Coordinator, and the keynote address by the Federal Minister, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, Ministry for Planning, Development and Reform.

The second session provided the audience with an orientation on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), their centrality in development planning, and the role of local elected governments as key partners in their implementation. This session included presentations by Dr Asma Hyder, Member Social Sector and Devolution, Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform and Ms Shahnaz Wazir Ali, President, Shaheed Zulfiquar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST).

Two technical presentations on health and education were given by Major General, Dr. Azhar Kayani, Executive Director of the Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology and Mr. Mosharraf Zaidi, Founder and Campaign Director of Alif Ailaan respectively. Dr. Kayani gave an overview of preventive measures for cardiovascular diseases, while Mr. Zaidi talked about the possible involvement of local leaders in the education sector to improve the quality of education, and address the problems of teacher’s absenteeism and availability of basic infrastructure in the schools.

The third session was structured around detailed focus group discussions with local government representatives. These discussions provided a platform for local leaders to highlight development challenges faced by their respective districts and municipalities, and to discuss administrative challenges they faced in delivering quality public services to their communities. This discussion also provided an opportunity for representatives from diverse districts to share their experiences with each other and learn from each other’s successes and mistakes.

The summit concluded with the signing of a declaration by the local representatives to pledge their whole-hearted support for the SDGs and their implementation in their respective regions, and a question and answer session and closing remarks by the Professor Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Planning, Development and Reform.

Session I – Summit Opening
Welcome Address – Dr. Asma Hyder, Member Social Sector

It is very encouraging to see such enthusiastic participation in this summit from everyone, and I am very thankful that so many local representatives from all four provinces have been able to join us here today.

The Minister for Planning, Development and Reform has taken a very special interest in the process to make the Sustainable Development Goals inclusive at all tiers of government, and I am thankful to him for his initiative in making this summit a reality.

The purpose of today’s gathering is to start the consultative process for development planning at the local level, and to provide a policy framework for achieving the SDGs by 2030. The SDGs are a continuation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but are a more holistic framework for development. Pakistan failed in achieving the MDGs by 2015, largely due to gaps in the planning process resulting in a lack of indigenous ownership. We must make sure that we do not repeat past mistakes this time, and maximize the sense of ownership of these goals as our national agenda that stands to benefit us all.

Opening Remarks – Mr. Indrika Ratwatte, Acting Resident Coordinator, United Nations Pakistan

The SDGs were developed after a long process of consultation, and provide a global, comprehensive development framework. The new Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres, has made the SDGs a top priority and is particularly concerned with the maintenance of peace and security in conflicted regions, and combating climate change.

The SDGs are very comprehensive, and cover all aspects of individual and societal well-being. The aim of this summit is to transmit knowledge and understanding of these goals to local government representatives, and through them, to the entire fabric of society.

In 2015, Pakistan became the first country to adopt the SDGs as part of their national agenda, which was a landmark decision. A parliamentary taskforce has also been set up, along with the establishment of an SDG secretariat, and these are all vitally important steps in materializing the SDGs in Pakistan, and show the high level of commitment by the national government to this agenda. The Prime Minister himself has taken a personal interest in the SDGs and this also demonstrates resolve on the government’s part to make these goals a reality.

Moreover, the upcoming national census will provide valuable data in order to proceed with evidence-based planning around the SDGs and development in general. It will allow for improved localization of SDG targets in Pakistan’s context. The recently established SDG Support Units at the federal as well as provincial levels will play the important role of aiding this localization and sensitizing district and other tiers of government machinery to these goals.

Local governments must be the catalysts for change in this process, and the federal and provincial governments must improve coordination with them and amongst each other to ensure that Pakistan does not stray from this vision for development.

This summit will provide a platform for fruitful dialogue, and the opportunity to strengthen existing mechanisms to transmit the SDGs to the local level.

The United Nations stands united with Pakistan towards achieving the goals.
Keynote Address – Professor Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Planning, Development & Reform

The world has now entered an era in which everything is moving at a very fast pace.

Previously, the strength of a nation depended on the natural resources it possessed, and agriculture was the backbone of a country. However, we witnessed a shift in this pattern with the industrial revolution, and agriculture lost its former importance. This changed the rules of the game and the nations that managed to adapt faster than others to these changes were able to grow and prosper faster. For example, Asia used to be a big power pre-industrial revolution, but it declined in influence and prominence because it was not able to keep up with the pace of technological change.

In the 20th century, some nations of Asia, termed the Asian Tigers, caught up with western countries and became prosperous. However, in the 21st century, the rules have changed once again, and digital technology has become the mainstay of innovation. A knowledge and data revolution has taken place and the world is amassing knowledge at an alarming rate, so much so that the knowledge amassed so far by humans will be doubled over the next few years.

In this new era, nations that produce more knowledge and are able to innovate are developing faster. Thus, if any nation wants to succeed, they should invest in the development of their people, since they are the drivers of innovation and the users of the vast amounts of knowledge we are accumulating. At the same time, nations must also be forward looking, and ensure that future generations can also benefit from natural resources.

Most importantly, for any nation to hope to succeed, it needs a comprehensive roadmap that addresses all its development needs, and ensures that available resources are not wasted, and are spent in the most cost-effective and impactful manner. For Pakistan, this roadmap is Vision 2025. The Vision states that there is a need for more collaborative governance, with the involvement of national and provincial governments, local governments, civil society, and the private sector in all stages of policy making.

The SDGs are a global development framework to eliminate poverty and deprivation in all its dimensions, whether that is economic, social, environmental, or legal. These 17 goals have been formulated after a consultative process with all world nations, and have subsequently been adopted by them.

However, it must be fully recognized that the SDGs are not just part of a top-down international agenda, but are also essential for Pakistan’s prosperity and development, and the well-being of its people. For example, Pakistan suffers from the problems of stunting and wasting among children due to malnutrition, and the SDGs address these problems directly, along with many other related health issues.

Pakistan remains the first country to unanimously endorse the SDGs in its Parliament as part of its national agenda. Whilst most of the SDGs related sectors have been devolved to the provinces after the 18th constitutional amendment, nonetheless, the federal government remains committed to serve in a coordinating and supporting role to bring all stakeholders together so that better outcomes may be achieved. There is a need for knowledge sharing amongst the federating units so that provincial subjects reach world standards.

The Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform has formulated a report on the Multidimensional Poverty Index which has mapped poverty according to each district. This will be a valuable resource in targeting the most deprived districts for the SDGs, particularly Goal 1 (No poverty).

The purpose of this summit is to initiate a dialogue on how local governments can play a bigger role in achieving the SDGs and how provinces can be made development partners so that the impact of projects can reach the communities they are meant to serve. Both the availability of resources and the quality of governance are dire issues and the SDGs will not be achieved until we resolve them.

Session II – Introduction to SDGs and Role of Local Governments

Introduction to SDGs – Dr. Asma Hyder, Member Social Sector, Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform

While the Sustainable Development Goals are the current development framework adopted by Pakistan, it is still important to talk about the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and learn from them.

In the 1990s, we witnessed the Asian Financial Crisis which demonstrated that the prevailing macroeconomic framework had failed. This led to the rise of the MDGs. Whilst the target date for the MDGs passed in 2015, it is very important to consider them since Pakistan was able to improve some indicators during the MDG era, such as gender parity and some others.

However, we must also look at the causes behind the failure to achieve the MDGs so that we may learn from our mistakes. One of the biggest steps we have taken this time to avoid the same fate for the SDGs is that the SDGs have been incorporated into our national agenda, and institutions such as the SDG support units and the parliamentary taskforce on SDGs have been established to mainstream the SDGs into our development planning. This is a very positive difference and will definitely be extremely helpful in accelerating progress on the SDGs.

The good thing about the SDGs is that they are clear, concise, time bound and measurable goals, which makes them a very useful framework for development policy. Moreover, both the SDGs and Vision 2025 are aligned to each other, which is instrumental in ensuring that our development plans are unified and streamlined, and we are moving in one direction together. At the same time, it is very important to look at inter-provincial disparities in order to understand our challenges better, so that we can adapt our approach to the issues that affect the economic and social lives of communities everywhere.
Role of Local Governments in Achieving SDGs – Ms. Shahnaz Wazir Ali, President, SZABIST

The SDGs are not a political or international agenda, they are our national development agenda. We must remember this and strive to achieve them, because they are for our own good.

The true parliamentarians of Pakistan are the local government councilors and local government is the key to prosperity in Pakistan, however, they need to be given appropriate powers and authority.

The major problems that plague our society are supply side issues, not demand side problems. The times when people were not aware of what is good for them are behind us; everyone wants good quality education for their children, and functional health facilities for their families. The problem is the availability of and access to these public services.

Rather than more advocacy and awareness creation, what we need is for district governments to provide supply side solutions to their communities. For this they need financial authority, institutional authority, and oversight and monitoring powers. For example, until the Basic Health Units are fixed, the health problems of the common people will not be solved. Local governments need to be empowered to take action against underperforming health units, and to help resolve other issues (such as lack of machinery).

Preventive Measures for Cardiovascular Disease – Major General Dr. Azhar Mahmood Kiyani, Executive Director, Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology

According to the World Health Organization’s Global Health Estimates, there were more than 0.4 million deaths from cardiovascular disease in Pakistan in 2015. Many of these deaths could have been prevented. Cardiovascular diseases are getting increasingly common in Pakistan, even among people under 30 years of age, which is a matter of grave concern. Our youth is getting increasingly susceptible to heart diseases, which is very worrying as they constitute a large part of our workforce.

While genetics also play a role in disease transmission, the primary reason for their heightened prevalence is a sedentary lifestyle and bad diet. Many cardiovascular complications, both large and small, can be avoided if we make some key lifestyle changes, such as reducing the amount of fatty food we eat, and exercising regularly.

A diet rich in fat causes fatty deposits to form in our arteries, which can trigger heart attacks. We should eat everything, but in moderation, and balance any oily meals we have with exercise to minimize the chances of disease. Smoking is another habit which increases the risk of cardiovascular disease. Once someone has had a heart attack, a portion of their heart tissue dies, causing permanent damage that affects our quality of life. Prevention is not only far easier than the cure, it is also much more cost effective, since cardiovascular procedures can be very costly.

We need to create more awareness about preventive measures at the grass-roots level, which will not only be better for the individual, but will also reduce the burden on public health facilities and hospitals. Local governments can play a key role in sensitizing the population about the steps needed to prevent a heart attack.

Local Governments and Quality Education – Mr. Mosharraf Zaidi, Founder and Campaign Director, Alif Ailaan

Under the current system, each province has adopted its own local governance structures. What is common though are the constraints local governments face in terms of both authority and finances. But local representatives can still play their part in the development of their communities, especially in ensuring the quality of education in their respective districts and municipalities.

The SDGs are not just concerned with school enrollment; they also address the quality of education we are imparting to our children, and that is what we all need to focus on as well. Local governments can help improve the quality of education by engaging fully in the public education system at all stages. They must conduct regular visits to the local schools and identify problems that hamper the process of quality learning for students. They must engage with students, teachers and parents alike, listen to their concerns, and try to address them.

Many of the problems in our schools are problems of governance, which can be ameliorated with active engagement and oversight by the government. Some districts like Mardan have had remarkable success through following this approach, and have been able to improve their educational outcomes significantly.

At the same time, local leaders should also engage with provincial governments and demand more support for their schools, financial and otherwise.
Session III – Focus Group Discussions with Local Government Representatives

The third session of the summit was comprised of focus group discussions. The participants were divided into six groups constructed using the Multidimension Poverty Index (MPI) to ensure that each group not only had representation from all four provinces, but also contained a mix of most and least developed districts/municipalities from each. Districts/Municipalities were ranked within each province, based on their MPI score, and then allotted to a group to ensure balance on provincial affiliation and deprivation in each group.

Each group was moderated by two moderators. Some specific questions were asked to each group, and the discussion largely revolved around them. However, discussions were not restricted to only those questions, especially when a representative highlighted an important issue which was not addressed in the list of prepared questions. At the end, each group selected a representative from among themselves to summarize the discussion they had during these sessions.

The list of FGD participants by group is attached as an annexure, and a detailed summary of the discussion is included in the next chapter of this report.
Focus Group Discussions

The issue of human development is gaining importance in public policy formulation because of continuous declining trends of major social development indicators in Pakistan. There are questions of responsibility and negligence along with authority and power to deliver basic functions.

At the planning level, there is no vertical integration due to either absence of local government institutions or intense centralized tendencies both at federal and provincial levels. Furthermore, no efforts have been made to improve inter-governmental relations for better planning, coordination and implementation of services. In addition to that the capacity of institutions, particularly local government institutions, is gradually deteriorating which is instigating irreversible distortion in the service delivery system. Finally, bad procedures of monitoring, lack of accountability, transparency and participation of people has not been ensured, which has resulted in inequitable and uneven development in the country.

Keeping in view all the negative aspects of service delivery functions, it was essential to understand the local government representatives’ views about the challenges and opportunities offered by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The elected representatives at the Local Government Summit were divided into six groups for Focus Group Discussion (FGD), to deliberate on the key human development challenges in Pakistan, to inform debate about major development impediments in their respective districts, highlight critical development needs, express their views about SDGs and their positive and negative aspects for the development of district, and deliberate on the nature of support mechanisms required and way forward for the SDGs. Another crucial objective of the FGD was to discuss lessons learned through sharing success stories made possible through adopting innovative approaches in service delivery functions.

Discussion Theme I – Importance and Relevance of SDGs for Local Government

The starting point of the discussion was why SDGs are important for local government. The participants believed that most of the sustainable development goals have relevance with the regular functions of local governments, such as poverty and hunger, education, health, clean drinking water, sanitation, economic well-being and employment or livelihood sources for people.

For poverty and hunger (Goal 1 and 2), the Mayor of Lahore city believed that it was impossible to tackle it at the local level because in some areas in Pakistan, particularly Sindh and Southern Punjab, agriculture is the only source of livelihood, but is not facilitated by government. So, the government should build infrastructure, industry and provide subsidized agro-farming methods to combat poverty and hunger. The quality education and good health goals (Goal 3 and 4) however were local government problems and could be achieved by implementing through local governments, because local representatives were much more aware of loopholes and hindrances that exist at the local level. They are therefore best placed to identify and recommend federal and provincial governments about area specific needs of schools and hospitals in the district.

A local level master plan is required to handle the issue of clean drinking water and sanitation (Goal 6). Since federal and provincial governments and international donor agencies have/are funding projects related to water and sanitation, local governments can agree to work under the supervision and coordination of international organizations, such as World Bank, UN and Asian Development Bank etc. To address gender inequality (Goal 5), local governments can be an effective institution through implementation of rules and regulations against harassment. At the grassroots level, awareness campaigns can be an effective tool in raising women rights and gender equality.

Similarly, many of the other SDGs and their related targets fall functionally into the purview of the local government as the most effective tier of government to address them. Experience has shown that in comparison to federal and provincial governments, local governments are more accessible, concerned and quick in responding to local needs. It is at the local level that people have direct contact with the government structures at an almost daily basis. Information is more readily available, and local authorities are more knowledgeable about the local situation than authorities that are far away from the grassroots level.

Two key points were raised by elected representatives in the context of the importance of SDGs for local government. Firstly, they were aware about the ‘responsibility’ of service delivery on them for local people. In the absence of local government for many years, local problems had increased considerably and the real challenge for local representatives now was to prioritize the delivery functions. In addition, the expectations and demands of local people have been raised after the reinstitution of local governments, without knowing the limitations posed by the current structure of local governance. It is imperative for local representatives to plan and utilize the existing local body system and explore the possibilities of solving problems within budgetary and administrative constraints. Emphasis was given to the vertical linkages among different tiers of government and the need to resolve communication and coordination gaps. Local governments should build strategy and establish coordination with federal and provincial governments.

SDGs are a local government problem and can be solved by the chairman of the district council. It depends on how s/he represents the area at the federal level and how s/he manages its problems. If someone has guts, s/he could achieve these goals.” (Chairman District Council, Qamber Shahdadkot).

“Strong and empowered district governments are necessary, but we have to survive in the existing circumstances and we should devise ways and means to optimally utilize the available powers (whatsoever we have) and resources for the benefit of the masses.” (District Nazim, Chitral).
SDGs are important for local governments since they are important for every person and place in the country. But implementation bottlenecks hinder the success of projects, and obstruct beneficial outcomes. It was suggested that pilot projects should be implemented at the union council level to assess limitations and shortcomings, and to test strategies that can produce desired results. For example, there are many government schemes such as the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) and Prime Minister Health Insurance Scheme that require improvements in targeting beneficiaries. It has been learnt from local people that many undeserving people are receiving benefits and exploiting the system and rights of poor people. Political patronage and nepotism are social evils that require strong local body institutions to combat them.

"It (SDGs) could be a local problem if we have the power and authority; for example, in our district there are number of industrial zones and factories that are polluting environment but we do not have the authority to stop them." (Mayor of Municipal Corporation, Gujranwala).

Discussion Theme II – Critical Development Impediments faced at the Local Level

Local Government representatives were asked to identify the most critical development impediments that they faced at the local level in serving their communities. They identified general issues faced by most local representatives, and also highlighted problems specific to their respective districts and municipalities.

Lack of proper health facilities, unsafe drinking water, and low quality education were the most common issues faced by local communities, as identified by local government representatives. Other prevalent issues included sanitation, waste disposal, and lack of road access. In addition, a number of representatives mentioned that electricity and gas provision were major issues faced by their communities. Nearly all local government representatives also stated that they had not been transferred the requisite administrative or financial authority by the provincial governments to be able to provide effective solutions to most of these development problems, and that this needed to change for their communities to prosper, and for local governments to perform their functions better.

Health is one of the most important public services, and is very closely tied to quality of life as well as to productivity. Provision of low-cost, basic health facilities is therefore paramount to any community’s development. Health related problems identified during the discussions included inadequate facilities at Basic Health Units (BHUs) and rural hospitals. This included buildings in deplorable conditions, as well as lack of proper and hygienic health equipment and machinery. Another major issue was access to health facilities, as there were very few facilities in some districts and people had to travel long distances to receive medical treatment treatment. This also discouraged people from getting proper care for their health issues. Besides material and physical resources, many local representatives also reported that there was a severe dearth of qualified human resources at public health facilities. Doctors and nurses were often absent, and many of them were not adequately trained to tackle emergencies.

"Washuk is one of the largest districts in Balochistan, but has a very sparse population. There is a severe lack of health facilities in the district, and there are no basic health units or hospitals accessible for people to visit to meet their health needs." (Chairman District Council, Washuk).

Water, especially clean drinking water, is vital for life and very closely linked to any community’s physical well-being. Ensuring that communities have access to clean drinking water was identified as a major problem by local government representa-

tives, and an area that they felt needed a lot of attention. This was an issue that was almost universal, and cut across all four provinces and both urban and rural districts. Many local representatives expressed that they were gravely concerned about the quality of drinking water available in their districts. They also expressed their frustration about their lack of administrative and financial authority to be able to resolve this issue for their communities.

"There is a dire need for clean drinking water and sanitation facilities in our community. Polluted water from other districts comes to Badin, and causes serious hazards for the environment, as well as for people’s health and livelihoods”. (Chairman District Council, Badin).

"I have the authority to install water collection points in my district, and faucets in the homes of my constituents, but who will ensure that the water that comes through those faucets will be clean? I have not been given the institutional or financial capacity to ensure clean water at the source. I feel like my hands are tied, and I am unable to serve my community as I should." (Vice Chairman District Council, Sanghar).

Education is another sector which needs special attention according to the local representatives. They raised significant issues in education including access to schools, inadequate and impoverished school infrastructure, teacher absenteeism, and lack of properly trained and motivated teachers. Most local government representatives from rural areas, especially in Balochistan, expressed that public education was either unavailable and inaccessible, especially for girls, or was of a very low quality.

"Public schools are few and far, not easily accessible, and children have to travel long distances to attend school, in an environment which is not always safe. The situation is even worse for girls. Moreover, there is also a serious problem of lack of teachers to teach our children." (Chairman District Council, Sherani).

Clean water, sanitation and management of solid waste were one of the other significant problems of communities, which needs special attentions. Both are closely linked to health, as well as to the environment. Sewerage and drainage systems were either not present, or were inadequate, and waste was being dumped into water bodies, which caused further complications and hampered the provision of clean drinking water. Solid waste management was also identified as an issue that was pervasive, and waste collection from households and its disposal were both inadequate, as described by numerous local government representatives. This was true for relatively urbanized and developed districts as well. However, the solutions are not straightforward and require better management, as well as financial and human resources.
“Cleanliness and sanitation are very important, and inextricably linked to other SDGs. We can mobilize resources from the private sector given unavailability of adequate public funds, but our district still needs technical support and guidance, and a feasible model for solid waste management.” (Chairperson District Council, Sialkot).

“There was virtually no existing solid waste management system in my district, which led to the accumulation of a lot of waste in streets and caused many health problems. Through our own initiative and local donations, we have deployed a waste management system which includes installation of large bins and retrofitting rickshaws with trolleys to collect waste and correctly dispose it. This has been very successful, and we are witnessing a decline in the incidence of diarrhea in our community as well.” (Chairman District Council, Gujrat).

Energy provision, particularly electricity, was also identified as a major impediment to development during the discussions. While electricity shortages have decreased in some areas, many representatives reported that their constituents still faced prolonged periods with no electricity. This was truer for rural areas, particularly in Balochistan.

“Electricity is still a major problem faced by communities living in my district. There have been times when there was no electricity in the district for as long as three months at a time.” (Chairman District Council, Sherani).

Besides development issues related to a particular sector (such as health or education), nearly all local government representatives stated that they felt that the provincial government still relied heavily on the district administration for service delivery, and local governments still lacked de facto authority to serve their communities in the best manner possible. They said that they were not given the resources to provide basic public services in their communities, and lacked the authority to hold the public departments responsible for providing most of these services accountable. This was a major theme in the discussion, and something that was acknowledged as the cause of much frustration among all local government representatives. Moreover, it was specifically pointed out that development could not just happen with cosmetic changes; giving local governments appropriate authority was paramount for success and the local government system would collapse if this was not done in an effective manner at the earliest.

“Forget getting funds to implement public service programs, we have not even been given the funds to keep our own offices running well. District council buildings are in dismal conditions since the system had been defunct for more than ten years. Nevertheless, we can find solutions for the lack of resources, but it is imperative that we have the institutional authority to be able to do our jobs.” (Chairman District Council, Khanewal)

“The Provincial Assembly’s core responsibility is legislation, not allocation and distribution of funds. But the dilemma is that all assemblies have kept resources in their own hands to enjoy prestige instead of empowering local elected governments to serve their communities. It has been three years since we have received a salary. As local government, i.e. union council and district council were established to distribute funds equally, therefore local government seeks delegation of powers from provincial government.” (Chairman District Council, Qilla Saifullah).

“Given the current state of affairs and the severe lack of control and power that has been divested to the local governments, the only kinds of programs we can actually implement are providing people with sewing machines or installation of hand pumps. Everything else is currently out of our purview due to the lack of funds and authority.” (Chairman District Council, Shaheed Benazirabad).

“We should be given the authority and funding to solve problems related to the SDGs. But in reality, power is devolved into fifteen sections such as health, education, and administration, etc. Moreover, the government itself makes and breaks the rules, such as first they assigned 30 percent budget for local bodies, and then cut it off to 21 percent. There is no check and balance on the projects implemented. These problems can be solved at local level unless we are assigned powers.” (District Nazim, Abbottabad).

Discussion Theme III – Coordination and Support Required from Provincial and Federal Governments

Federal government provides financial support to provincial government and local government seeks similar support from the provincial government. For a transparent process of financial transactions legal system needs to be change for effective service delivery through local government representatives, because the old District Coordination Officer (DCO) system still has powers to implement the strategies at the local system. This creates a conflict of interest between the district representatives and the provincial level departments. The unelected office bearers/bureaucracy are not willing to complete power sharing with the elected local body representatives, which creates hurdle to effectively serve the people at the district level.

“If provincial government does not transfer powers to the district governments, it shows their mistrust on public representatives. Lack of coordination between district administration (Bureaucracy) and the elected representatives is the major cause of the deprived state of affairs at district level. Lack of financial resources is also hampering the pace of development.” (Chairman District Council, Bhakkar).

“Appreciation is due to Minister PD&R for providing this opportunity which will help in removing inter-provincial difference. Local governments demand full empowerment, eradication of corruption, proper curriculum development, local level energy production (canal level Hydro power generation) and proper market mechanisms for the achievement of SDGs. To overcome financial constraints, UC level resource mobilization authority will be key for achieving SDGs. I will request the authorities that 50% of the district level revenue should be given to that district government.” (Chairman District Council, Vehari)

The districts need to develop a comprehensive plan and strategy. The absence of planning at district level is the central issue affecting the quality service provision. The technical expertise to develop such plans is also a challenge at local institutions. The knowledge of the local issue is the first step to solve the problems but with translating and finding solution of the problem this knowledge has no value. The local representatives viewed SDGs as an opportunity for local institutions to streamline and systemize the existing approaches for better service quality.
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Discussion Theme IV – Collective Way Forward for the SDGs

The role of political parties should be to improve human development indicators at local level through increase efficiency, endeavor to establish horizontal and vertical linkages, promote equity, ensure local community participation in the various stages of development and development of partnership with all stakeholders. Unfortunately, the local development agenda is not on high priority list of political parties. In a way, SDG is an opportunity for political parties to revisit their development vision and understand the role of local government in the effective implementation.

“It’s a great opportunity to local governments and their efforts and agenda are very positive only if it is materialized properly. The only issue is that government departments have no collective efforts and integration.” (Chairman District Council, Gujrat)

“Planning Departments should be setup at district level. Union council level Planning officials should be appointed at the union council. And Power should be devolved to the lower administration level.” (District Nazim, Upper Dir)

In addition to the vision of political parties, it is also difficult to accomplish much without the genuine support of provincial and federal governments, especially in developing institutional capacity. Lack of human and financial capacity is common in almost all the districts. Training and capacity building of local government staff under SDG projects is vital to improve efficiency and human and time cost saving.

“Our political parties should have a clear vision/realization that without strong local governments SDGs cannot be achieved. In the disturbed areas of Balochistan, government can ease that situation with the involvement of local government representatives; because the UC counsellor has more penetration and influence till the grassroots level. The stakeholder involvement should be ensured while formulating District level SDGs policy formulation.” (Chairman District Council, Pishin)

The current local government system in three out of four provinces has not given much fiscal space to the elected local government representatives. Nonetheless, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the district government can levy local taxes for resource mobilization and financing of the programs needed for human development. For instance, the District Nazim of Mardan shared his resource mobilization experience with the participants, where the district government has raised the user charge in health sector by only Rs. 20. These additional funds have been used to finance paramedic training of young graduate girls to deliver services at home for female patients. This strategy has also been helpful in addressing cultural sensitivity issues for female patients.

“Capacity building from grassroots level is important for the development of the country. Similarly, SDGs will make capacity building from local levels as is done here today.” (Muhammad Aslam Sheikh, Chairman, District Sukkur)

“Local governments have a strong bonding with public and they (elected local government representatives) are aware of the basic problems. So, SDGs should take initiatives by keeping local government on board. Unfortunately, there are some issues regarding authority of local governments. Therefore, local/district governments should be given an authority to take funding and make new contracts from various NGOs for new developments in their areas.” (Chairman District Council, Khanewal)

“In view of SDGs we should have authority and funding to solve problems. But in reality, power is devolved into fifteen sections such as health, education, and administration etc. Moreover, the government itself makes and breaks the rules such as firstly they assign the 30 percent budget for local bodies and then cut it off 21 percent. There is no check and balance of the projects held under the bureaucracy. These problems can be solved at local level if we are assigned powers.” (Chairman District Council, Abbottabad)

Adopting a uniform local government system by adopting the best practices in each district/province would eradicate several issues, especially those related to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities. However, one can never be too sure that one model fits all. A better inter-district coordination mechanism is required to adopt best practices and learn from bad experiences. Furthermore, inter-district coordination is essential to control several issues which have an overlapping impact on other districts, e.g., Badin district is facing serious environmental hazards due to the flow of contaminated and waste water from other districts into Badin district. Therefore, development of coordination among local institutions of other districts will also be a challenge for SDG implementation.

Discussion Theme IV – Collective Way Forward for the SDGs

There are critical accountability and transparency issues at the district level. Stakeholder’s involvement in district level planning for SDGs implementation/decision making will develop mechanisms for accountability and monitoring. At district level, proper accountability mechanisms must be designed to monitor and control the progress on the SDGs related schemes and projects.

It is highly recommended that the National Assembly should pass a bill to have uniform local government system in all the provinces. The functions that are better delivered at the local level should not be performed at the higher level. For instance, local government representatives expressed that if given powers to monitor the delivery functions of education, sanitation and health sector in SDG framework, there is a strong likelihood of achieving better results. They also said that similar events should also be planned for the DCOs of relevant district government staff to discuss the issues raised in this summit so that coordination and cooperation between local government elected representatives and administrative tier of the government (bureaucracy) can be improved. These summits would further increase the capacity of local government staff, as there are serious issues of technical, administrative and management capacity skills. This will increase the pool of trained staff at local level. If the right people are assigned the right job, all issues related to good governance can be solved, maintained some local representatives.

Sectoral priorities were also discussed in all six groups. All representatives were convinced that local governments should be
given the authority to perform some basic functions such as education, health, water supply, sanitation and road infrastructure. The limited functions of current local government system are restricting local representatives from effectively contributing to local development.

“The importance of hygiene and sanitation and its linkages with other SDGs targets and indicators must be understood at all levels. The district needs an effective model for solid waste management and capacity building. The initiative of resource mobilization should include the private sector as well.” (Chairperson District Council, Sialkot).

“The absence of solid waste management infrastructure is a major issue. The quality of water in the district is also low. The installation of UC level water filtration plants will improve the health related indicators of SDGs.” (Chairperson District Council, Toba Tek Singh).
Analysis of Pre-Summit Responses from Local Government Representatives

A questionnaire was sent to all the district council chairmen and mayors of cities prior to the summit. It was developed to capture the existing socio-economic situation in each district/city as well as identify needs for further development in different sectors in each district/city. Several questions were asked of each district/city representative, including (i) most prevalent means of livelihood; (ii) effectiveness in the provision of basic services by the government and private sector, as well as the dependence on the government sector; (iii) hurdles in the provision of basic needs; (iv) most pressing development needs; (v) reasons for disparities among regions/districts/UCs; and (vi) non-financial support required from different government and non-government stakeholders.

Participants

A total of 126 local government representatives from all over the country were invited to the summit, and each was also sent the pre-summit questionnaire. 75 representatives attended the summit, and 49 questionnaires were filled and submitted to the summit team. The proceeding analysis is based on these 49 responses, and Figure 1 shows the provincial distribution of responses received.

Most Common Means of Livelihood

Respondents reported the primary means of livelihood in their districts, based on their knowledge. A few reported two to three means and some reported up to eight means of livelihood. Figure 2 shows the overall distribution of means of livelihood across all districts. Based on the data obtained, the most common source of livelihood was agriculture (in 25.8% of districts). Many representatives also reported that people in their districts were working as laborers in other sectors (21.4%; mostly informal employment). Among other livelihood sources, self-employment and trade (17%) were also common, as were government employment (11.3%) and private sector employment (9.4%).
Each respondent was also asked to list the most important sectors in their district/city. Figure 4 shows the most important sectors for the local economy, as identified by the local representatives. Based on the data obtained, agriculture and industry emerged as the most important sectors in most districts. However, industrial sectors were overwhelmingly appreciated by the representatives for providing employment to the people in their area. Figure 5 shows the most important sectors identified by province. Agro-based industries were appeared to be more important to district economies in Punjab and Sindh, compared to the other two provinces. Agriculture and other non-agriculture industries had the most share in Baluchistan, while agriculture and the services sector was considered the most important sectors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Not all opportunities are always available at one place, therefore people often move to other areas to find jobs that match their interests and/or skillsets. 18 percent of surveyed representatives, mostly from big urban centers in Punjab, reported that most people in the district are able to find jobs in their own districts, while an overwhelming 82 percent believed that most people move out of the district to get employment (Figure 6). People generally tend to move to the bigger cities close to their village/town – for example, people from districts in Balochistan tend to move to Quetta; people living in districts near Islamabad and Rawalpindi seek jobs there; people move to Faisalabad, Sialkot, Multan, and Lahore to get jobs from rural districts in Punjab; while people from Sindh tend to move to Karachi and Hyderabad. While a higher degree of geographic mobility for better employment opportunities is considered a positive trend, a majority of people doing so it also indicates that the local economy/market is unable to create adequate opportunities matching the existing skillsets of the working population.

The government provides many basic facilities such as health and education in districts, using the funds it generates through taxation as well as borrowing. Local representatives were asked to rank the extent to which their respective district relied on the government for provision of various basic facilities, and how effective they felt the government was in providing them. The responses were recorded on a Likert scale, i.e., 1 – 5, where 1 signified the lowest and 5 signified the highest degree of reliance/effectiveness on public provision of basic facilities.

Figure 7 shows the degree of reliance on and effectiveness of the government in providing basic services across districts according to the respondents. There was a high degree of reliance on the government for the provision of basic facilities.
of basic services, particularly clean water, health, streets and sanitation, waste management, electricity, and roads. The degree of effectiveness was not at par with this however, and most district representatives reported a low level of effectiveness for the government in these services.

Reliance on the government for provision of education was relatively lower, and effectiveness was ranked higher than other sectors with a high degree of reliance. Government effectiveness in providing education was higher in Punjab than in other provinces, while effectiveness in clean drinking water, sanitation and waste management was the lowest despite much higher reliance on the government.

It was interesting to note that the degree of reliance on government was relatively high even for the employment generation and transport, which are generally easily and effectively provided by the private sector. This trend was found most significant in Baluchistan, followed by Punjab, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Provision of Basic Facilities – Public vs Private Sector Effectiveness

There is often debate on whether the public or the private sector is more effective at providing basic services to communities. The degree of perceived effectiveness may vary according to the relative demand and supply of quality products/facilities. Respondents were asked to rate both the private and public sector on a 5-point scale, where 1 signified the lowest and 5 signified the highest degree of effectiveness in the provision of basic facilities.

Contrary to expectations, local government representatives believed that public sector effectiveness in the education and health sectors was higher than the private sector. This was also true for other sectors such as roads, sanitation, waste management, energy, etc., which are generally considered public functions.

On the other hand, the private sector was considered more effective than the public sector in the provision of clean drinking water, transport and employment.

Problems faced by communities in public provision of basic facilities

Although nearly all the above mentioned basic services come under the domain of the government due to presence of inevitable market failures in these sectors, nevertheless, communities face several problems in availing these services. One of the major obstacles is lack of facilities due to financing and administrative problems. For instance, there is a lack of equipment and medicines at health facilities; emergency facilities are only available in large cities; teachers are absent from schools; teachers and students are not available to come to school even if there are schools in certain areas, etc. According to the local government representatives, many of these problems continue to exist due to a lack of local accountability and oversight for a long period of time in the absence of a devolution plan.

Similarly, there were several other problems mentioned by the local government representatives, including bad drainage system, especially after rain; waste management issues causing diseases; solid waste management and its disposal; and bad drinking water. All these issues are linked to ill governance which is partly associated with the lack of interest at local level as well as corruption and mismanagement at the grassroots level.

Besides the aforementioned problems, load shedding, ill maintained roads and problems faced by farmers due to non-existence of better market price are also significantly linked to the issue of lack of proper management. These problems can only be solved by devolution of powers should be done in a transparent way in accordance with strict accountability standards.

Significant Obstacles to Development

Local representatives were asked to list the four main obstacles to development they face, in ranked order. The four impediments that most representatives named were: (1) Financing, (2) Governance, (3) Access and (4) Human Capital. This means that as per the local elected officials, impediments in these four factors at the local level hinder development planning, and also make any development plan, even if it is well-crafted, harder to implement.

Obstacles to Development

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Financing  
Governance  
Access  
Human Capital
**Most Pressing Development Needs**

Although there is a history of many development plans and projects implemented in Pakistan, communities are still deprived of numerous basic facilities. Each respondent mentioned several development needs that they felt were most pressing for their district/municipality. Among them, education and health emerged as the most common development needs of local government representatives, followed by clean drinking water and roads, bridges, tunnels, transportation and local streets in the city/town/villages. These identified development needs were similar across all the provinces. Does this imply that a uniform policy across all provinces would work in addressing these needs? The answer is no. Every area has its own problems of education, health, sanitation, and infrastructure. Similarly, every problem has different solutions in each area according to the prevailing socio-economic and market conditions, financial and administrative constraints, and the infrastructure available in that area.

**Current Development Plans**

The 18th amendment devolved many sectors, which made provinces responsible for providing social sector services to communities. The most pressing needs mentioned above are therefore the responsibility of the provincial and local governments, with the federal government playing a coordination and facilitation role. Current development plans of local governments as described by surveyed local representatives were largely aligned with the most pressing development needs identified above. The top five priority areas in terms of development planning for local governments were health, education, clean drinking water, roads and sanitation.

**Difference in UCs in a District**

Not all UCs may be at par in terms of development within a district. Some may be more developed than others due to a variety of reasons. Local government representatives may therefore need to adopt different development approaches for different UCs.
within their districts, based on their current situation. Each respondent was asked whether they felt that all UCs in their district were equally disadvantaged, or if some were more disadvantaged than others. According to the data obtained, 49 percent of the local government representatives believed that all UCs in their district were almost at the same level of development, i.e., there was no major disparity among UCs in their district (Figure 11). Most of these responses were from districts ranked lower on the Multidimension Poverty Index (MPI).

Respondents who believed that some UCs were more disadvantaged than others in their district were also asked to identify reasons why they thought this was so. Unlike a previous question on significant impediments, where access to finance was identified as the foremost impediment for development, inequitable distribution of resources was the leading issue among the main reasons for disparity between different UCs of the same district. This discrepancy in resource allocation is partly due to the existence of villages in remote, hard to reach areas that are far from major urban centers.

Other reasons cited for intra-district disparities were politicians acting in their own vested interests and only focusing on certain areas, different resource endowments of towns/villages, and exposure to natural calamities.

Development in remote areas can be possible under the local government system because UC council chairman, Counselor member, youth member, women member and minority member are better workers to provide facilities.

Non-Financial Assistance from Stakeholders

Five stakeholders were identified, i.e., Federal Government, Provincial Government, Private Sector, International NGOs, and Local NGOs or Community Based Organizations, and local government representatives were asked what kind of non-financial support they hoped to receive from them to aid development in their constituencies. The results for the most common responses are shown below:

### Federal Government

- Improve Energy Availability
- Coordination and Cooperation among Different stakeholders and Local Government
- Empower Local Government

### Provincial Government

- Improve Education and Health
- Coordination and Cooperation among Different stakeholders and Local Government
- Empower Local Government
- Better Governance
Private Sector

- Generate Economic Activity
- Provide Employment Opportunities
- Invest in Education and Health

International Development Organizations/ INGOs

- Coordination and Cooperation among Different stakeholders and Local Government
- Investment in Education and Health
- Investment in Sanitation Schemes

Local NGOs and Community Service Organizations

- Awareness Campaigns on Different Social Issue, e.g., Health Hygiene, Safe drinking water etc
- Coordination and Cooperation among Different stakeholders and Local Government
- Investment in Education and Health
Post-Summit Feedback from Local Government Representatives

The objective of the Local Government (LG) Summit was to provide a brief introduction of the SDGs and understand the local context from the viewpoint of their effective implementation. This was the first summit organized at the national level, while the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform plans to convene a series of similar summits in the four provinces with provincial governments and local government representatives. To enhance the efficacy of subsequent events, feedback and comments from the local government participants were sought at the end of summit, and are summarized below.

Understanding and Significance of the SDGs

The participants were sensitized to the SDGs and their implications for local government development needs. Almost all participants were engaged in the process and they actively contributed their own experiences and suggested possible ways forward. The highlights of their understanding about the significance/importance of the SDGs and associated targets from this summit are as follows:

- “There were detailed discussions on the 17 goals of the SDGs and the issues surrounding them. Upon returning home, we will set our own targets and work towards the betterment of the people.” (Chairman District Council, Kech,).
- “The summit was good. It shows that the federal government wants to take some action. The importance of this summit is to take all the Nazims/Mayors/Lord Mayors to interact with each other to discuss different problems faced by each district.” (District Nazim, Tank).
- “This workshop has been extremely beneficial in understanding the significance and importance of the SDGs. We have been able to understand up to a level where we can work effectively in achieving these goals.” (Mayor Municipal Corporation, Lahore).

The participants also emphasized on the planning and implementation aspects of the SDGs framework and considered local government as an important part of the SDGs implementation. There were suggestions about empowering local governments and the need of authentic statistics at the district level. The participants thought it was vital for local governments to know the current situation and baselines of the SDG indicators in their districts.

Effectiveness of Summit in Highlighting the Role of Local Government in SDGs Achievement

The local government representatives unanimously appreciated the efforts of the federal government in bringing all the local leader from all over Pakistan and providing an opportunity to discuss their local problems, share success stories and lessons learnt. Pointing towards lack of administrative and financial powers, most local government representatives were adamant that they can play a crucial role in the implementation and achievement of the SDGs if the appropriate authorities are divested to them. The following are some highlights of their responses in this regard:

- “The idea (of the SDGs) is excellent and understandable but cannot be implemented without funds and powers.” (District Nazim, Abbottabad).
- “Local governments are the only level of government that have the knowledge and can share which city/village are facing what specific problems. The SDGs can be achieved when the local government is trusted with financial/political and administrative powers. The problems will then be solved.” (District Nazim, Tank).
- “Organizers as well as all the participants agree that the local government representatives coming from grass-roots level are the right people to implement these development goals, but that is only possible with more empowerment.” (Chairman District Council, Lodhran).
Areas of Improvement for Future Summits

The participants were requested to provide their inputs regarding the grey areas of the summit that how similar events can be made more productive in the future. The absence of provincial government representatives at the summit was highlighted as local governments have to work very closely with them in the implementation of the SDGs. The frequency of such events was also raised, and some participants suggested that such discussions must be held on a quarterly basis. Many also emphasized the need to involve union council representatives at future events. Representatives felt that the federal government should take the lead in the implementation of the SDGs and the appointment of a focal person in this regard would remove political bottlenecks. It was also pointed out that all these international goals may not have relevance with the local realities, so a genuine localization of the SDGs is essential. The following are some highlights of elected local government representatives:

“Representative of provincial governments should have been part of this summit. Also, representatives of Planning Commission should have been part of this work and should have noted the observations made by the elected local representatives” (Mayor Municipal Corporation, Lahore).

“Conducting divisional workshops – district workshops. Information & Statistics – figures should be provided to local government members” (Vice Chairman District Council, Okara).

“I feel that this workshop has played its parts in making us aware of the idea of development. Same kind of workshops should be conducted with the UC chairmen but after they are fully empowered and have the funds to achieve these goals.” (Chairman District Council, Vehari).

Accelerating Progress on SDGs and their Alignment with Local Development

Agenda 2030 requires the development of partnerships at all levels of the government. The level of coordination and support is key to these partnerships. In Pakistan, local development needs have increased with the continuous neglect by respective provincial governments, and the absence of vibrant and functional local governance institutions. This has also drained the existing capacity, both human and financial, at the local level, which further surges the pace of deterioration of economic, social and environmental infrastructure. For the SDGs, it is now imperative to take advantage of their latent potential to deliver services by applying local knowledge and mechanisms that are consistent with cultural and traditional needs. To accelerate the progress on the SDGs, local government representatives suggested the continuation of similar events at provincial and district levels. Area specific planning is highly desirable, and can only be done through involving the lower tier of local governance, i.e. union councils (UC) in the framework of the SDGs. Creating awareness and conducting training programs for UC chairmen will provide better results. Lastly, the ownership of the local people is essential for developing partnerships for the SDGs. The following are some statements of local representatives:

“It would be very useful to educate and train the UC chairmen because they are the people who are actually capable of solving problems at the local level.” (Chairman District Council, Vehari).

“It think it would be fruitful to organize future workshop at all levels, which includes tehsil, district and provincial level to achieve the SDGs.” (District Nazim, Shangla).

“It is very important to keep on doing work at district levels. We also have to work for capacity building of local governments. If possible we should make a Local Government Institute.” (Chairman District Council, Sukkur).

“It should be a frequent affair. Follow up and focused events will be very helpful in creating ownership.” (Chairman District Council, Narowal).

Usefulness and Productivity of the Summit

All efforts were made to make this summit more interactive and participatory. However, it is also important to understand the views of local government representatives to maximize the benefits of such events in the future. From organization viewpoint, the sequencing, usefulness and relevance of the components are all essential considerations. The participants have not only outlined a specific component that they wanted to be incorporated in future events. However, there were some suggestions for the improvement:

“Training sessions should be increased. In a one day workshop, long periods are less effective. Local heads can be trained through this kind of proper classes/workshops. Tax launching proposals workshops may be more effective for (augmenting) sources of revenue generation.” (Chairman District Council, Khanewal).

“The summit should be conducted at the provincial level with the Chief Minister. Moreover, subjects such as health, education & public health and engineering should be devolved to the district.” (Chairman District Council, Kech).

“I think such a meeting should end with some major announcements like giving autonomy and empowerment of these institutions otherwise it will be of no significant use.” (Chairman District Council, Lodhran).
Pre-2013 Neglect of Local Development Priorities

The views of local government representatives on the neglect of their local development needs by the provincial and federal governments prior to 2013 are important from the perspective of targeting less developed local areas. Respondents were therefore asked if they felt their district/city had been neglected in development prior to 2013 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the strongest agreement to the statement. 50% of the respondents chose not to answer this question. The percentage of the qualitative responses were calculated from the ranking of questions for the rest. The responses present a mix of agreement and disagreement, as 55% of the local government representatives fully agreed that their districts were neglected in development priorities before 2013 as opposed to 18% percent who fully disagreed (i.e. they perceived no neglect before 2013).
Conclusion and Way Forward

Pakistan has embraced the SDGs with a strong political will and a convincing development strategy, manifested in the Vision 2025 planning document that has been endorsed by both federal and provincial legislatures. The SDGs have been declared as the ‘national development agenda’ instead of as global development goals. The federal and provincial assemblies have also recognized the critical role that SDGs can play in transforming lives, particularly those of the most marginalized and disadvantaged. This localization of the SDGs is key, since a lack of national ownership was one of the biggest reasons why the previous global development mandate, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), failed dismally in the country.

While achieving the SDGs certainly requires a unified vision and consensus among the higher tiers of government, many of the goals and associated targets pertain to functions that can be best served by local governments, and are directly or indirectly linked to their daily work. This includes improved management of schools, better access to quality health facilities, provision of clean water, streets and sanitation services, and local security among others. Local governments cannot be seen as mere implementers of the agenda – they can be the catalysts of change, and the level of government best-placed to link these global goals with local communities. Unlike other tiers of elected governments, local representatives live in the same communities that they are elected to serve, and are therefore best placed to identify local development needs, as well as tailor effective ways to respond to them.

The objective of the Local Government Summit was to sensitize local representatives to the SDGs, initiate consultations with them as key partners in the achievement of the SDGs, and to jointly agree on a way forward on grassroots level development. It provided a platform for local representatives to discuss their needs and express their concerns regarding sustainable development in their communities, and generated a healthy, honest debate about the limitations of local government authority in the country, and the need to divest more powers from the provinces to districts and municipalities. Many representatives felt that they lacked the financial capacity and the institutional writ to serve the needs of their communities in a concrete manner. Some also expressed that they needed greater support from the national and provincial governments in developing the technical capacity to formulate development plans, and would benefit from training on the tools, mechanisms and strategies required to implement the SDGs effectively at the local level.

On the one hand, provincial governments need to give local elected representatives more freedom, and on the other, local representatives need to demonstrate their capacity to address local issues. A lot can still be accomplished if local representatives are dedicated to make a difference, and try to be inventive in the face of barriers. While the challenges faced by each district and municipality are diverse and unique, local governments must look to each other for inspiration and try to learn from each other’s successes and mistakes in making a currently weak system as effective as it can be.

The Summit ended on a very positive and encouraging note, with local representatives signing a declaration that welcomed the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 as a framework for transformative change, and called for national and provincial governments, international organizations, civil society and the academia to join them, and to foster new partnerships with local political leadership. They pledged their whole-hearted support for the SDGs and committed to devote all their energies and resources towards their realization.

The Local Government Summit was only the first step in a larger consultative process to involve the local tier of government in the development process, and to accelerate progress on the SDGs. It was the first time that elected local representatives from all four provinces of Pakistan were able to jointly discuss development needs and priorities, and learn from each other’s experiences.

The next step in this process is to take the dialogue to the provincial level, and organize consultations between each provincial government and respective local government representatives. This is key since many government functions related to the SDGs have been devolved to the provinces since the 18th amendment, and provinces have the most resources and authority for implementation under the current system. It is also essential for each provincial government to engage directly with local governments since each province has designed its own system of local governance with varying degrees of local autonomy, and a national level discussion can only serve the agenda so far. The federal government must provide a vision, and serve as the coordinator and facilitator of the development process, while provinces and local governments take the lead on localization and implementation. These consultations will further solidify the partnership between the three tiers of government, and propel progress on achieving the SDGs and realizing the vision for development that has eluded the country so far.
# Agenda

**Local Government Summit on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**  
**Thursday, March 9, 2017**

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<td>Registration</td>
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<td>10:00-10:05</td>
<td>Recitation from Holy Quran</td>
<td>Dr. Haroon Sarwar</td>
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<td>10:05-10:15</td>
<td>Welcome Address</td>
<td>Dr. Asma Hyder, Member, Social Sector, Ministry for Planning, Development and Reform</td>
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<td>10:15-10:25</td>
<td>Opening Remarks by UN Representative</td>
<td>Mr. Indrika Ratwatte, Resident Coordinator (Acting), United Nations Pakistan</td>
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<td>10:25-10:40</td>
<td>Opening Remarks by Summit Chair</td>
<td>Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Planning, Development &amp; Reform</td>
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<td>10:40-11:20</td>
<td>Group Photo / Tea Break</td>
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<td>11:20-11:50</td>
<td>Presentation on Cardiovascular Diseases and Preventive Measures</td>
<td>Maj. Gen. Dr. Azhar Mahmood Kayani, Executive Director, Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology</td>
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<td>11:50-12:00</td>
<td>Introduction to SDGs</td>
<td>Dr. Asma Hyder, Member, Social Sector, Ministry for Planning, Development and Reform</td>
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<td>12:00-12:20</td>
<td>SDGs and Role of Local Governments</td>
<td>Ms. Shahnaz Wazir Ali, President SZABIST</td>
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<td>12:20-12:30</td>
<td>Education and SDGs</td>
<td>Mr. Mosharraf Zaidi, Founder and Campaign Director, Alif Ailaan</td>
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<td>12:30-01:00</td>
<td>Q&amp;A Session</td>
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<td>Lunch &amp; Prayer Break</td>
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<td>02:00-02:05</td>
<td>Local Government, Devolution and SDGs</td>
<td>Mr. Zafar ul Hassan, Chief, Poverty Alleviation and SDGs Section, Ministry of Planning Development and Reforms</td>
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<td>02:05-04:00</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
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<td>04:00-05:00</td>
<td>Group Presentations/Feedback</td>
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<td>05:00-05:15</td>
<td>Closing Remarks</td>
<td>Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Planning, Development &amp; Reform</td>
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<td>05:15</td>
<td>Vote of Thanks</td>
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Picture Gallery

Local Government Summit on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
# List of Participants

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<td>Sardar Ameer Muhammad Khetran</td>
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<td>Mr. Fida Hussain</td>
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<td>Malik Usman Khan Achakzai</td>
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<td>District Member</td>
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## List of Participants

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# Group Composition for Focus Group Discussions

## Group A

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Local Government Summit on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Thursday, March 9, 2017

Pre-Summit Form

Name: ____________________________ District/Town: ____________________________ Province: ____________________________

Local Economic Profile:

Q1. What are the most common means of livelihood in your district? (Name the five most important, in ranked order).

1. ____________________________
2. ____________________________
3. ____________________________
4. ____________________________
5. ____________________________

Q2. What industries/sectors are most important to your local economy? (Name the five most important, in ranked order).

1. ____________________________
2. ____________________________
3. ____________________________
4. ____________________________
5. ____________________________

Q3 (a). Are most people able to get jobs in the local district?

Yes
No

Q3 (b). If No, which districts/cities do they migrate to most often to find jobs?
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Provision of Basic Services:

Q4. To what extent do you think your district depends on public provision of the following basic services? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 signifying the highest level of dependence.

(a) Education 1 2 3 4 5
(b) Health 1 2 3 4 5
(c) Clean drinking water 1 2 3 4 5
(d) Roads 1 2 3 4 5
(e) Streets 1 2 3 4 5
(f) Sanitation 1 2 3 4 5
(g) Waste management 1 2 3 4 5
(h) Energy - Electricity 1 2 3 4 5
(i) Energy - Cooking/Heating 1 2 3 4 5
(j) Transport 1 2 3 4 5
(k) Employment 1 2 3 4 5

Q5. How effective is the government in providing these basic services in your district? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 signifying the highest level of effectiveness.

(a) Education 1 2 3 4 5
(b) Health 1 2 3 4 5
(c) Clean drinking water 1 2 3 4 5
(d) Roads 1 2 3 4 5
(e) Streets 1 2 3 4 5
(f) Sanitation 1 2 3 4 5
(g) Waste management 1 2 3 4 5
Q6. How effective is the private sector in providing these basic services in your district? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 signifying the highest level of effectiveness.

(a) Education
(b) Health
(c) Clean drinking water
(d) Roads
(e) Streets
(f) Sanitation
(g) Waste management
(h) Energy - Electricity
(i) Energy - Cooking/Heating
(j) Transport
(k) Employment

Q7. What major problems does your community face in relying on the government for the provision of these basic services? Please be as specific as possible.

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Local Development Needs:

Q8. In your opinion, what are the most pressing development needs in your district? (Name the five most important, in ranked order).

1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________
4. __________________________
5. __________________________

Q9. Which of the following general issues do you think has held your district back the most? Please rank from 1 to 4/5, with 1 being the most serious/difficult to overcome.

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<td>Financing</td>
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<td>Human Capital</td>
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<td>Others</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q10. What are the top priority areas in the current development plan for your district? (Name the five most important, in ranked order).

1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________
4. __________________________
Q11. Are these impeding factors uniformly spread across your district, or are some UCs at a greater disadvantage than others?

1. All UCs are equally disadvantaged
2. Some UCs are at a greater disadvantage than others

Q11 (a). If some UCs are at a greater disadvantage, what do you think the primary reasons for this are?

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Q12. What kind of non-financial support do you think your district requires from the following stakeholders to overcome these development impediments? Please be as specific as possible in your responses.

(a) Federal government:
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
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(b) Provincial government:
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(c) Private Sector:
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(d) International development organizations/NGOs:
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(e) Local development organizations/NGOs:
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Local Government Summit on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)  
Thursday, March 9, 2017

Post-Summit Feedback Form

Q1. How well do you understand the significance/importance of the sustainable development goals and associated targets after attending this workshop?

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

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Q2. How effective do you think this workshop was in orienting you to the SDGs and highlighting the role of local governments in their achievement?

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Q3. How do you think this workshop could have been improved and made more productive for you? Please be as specific as possible.

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Q4. Do you think it would be useful to organize further workshops at the provincial or district level to better align local development to the SDGs and accelerate progress?

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Q5. Please describe any components that you think such a workshop must have in order to be most productive and useful for you.

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Q6. Do you feel your district has been neglected in development priorities prior to 2013? Rank it on a scale of 1-5. Rank 1 if you do not agree and rank 5 if you fully agree.

1  2  3  4  5
Press Release

Local governments urged to help achieving SDGs

March 9, 2017

ISLAMABAD, Mar 9 (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms Ahsan Iqbal Thursday said the role of local governments was pivotal to achieving Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations for all its member countries.

Addressing mayors of local governments of all districts of the country here at a Summit on SDGs, the minister said the representatives could be helpful in expediting the implementation process of SDGs.

The primary objective of this seminar was to initiate a dialogue on the prospects of SDGs at local level and to develop coordination and support mechanisms for SDGs among all three tiers of the government.

The minister said he would contact the chief ministers of all four provinces for cooperating with the local government’s representatives in this regard.

The role of local governments, he said had become critical in SDG achievement, especially from the perspective of identification, planning, implementation, monitoring and oversight.

The participation of the local population in their areas in the identification of local needs, and subsequently planning and implementation is essential, and needs to be ensured, the minister added.

He said local communities ought to be the “real beneficiaries” of the SDGs, and steps needed to be taken to increase their voice in the development planning and implementation process.

The minister added that Pakistan was among the least developed countries in term of social sector development, therefore the present government had taken a number of measures for the development of various social sectors including health, education, environment and poverty eradication.

Ahsan Iqbal said after 18th constitutional amendment, the responsibilities and functions of provincial governments had increased substantially especially in the social sector.

He asked the local government representatives to also ensure good governance in their respective areas to improve the performance in public sectors.

The UN SDGs are an outcome of contentious deliberations of all member States that have been ratified by Head of States of the countries on September 25 to 27, 2015.

As an international development framework, the SDGs offer a diverse opportunity to transform the national, regional and local development framework and planning.

The 17 goals and 169 targets of SDGs call for theoretical and conceptual clarity to design a plausible implementation plan for the next 15 years.

In June 2016, the UN Statistical Commission proposed approximately 241 SDG indicators for Pakistan to review the progress at the national and global level.

These indicators will be tracked for monitoring progress at regional, national and sub-national levels.

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Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal says the goal of sustainable development can be achieved through maximum inclusiveness and equitable distribution of resources.

He was addressing the Local Government Summit on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) held in Islamabad on Thursday.

He said the Government has focused on engaging all state institutions, the civil society and media in its efforts towards SDGs.

The Minister said the elected representatives at Federal, Provincial and local levels are the most important means for passing on fruits of development to the masses.

He said well integrated policies, better coordination among different tiers of Government and continuity of development policies is the key towards a prosperous Pakistan.

Ahsan Iqbal said the unplanned policies of the past have cost the country a huge loss by dismantling the state’s institutional network.

He said in the present age of digitalization and knowledge revolution the nations with maximum focus on building, innovating and grooming of their human resource will survive in the race of fast development.

He said it is the foremost duty of the elected Governments to ensure enabling environment for the best utilization of skills and creative potentials of the people.

The Summit was attended by local Government representatives from all the four provinces.

Ahsan Iqbal called upon them to put forth their recommendations about their roles in the implementation of SDGs.

He said today’s Summit is a reflection of will and motivation of all the elected representatives to work for the achievement of these Goals.

The Minister particularly appreciated the elected local representatives from Balochistan who came in large numbers.
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