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Editorial

Honourable Members and Dear Readers,

The month of Nov., 2021 saw the team of Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) hectically contributing in research, legislative, training and public outreach services for the Members of National as well as Provincial legislatures. As envisioned by the Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan/President of PIPS Board of Governors Mr. Asad Qaiser, the Institute hosted a comprehensive day-long seminar on Situation in Afghanistan: Prospects and Challenges on Nov., 18, 2021. Seasoned MPs, academics, area experts and journalists / anchorpersons joined as panelists which was attended by Hon Members of National Assembly and Senate Foreign Affairs Committees, experts and think tanks, civil society and students. Syed Fakhar Imam, Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research presided over the inaugural session.

PIPS also organized a Roundtable on Education on Nov 11, 2021 for Standing Committee on School Education, Provincial Assembly of Punjab, on girl child education in partnership with Civil society. The 8th National Parliamentary Development Course NPDC for officers in BS17-18 also commenced at the Institute. A national workshop on Human Trafficking was held on Nov 17-18, 2021 with the support of IP5 EU project run in consortium by PIPS and GIZ. A delegation of Development International Alternatives DAI led by their CEO Mr. Kent Piper also visited the Institute on Nov., 2021.

This Issue of the PIPS Parliamentary Research Digest includes analytical articles on “SDG 1: Ending Poverty in All Its Forms” – How Can Engagement with SDG 1 Help?”, a review of Pakistan’s achievements regarding SDG 1, The Glasgow Climate Pact as well as a set of way forward/recommendations of the seminar on Afghanistan Today: Prospects and Challenges, and the roundtable with Standing Committee of Provincial Assembly of Punjab, respectively. Please contact us for any feedback on the PIPS Parliamentary Digest in addition to accessing any of PIPS technical assistance at: research@pips.gov.pk.

Muhammad Rashid Mafzool Zaka
Director General (Research)



Meeting of Honourable Mr. Asad Qaiser, Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan / President PIPS BoG with PIPS leadership, September 15, 2021



Visit of DAI delegation led by Mr. Kent Piper, CEO DAI at the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services, Friday, November 10, 2021



From Left to Right: H.E. Sardar Muhammad Shokaib, Charge d'Affairs Embassy of Afghanistan, Honorable Senator Lt Gen. (Retd.) Abdul Qayyum, Mr. Saleem Safi, Anchorperson, Honorable Senator Ms. Samina Mumtaz Zehri, Honorable MNA, Ms. Zahra Wadood Fatemi and Honorable Senator Dr. Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur attending Seminar on Situation in Afghanistan: Prospects and challenges, Thursday, November 18, 2021

ANALYSIS**“Ending Poverty in All Its Forms” – How Can Engagement with SDG 1 Help?****Haris Gazdar**

Director, Collective for Social Science Research

1. Introduction

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a comprehensive charter agreed by members of the United Nations in 2015 for the freedom of individuals from extreme deprivation and exploitation by 2030.¹ It follows the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which were agreed in 2000 and set targets for 2015. The seventeen SDGs, taken together, cover all significant dimensions of human well-being, today and into the future and offer a mechanism for holding states and the global community responsible for delivering on those dimensions. They include areas such as food security, health, education, access to clean water, social equality, economic inclusion and sustainability. Each of the SDGs, in turn, consists of several facets of well-being within any given dimension and these are then expressed with reference to specific indicators and sources of data. Within this elaborated framework of goals and indicators, countries specify national targets.

Aim of the paper: *Do the SDGs make a difference? And if so, how? How do political actions and policy choices relate to the target indicators? What do countries like Pakistan need to do to meet the targets they have set for themselves? And what will this actually mean for their citizens? This article attempts to address some of these questions by examining SDG 1 titled “ending poverty in all its forms everywhere”. The Article begins by trying to untangle some of the concepts, methods and data which lie behind indicators under SDG 1 and the relationship between SDG 1 and other SDGs and their indicators. This paper also offers a review of trends with respect to some of these indicators in Pakistan and the question of the role of a framework such as the SDGs in leading change. The article concludes with some observations and questions about how the debate around SDGs in general and SDG 1 in particular might help to shape the policy discussion and political debate in Pakistan.*

2. Concepts, methods and data

The association of deprivation with the inadequacy of monetary wealth or income became strong with the rise and domination of a capitalist market economy. Pre-capitalist societies identified poverty not simply as an outcome but a process. A population might be vulnerable to starvation due to crop failure or war and a person might be vulnerable to indebtedness, dependence and servitude through illness, misfortune or loss of political status. Entire populations might be made vulnerable to hunger and servitude through war, invasion and subjugation. The ascendance of capitalist market economies increasingly commodified and monetized resources including labor. Money income became an important measure of well-being, since what a person needed to or

¹Sustainable development goals, “Goal 1: Ending poverty in all its forms everywhere,” <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/poverty/>

wanted to consume had to be bought using money and his/her labor was remunerated in terms of money wages.

Many economists found the idea of a unique money-based measure of well-being to be simple, intuitive and even liberating. An individual could choose how to spend his/her money to optimize on one's own welfare. And policy could focus on creating conditions in which one could make optimal choices without harming others. The focus on money incomes also resonated with the popularity and then virtual hegemony of the idea of gauging the health of an economy through national income accounting.

Of course, even in most capitalist market economies academics, economists and policy-makers alike understood the limitations of a money-based approach to deprivation. Public health and hygiene, schooling, child hunger and care for the ailing and elderly were generally addressed directly through social provisioning rather than through income supplements. Moreover, in countries like Pakistan, there continued to be large subsistence elements alongside growing market economies. Even as the commodification of resources and labor continues apace, the understanding that money-based measures of well-being are incomplete, inadequate and often misleading gained ground in academic debate and policy discourse. The scholarship of Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen and his colleagues on these matters found expression in the 1980s in the UN system in the form of the idea of a Human Development Index (HDI) through the efforts of Dr. Mahbub-ul-Haq.

The key takeaways of Sen's contribution in this area are that many dimensions of human well-being can and should be measured in their own right, the search for a perfect proxy for well-being is futile and that individuals and collectives will have different reasons, under various contexts and moments in time, to value a range of "capabilities and functions". The means through which individuals will attain these capabilities and functioning will also vary in time and space and markets will generally represent only one (small) part of those means. In a nutshell, the quest for empirical measures of human well-being will remain ongoing business, it will and should be shaped by institutions and politics and we ought to be looking out for many different indicators across dimensions to better understand what has happened and to talk about what is to come.

The SDGs like the MDGs before them are true to these insights about measuring human well-being and deprivation. Unlike the HDI which compounds different elements of well-being into one composite indicator, the goals track progress against several indicators. MDG 1 (Eradicate Extreme Hunger and Poverty) focused on income poverty, employment and hunger – three elements of well-being which in most countries are associated with monetary deprivation. Other MDGs covered aspects of deprivation and well-being mostly not directly associated with money income. The SDGs cover all of the ground of the MDGs and added other important elements. Hunger and work moved, for the most part, to SDG 2 and SDG 8, respectively.

3. Indicator trends in Pakistan

SDG 1 retains the indicator for income-based measurement of poverty – the proportion of people living below a money-based poverty line.² SDG 1.2 also requires halving “the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions”. This may include aspects of wellbeing and poverty such as education and health also being tracked in other SDGs. Pakistan’s national framework for SDGs has adopted two indicators under SDG 1.2.³ The first is the reduction of the headcount ratio of poverty or HCR (proportion of population living below the national poverty) from 29.5% in 2015 to 9% in 2030. The second is a reduction in the Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) from 38.8% to 19%. This combines indicators in education, health and living conditions (including water, sanitation and housing).⁴ Both HCR and MPI are estimated using household survey data. Most of the elements of the MPI would appear in indicators for other SDGs too.

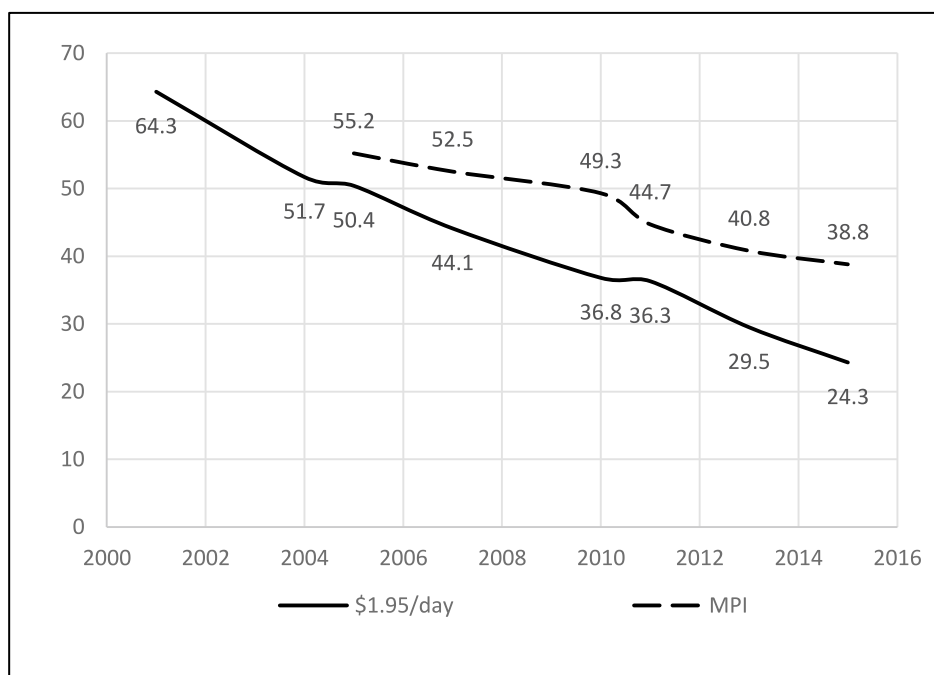


Figure 1 Trends in poverty indicators

² “By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day”, SDG 1.1.

³ Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform Pakistan (MoPDR), *Summary For The National Economic Council, Sustainable Development Goals National Framework* (Islamabad: Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform, 2018); Government of Pakistan, *Pakistan’s Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for SDG, Voluntary National Review* (Pakistan: Government of Pakistan, 2019).

⁴ “Multidimensional poverty in Pakistan,” available at: <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/pakistan/docs/MPI/MPI%204pager.pdf>; Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform, OPHI, UNDP, *Multidimensional poverty in Pakistan* (MoPDR, OPHI, UNDP) (<https://www.undp.org/content/dam/pakistan/docs/MPI/Multidimensional%20Poverty%20in%20Pakistan.pdf>)

Source: World Bank Databank and UNDP

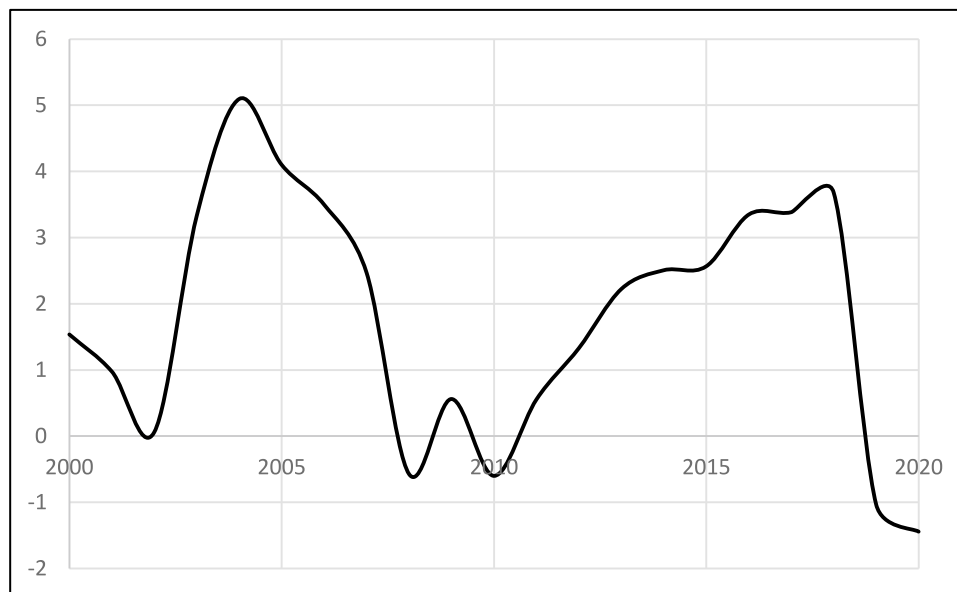


Figure 2 GDP per capita growth (annual %)

Source: World Bank Databank

Figure 1 shows the trend in the two SDG 1 poverty indicators in Pakistan from around 2000 onwards. The headcount ratio of poverty using the national poverty line halved in the 10-year period preceding the adoption of the SDGs. Its continued and steady decline since 2000 despite wide fluctuations in the growth rate of the economy (Figure 2) and no significant trends with respect to income distribution⁵ is both remarkable and puzzling. If the period since 2000 is indicative of how the headcount ratio of poverty might behave, Pakistan ought to be able to achieve its target of reducing HCR to 9% by 2030, virtually regardless of its performance with respect to economic growth and income redistribution.

The headcount rate using the MPI has also registered a steady but less rapid decline in the same period. The rate of improvement will need to accelerate if this indicator is to achieve its target of 19%. Two-thirds of the weight of this indicator comes from the uptake of education and health services while the remaining third one comes from living conditions such as water, sanitation, fuel source and housing. The decline in MPI poverty from 2005 to 2015 was driven in large part by improvements in these living conditions.⁶ This element of the MPI is more likely to be driven by private income than indicators for the uptake of public services. This finding is in line with the decline in the headcount ratio of income-based poverty.

Other indicators under SDG 1 are mostly about the outreach of government to those vulnerable to income poverty (SDG 1.3), equitable and rights-base access to economic resources (SDG 1.4) and

⁵ The Gini coefficient went from 30.4 per cent in 2001 to 32.6 per cent in 2015. The share of income of the lowest income quintile hovered around 9 per cent throughout this period – World Bank Databank.

⁶ Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform, OPHI, UNDP, *Multidimensional poverty in Pakistan*

sustainable and sound policy frameworks (SDG 1A and SDG 1B) for poverty reduction. So while the SDGs framework does not elaborate a theory of change, SDGs 1.3, 1.4, 1A and 1B are indicative of causal or intermediate factors which might lead to improvements in headline indicators under 1.1 and 1.2.

Pakistan's SDGs framework, however, does not include any significant engagement with causal and intermediate factors. SDG 1.3 refers to the establishment and extension of social protection systems for 'substantial' coverage and Pakistan set itself a target of increasing the coverage of its systems from 29% to 70% of the population. It is not clear in the framework document what accounts for coverage in the baseline and how this might more than double. SDG 1.4 is about equal rights to economic resources including public services, land, natural resources and financial services. Pakistan has not indicated national indicators, baselines or targets in this area. SDG 1A requires progress towards effective and sustainable resource mobilization and Pakistan has chosen to interpret this as a call for increasing budgetary allocations to poverty-related programmes and essential services.

In a nutshell, Pakistan appears to have done well with respect to reducing income poverty – to the extent that existing data series provide an unbiased picture of trends. This improvement is reflected in both the headline indicators under SDG 1 – headcount poverty ratios using, the national poverty line and the MPI respectively. If these trends were to continue, Pakistan has a high probability of achieving its targets under SDG 1.2. The causal and intermediary factors leading to this change are not clear and have not been analyzed. While the beginnings of a social protection system (as required under SDG-1.3) were established in 2008 and this might have protected the poor during periods of low or negative economic growth, it is not clear how it might have led to a steady decline in the headcount ratio. Of the other intermediary and causal factors – equitable rights to resources (SDG 1.4), sustainable resource mobilization (SDG 1A) and a policy framework (SDG 1B) – there were few conspicuous changes.⁷

4. Will SDGs make a difference?

Evidence on the potential impact of commitments such as the SDGs is mixed. Development trends are driven by a complex interplay of economic, political and social factors and it is challenging to attribute any change to agreements which are not even binding. Studies of the impact of the MDGs have argued that we should be looking not for 'before, after' changes in levels, but whether and to what extent improvements in relevant indicators underwent changes of pace.⁸ It was found that the MDGs may have contributed to the acceleration of a range of well-being indicators – particularly those relating to education and health and particularly in low income countries in sub-Saharan Africa. No impact was found for middle income countries. What is less well understood is how

⁷ The only significant change with respect to the policy or governance framework were the 18th Amendment and the 7th NFC award which increased provincial responsibility, accountability and resources for public services.

⁸ John W. McArthur and Krista Rasmussen, *Change of Pace: Accelerations and Advances during the Millennium Development Goal Era* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 2017) https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/global_20170111_change_of_pace.pdf

precisely the MDGs might have influenced acceleration. One speculative answer is that in countries with relatively low baselines and a large donor footprint (compared with national budgets), MDGs may have helped in prioritizing certain social investments yielding results.

In the case of SDG 1 in Pakistan, achieving the target of a reduction in the headcount ratio of the national poverty line to 9% by 2030 may not require a change of pace at all. As shown above, the headcount ratio has more than halved in the last ten years despite unstable economic growth. Reducing the headcount ratio using the MPI may require some acceleration over current trends. Given that we know relatively little about factors driving the trend with respect to income poverty, any policy intervention for accelerating improvements with respect to the MPI headcount will need to rely on accelerating the uptake of education and health services.

The uneven impact of MDGs across sectors, income levels and regions holds important lessons for the effectiveness of SDGs in Pakistan and countries like it. The fact that middle-income Asian countries appear not to have benefited greatly from the MDGs agenda is not because they lagged behind others. On the contrary, many of them had already achieved accelerated improvements in key MDGs target areas. They continued along that path and did not require or make use of the additional boost provided by the MDGs agenda. The sub-Saharan Africa region had a different story. Following a period of rapid development and growth in the 1960s and 1970s in the wake of their national liberation struggles many countries experienced the 1980s as a 'lost decade for development', burdened by adverse world markets and debt crisis.⁹ This became worse in the 1990s as state capacity was challenged and health systems collapsed in the face of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in many countries. The MDGs offered an opportunity – in terms of political commitment and policy direction – of a region-wide resetting of the agenda. And the evidence suggests that this opportunity was taken.

5. Policy and politics

The significance of SDGs will be lost if we are unable to get to the essence of the opportunity they offer with respect to the changes we want to see. As the experience of the MDGs shows, the real impact of such goal-setting is in those areas where we see lags currently and where acceleration is required. Taking Pakistan's engagement with SDG 1 as an illustrative example, here are some issues for policy and politics.

The choice of indicator should not, wittingly or unwittingly, steer us towards the lazy path. Pakistan's targets with respect to SDG 1.2 are not challenging, given current trends with respect to the headcount rate of income poverty. Rather, this is a moment to pause and reflect on whether and to what extent the indicator and the data available for tracking progress are up to the task. The steady decline in the headcount ratio of income poverty, despite uneven economic growth and lack

⁹ Hans Wolfgang Singer, "The 1980s: a lost decade—development in reverse?" In: *Growth and external debt management* (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 1989).

of progress with respect to redistribution, needs to be examined more critically than it has been, if we are to remain true to the intent behind SDGs.

There is no point selecting targets which will be achieved regardless of policy effort and certainly no value in placing undue weight on improvements we do not fully comprehend. There is a need for a careful analysis of what is driving the indicator, to make corrections where necessary and also to draw genuine lessons for policy if the trends are found to be robust. If it is found that we are doing something right, without yet knowing what it is, it will be good to uncover it and to do more of it in other areas of concern. If we find that the indicator and the data we use to track it are not quite right we should fix them, or look for other indicators which are truer to our intent of reducing deprivation.

SDG 1 also offers the opportunity for a proper engagement with the range of causal and intermediary factors behind poverty reduction. How should we think about equitable and rights-based access to public and economic resources? What is the political economy of access to land, natural resources, finance and public services? What is the current situation, how has it changed in the recent years and how might it change further in favour of poverty reduction in the coming decade? What are feasible pathways for interactions between economic, social and political realms for change to happen and what might be the role of legislation and policy-making at different tiers of government? Who would be the key stakeholders and how will they be engaged?

SDG 1 can provide similar openings for a pro-poor discussion on sustainable public finances and on reforms in governance and policy frameworks. What is a realistic trajectory for raising tax-GDP ratios in Pakistan in the period covered by the SDGs? What will be the guiding principles of fiscal reforms which can deliver the reduction of “poverty in all its dimensions”? What are the various instruments available in our democratic system for making credible commitments with respect to social protection and poverty reduction expenditures? What further reforms do we require to strengthen the achievements of the 18th amendment and to ensure that there is capacity in government to deliver on commitments made to the people and to the global community?

A third of the way into the SDGs period, there is still time to utilize the space for fostering policy and political debate, for realistic but challenging targets and for a lively debate on causal and intermediary factors, constraints and ways forward. The SDGs can be used to reset the agenda for reform as was done through the MDGs for sub-Saharan Africa. This might be a more productive use of the SDGs than any combination of self-congratulatory box-ticking and lament depending on numbers attained or not a decade from now.

SDGs and Pakistan

A Review of Pakistan's Achievements on Goal 1: No Poverty

SDGs Desk
PIPS Research Wing

GOAL 1: NO POVERTY

1. General statistics

- i. Pakistan's Human Development Index was valued 0.557 (Low human development category) out of 1 for the year 2019 and had ranked 154th out of 188 countries.¹
- ii. Expenditure on pro-poor sectors during 2019-20 amounted to Rs. 3,447.35 billion which was 8.3% of GDP (provisional figures).²
- iii. Expenditure on pro-poor sectors in 2016-17 stood at 9.5% of GDP, 9.2% of GDP in 2017-18, while slightly dropped to 8.0% of GDP in 2018-19.
- iv. In Pakistan, almost 4 million people moved out of poverty over 5 years counting from 2015.³
- v. Intensity of poverty deprivation stands at 51.7% in 2017-18.
- vi. Population in severe multidimensional poverty stands at 21.5% and population vulnerable to multidimensional poverty stands at 12.9% in the year 2018-19.
- vii. Pakistan is committed to reducing poverty from 24.3% to 19% by 2023, while reducing the multidimensional poverty headcount from 38.8% to 30% over the same period.⁴

2. Health specific general statistics

- viii. Cumulative health expenditures by the federal and provincial governments during FY 2019 increased to Rs. 421.8 billion from Rs. 416.5 billion last year showing a growth of 1.3%. As percentage of GDP, it was 1.1% in the FY 2019.⁵
- ix. Annual health budget has been continuously less than 1% of the GDP since a decade.⁶
- x. 27.7% of the overall population is deprived of health, 41.3% is deprived of education and 31.1% of the overall population is deprived of proper standard of living.⁷

¹ United Nations Development Programme, "Human Development Report 2020: The Next Frontier Human Development and the Anthropocene," (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2020).

² Finance Division Pakistan, "Social Protection," in *Pakistan Economic Survey 2020-21* (Islamabad: Printing Corporation of Pakistan Press, 2021)

³ United Nations Development Programme and OPHI, *Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2020: Charting Pathways out of Multidimensional Poverty, Achieving the SDGs* (UNDP and Oxford Poverty and Human Development initiative, 2020).

⁴ Ministry of Planning Development and Reforms, Government of Pakistan, *Pakistan's Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for SDG, Voluntary National Review* (Islamabad: MoPDR, 2019).

⁵ UNDP, *Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2020*.

⁶ UNDP, *Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2020*.

⁷ UNDP, *Global Multidimensional Poverty Index*.

3. Education specific general statistics

- xi. Public Expenditure on education was estimated at 2.3% of GDP in 2018-19 as compared to 2.4% in 2017-18.
- xii. Cumulative education expenditure by federal and provincial governments during FY 2018-19 increased by 4.7%, to a total of 868 billion as compared to previous fiscal year.

4. Social Protection specific general statistics

- xiii. Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund from April 2000 to March, 2020 has disbursed Rs. 224.64 billion to its partner organizations in 144 districts across the country.
- xiv. During FY 2020 (July to March), Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal has disbursed an amount of Rs. 2.705 billion through its core projects/schemes.⁸
- xv. The government approved a relief package of Rs. 179.8 billion to provide immediate cash relief of Rs. 12,000 to 14.8 million poor families under Ehsaas Programme.
- xvi. Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) budgetary allocation has also been increased from Rs. 102 billion in FY 2016 to Rs. 180 billion in FY 2020 to support unconditional cash transfer to the poorest segments of the society. Number of beneficiaries now stands at 4.5 million who are being paid through biometric based payment solution, developed by BISP.⁹
 - i. Under Kafaalat Programme, it was estimated that by the end of 2020 the government would give monthly cash stipends of Rs. 2000 to at least 7.0 million most deserving and poorest women all over the country.¹⁰
 - ii. Workers Welfare Fund during July-March, FY 2021 disbursed Rs. 2.47 billion on 33,679 scholarship cases while Rs.573.44 million have been utilized as marriage grants @ Rs. 100,000 per worker benefitting 5,736 workers' families. The WWF has also disbursed Rs. 496.55 million as a death grant @ Rs. 500,000 per worker, covering 994 cases of mishaps all over the country.¹¹
 - iii. Under Ehsaas Programme, interest free loan amounting to Rs. 17.50 billion has been disbursed to the borrowers in July-March FY 2021.¹²
 - iv. The government has introduced a Relief Package of Rs. 144 billion, in the backdrop of COVID-19, to provide immediate cash relief of Rs. 12,000 per household for four months to almost 12 million poor families under Ehsaas Programme.¹³

5. Household specific general statistics

- v. In Pakistan, overall the numbers of households that own dwelling units remained stable at 84% during period 2014-15 to 2018-19. The percentage was higher in rural areas i.e. 91% as compared to 72% in urban areas.¹⁴

⁸ UNDP, *Global Multidimensional Poverty Index*.

⁹ Finance Division, *Pakistan Economic Survey 2019-20*

¹⁰ Finance Division, *Pakistan Economic Survey 2019-20*.

¹¹ Finance Division, *Pakistan Economic Survey 2020-21*.

¹² Finance Division, *Pakistan Economic Survey 2020-21*.

¹³ Finance Division, *Pakistan Economic Survey 2019-20*.

¹⁴ Finance Division, *Pakistan Economic Survey 2019-20*.

- vi. 91% of household in 2018-19 as compared to 93% in 2014-15 were using electricity as source for lightning while 4% households reported solar energy as source of lightning.¹⁵

6. Sanitation specific general statistics

- vii. In Pakistan in terms of sanitation as a basic necessity, overall 80% households have flush toilet facility in 2018-19 as compared to 74% in 2013-14. Only 12% households in 2018-19 do not have any toilet facility as compared to 17% in 2013-14. About 18% of rural population and 1% of urban population do not have access to toilet. Among provinces, Balochistan Province has lowest number of toilet facilities with 17% of population and 6% population in KP and 8% in newly merged Tribal Areas do not have toilet facilities.¹⁶
- viii. 35% of households in Pakistan did not have any form of sanitation system in 2018-19 as compared to 37% in 2013-14. 52% of households in rural areas did not have any sanitation system as compared to only 8% of households in urban areas.¹⁷

Progress Tracking

Table 1 Status of Indicators-SDG 1

Code	Indicators	Year	Value	Year	Latest Value	Unit	Target by 2030
1.1.1	Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural).	2013-14	6.07 ¹⁸	2017-18	3.9 ¹⁹	%	
1.2.1	Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age.	2015-16	24.3 ²⁰	2018-19	24.30 ²¹	%	9 ²²

¹⁵ Finance Division, *Pakistan Economic Survey 2019-20*.

¹⁶ Finance Division, *Pakistan Economic Survey 2019-20*.

¹⁷ Finance Division, *Pakistan Economic Survey 2019-20*.

¹⁸ Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms, Federal Support Unit, UNDP, *Sustainable Development Goals, Pakistan's Perspective, Data Reporting Gaps*, (Federal SDGs Support Unit, June, 2018). https://www.sdgpakistan.pk/uploads/pub/Data_Reporting_Gaps_2018.pdf.

¹⁹ UNDP, *Global Multidimensional Poverty Index*.

²⁰ GOP, *Pakistan's Implementation 2030 Agenda*, VNR 2019.

²¹ UNDP, *Global Multidimensional Poverty Index*.

²² GOP, *Pakistan's Implementation 2030 Agenda*, VNR 2019.

1.2.2	Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.	2014-15	Overall = 38.8	2017-18	38.3 ²³	%	19 ²⁴
1.4.1	Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services.	2014-15	BHU= 57.4, Family planning = 82.66, School= 93.7, Vet hospital = 71.06, AGRI EXT= 69.3, Improved water source= 86, Sanitation= 73 ²⁵	2018-19	Family Planning= 98 ²⁶ , Electricity= 91 ²⁷ , Clean cooking fuel used for Lighting and cooking= 41, clean fuel used for lighting, cooking and heating = 35, Improved water source= 95 (urban areas) and 93 (rural areas) ²⁸ , sanitation= 63.5 ²⁹ .	%	
1.4.2	Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure.			2018-19	Male: 97 Female: 2 ³⁰	%	

²³ UNDP, *Global Multidimensional Poverty Index*.

²⁴ GOP, *Pakistan's Implementation 2030 Agenda*, VNR 2019.

²⁵ MoPDR, *Data Reporting Gaps*, 2018.

²⁶ National Institute of Population Studies and ICF, *Pakistan Demographic Health Survey 2017-18* (Islamabad, Pakistan and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NIPS and ICF, 2019).

²⁷ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, *Pakistan Social & Living Standards Measurement Survey (PLSM) 2018-19, National/Provincial (Social Report)*, (Islamabad: GOP, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, June 2020).

²⁸ *Pakistan Social Living Standards Measurement Survey, 2018-19*.

²⁹ SDG Tracker, "Sustainable Development Goals 1" SDG Tracker, <https://sdg-tracker.org/no-poverty>

³⁰ *Pakistan Social Living Standards Measurement Survey, 2018-19*.

1.5.1	Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population	2013	Death= 559, Injured= 1355, Houses damaged = 106868 ,Villages damaged = 4111, population affected = 1.5m ³¹	2017	Death= 44, internally displaced persons = 1800 ³²	Number	
1.a.1	Proportion of resources allocated by the government directly to poverty reduction programs	2014-15	45.2 ³³	2018-19		%	
1.a.2	Proportion of total government spending on essential services(education, health and social protection)	2014-15	Overall = 18.18 ³⁴	2016-17	Education= 12.60 ³⁵	%	
1.b.1	Proportion of government recurrent and capital spending to sectors that disproportionately benefit women, the poor and vulnerable people.	2014-15	Women = 1.88, Poor= 1.86, Vulnerability= 24.37 ³⁶				

³¹ MoPDR, *Data Reporting Gaps*, 2018.

³² SDG Tracker, Goal 1.

³³ MoPDR, *Data Reporting Gaps*, 2018.

³⁴ MoPDR, *Data Reporting Gaps*, 2018.

³⁵ SDG Tracker, Goal 1.

³⁶ MoPDR, *Data Reporting Gaps*, 2018.

Geo Political Situation and Afghanistan: Prospects & Challenges

Muhammad Rashid Mafzool Zaka, Director General (Research) PIPS
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The withdrawal of US/NATO forces from Afghanistan after two decades has altered the geo-political fabric of the South Asian region with far reaching impacts even beyond the regional contours. The evolving situation demands deeper scrutiny of a plethora of issues, first and foremost being the recognition of the Taliban regime, which has taken the reins of power in Kabul ensuring its control over every nook and corner of Afghanistan. Though not a single country has yet recognized the government of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the dialogue process is under way through various multilateral processes involving multitude of states. The impending humanitarian crisis and the economic collapse due to the freezing of Afghan assets by the international community make the next important agenda items for any discussion on Afghanistan. Also there are fears of fresh waves of refugees emerging out of the Afghan territory which has already sent millions of its citizens to neighboring countries as refugees over the course of past decades. In this context, as envisioned by the Honourable Speaker, National Assembly of Pakistan/ President of the BoG Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) Mr Asad Qaiser, the Institute hosted a day-long seminar on “Situation in Afghanistan: Prospects & Challenges” on Thursday 18 November 2021. The Seminar comprised of two major sessions apart from the inaugural session. The subject of “Emerging geo-political situation and Pakistan” was the focus of panel discussion which was addressed by seasoned panelists specializing in this area. The second panel focused on the “Way forward for regional peace, stability and cooperation.”

Hon. Syed Fakhar Imam, Federal Minister for National Food Security inaugurated the Seminar as the Chief Guest. The event was attended by a packed auditorium with participants including Hon. Members of National Assembly and Senate, representatives from think-tanks & media, government officials, and academia. Among the Members Standing Committees of Senate and National Assembly, Hon. MNA, Zahra Wadood Fatemi, Senator Zarqa S. Taimur, Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri, and Senator Walid Iqbal also attended the event. Among think tanks, senior research fellows from the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Center for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) and Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) attended the seminar. Moreover, academia from Riphah University School of Public Policy and School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad participated in the event. Mr. Asif Memon, Director General (SA) represented the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) government of Pakistan. Ms. Tehseen Khalid, Director (Research) PIPS moderated the inaugural and first panel discussion.

PROCEEDINGS: The seminar commenced with the National Anthem followed by recitation of verses from the Holy Quran. Mr. Muhammad Rashid Mafzool Zaka, Director General (Research) PIPS welcomed the participants and presented an overview of the seminar in the context of the evolving situation in Afghanistan.

Ambassador (Retd.) Aizaz Chaudhry, Director General (ISSI), during his key note address titled “Prospects & challenges in the wake of new dispensation in Afghanistan,” emphasized that Pakistan should not rush to recognize the Taliban government in isolation. Relevant diplomatic channels should be utilized to take a regional approach for that matter. He stated that first and

foremost priority should be the ordinary Afghan people who face daunting challenges in the current situation. He reiterated the need for humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan as a priority by regional countries especially China and Pakistan.

With regards to the security situation, he expressed concerns of Afghanistan entering into a situation of civil war that can threaten peace and security in the entire region. He pointed out that Pakistan can be the next target of ISKP. As a precautionary measure, he suggested border fencing and enhanced intelligence viz a viz infiltration of any terrorists. Moreover, he underscored the need for registration of all Afghan citizens in Pakistan and above all a need for a consensus Afghan policy formulated by and at the Parliament. He eulogized the initiative of Hon Speaker Asad Qaiser and the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) for hosting such timely and comprehensive seminar. As a matter of policy, he suggested keeping contacts with all major factions in Afghanistan besides continued engagement with the United States. He also informed that UN Resolution 1267 puts sanctions against terrorist outfits since 1999 including Taliban, which is why the US dollars 9 billion have been halted by the West. He ended his talk by emphasizing that regional approach is the best bet.

Hon. Federal Minister for Food Security Syed Fakhar Imam shed light on the humanitarian crisis brewing in Afghanistan especially in the context of food security and economic revival. He shared that the world at large and regional actors must respond to the grave economic challenge Afghanistan faces today. He informed the august gathering that agriculture accounts for only 22% of Afghanistan's total GDP of 19.29 billion USD which is meager to even provide essential staple food to the local population. No matter 4 lac jobs in Afghanistan are associated with opium production but their major exports to Pakistan include quality fruits such as apples, pomegranates and peach. With regards to the human rights issues in Afghanistan under discussion at multiple levels, he opined that such matters should be taken up at parliamentary forums. During his address he paid tribute to the Afghans who preferred to die and did not allow foreign powers to conquer them. The Hon. Minister expressed the hope that Pakistan's continued engagement with the US, China, Russia and Afghanistan can play a decisive role in bridge building for peace, stability and humanitarian support to the new government in Afghanistan as peace is a mutual goal for all.

Dr. Nazir Hussain, Dean Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Wah directed his talk more towards the emerging geopolitical scenario in which new actors have taken role in the region. He pointed towards Turkey, Qatar and China as new power contenders in Afghanistan. Among these countries, Qatar is expected to be safeguarding the US interests in Afghanistan in the post-withdrawal scenario. He opined that Afghanistan issue is now more human security oriented, the traditional security approach seems to be losing its salience. The Cabinet and Foreign Office must draw policy while a consensus of political leadership at the Parliament is imperative. Pakistan has been facing both challenges and opportunities in the wake of new dispensation in Afghanistan. He emphasized that Afghans should be given the opportunity to decide for themselves. He reiterated that chaos is still there on Afghan territory and the possibility of a civil war cannot be ruled out altogether. He also shed light on the role of India in the region in the wake of US/NATO forces withdrawal and Taliban takeover. Given the deep influence India has acquired over the course of past two decades in Afghanistan, he maintained that Indian capabilities should not be underestimated.

The participation of **seasoned journalist, Mr. Saleem Safi**, during the first panel discussion broadened the debate as he shared his deep insights into the past as well as current situation in

Afghanistan. He maintained that with US/NATO withdrawal both challenges and opportunities have emerged in the existing situation. Pakistan's support was crucial for Taliban victory in Afghanistan. On the issue of recognition, he stated that only regime change has come about in Afghanistan the State is still the same. It is however unfortunate that an issue has been created about the recognition of the government in Afghanistan. He underscored that the freeing of Afghan assets by the international community is a key challenge. He stated that US has withdrawn from Afghanistan but not from region. It still holds the status of super power. Each regional country has its own interests and stakes in Afghanistan. Pakistan's concerns in the security domain pertain to the role of TTP which has gained strength in the new situation and can create chaos in Pakistan. He said that Pakistan should continue to engage with all stakeholders and groups within Afghanistan. He also stressed that Pakistan should sincerely interact with Afghans as equals and in all trust assist them in consolidation of peace, good governance and successful diplomacy.

Hon. Senator Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Abdul Qayyum, began his address by highlighting the problems faced by the ordinary Afghan citizens like food and medicines shortage due to the economic problems and humanitarian catastrophe. Taking a theoretical cum historical approach he highlighted the significance of Afghanistan in the region and the world at large. In the context of the US/NATO forces' withdrawal, he expressed deep astonishment at the Afghan army which crumbled hurriedly and did not offer resistance to Taliban forces. He stated that the cause of war is utmost necessary in order to generate the will to fight. With regards to Pakistan's policy toward Afghanistan, he noted that the situation was different in 2001. The political scenario was different at the time when the Taliban government was toppled by the US. Some of the decisions like the handing over of the Taliban government Ambassador to Pakistan, Jawad Zarif, were the corollary of the military government sitting in Islamabad. He emphasized that with the recent takeover of Taliban, a new reality has emerged in Afghanistan which cannot be ignored. Pakistan must engage with the Taliban. He encouraged the Taliban regime to play meaningful role with regard to the TTP which has created chaos in Pakistan with targeted attacks against state institutions. He emphasized Pakistan to include enhanced engagement with US as essential cornerstone of diplomacy.

Ambassador (R) Nadeem Riaz, President, Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), emphasized the need to reiterate Pakistan's National Interest viz a viz new realities of Afghanistan that must include engagement with regional countries like Russia, China and Iran. He saw that there is clearly a diversity of interests with regard to US, China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan, which is a challenge but an opportunity to move forward with dialogue and diplomacy.

Renowned Columnist Mr. Zahid Hussain reiterated three imperative factors that require greater attention and cooperation of the world at large and Pakistan, China and US in particular: Firstly, Afghanistan needs humanitarian support and food security to overcome a famine-like situation with a threat that over few years no less than 9.2 million people will fall below poverty line. There are 23 million Afghans facing famine and living on a single meal. Secondly, governance challenge is huge as national institutions are neither formed and there is no money to pay salaries of government employees. Thirdly, Afghanistan can be on the verge of economic meltdown until and unless trade, agriculture and revival of livelihoods is not triggered according to some plan.

H. E. Sardar Muhammad Shokaib, Chargé d'affaires Embassy of Afghanistan in Pakistan, expressed his hope that Pakistan will help Afghanistan in persuading the global community to help the new regime in its efforts for consolidation of peace, economic revival and institutional building in Afghanistan. He informed that as compared to a perpetual killing of around 20 to 30 people on

daily basis in the last 20 years during the presence of occupied forces, the last three months of the Taliban Government have brought peace and tranquility where life had returned to normalcy with start of livelihoods, agriculture and trade. He emphasized that the incumbent government in Kabul is certainly inclusive for having all major tribes amply represented. There is complete absence of political prisoners in Afghanistan under the current setup. The incumbent government is trying to fulfill the demands of the international community. He emphasized the US to allow access to US dollars 9 billion of funds donated by international partners so that Afghanistan government succeeds in providing essentials to its citizens. He stressed that Pakistan must engage with the United States and western powers to lift the sanctions put in the wake of UN Resolution 1267 in Oct., 1999. He stated that Taliban did not allow any anti-Pakistan elements to flourish on its territory. The Afghan diplomat thanked the National Assembly of Pakistan and the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services for organizing a comprehensive day-long seminar on Afghanistan - Prospects and Challenges.

Mr. Muhammad Rashid Mafzool Zaka, Director General (Research) PIPS informed that the Institute is now an international seat of parliamentary learning recognized for its research and capacity building initiatives both nationally and internationally as per vision of its Board. He offered the Afghan diplomat training/capacity-building activities such as exchange of parliamentary and political leadership and capacity building of officials and staff on good governance at PIPS as well as in the Afghan capital city as joint ventures between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Key Recommendations/Way Forward:

- i. **Recognition of Taliban Government:** The issue of recognition was one of the foremost areas of discussion. There was a consensus among the participants to recognize the Taliban regime not in isolation but through a regional consensus involving countries like China. Besides, the panelists agreed to remain engaged with Taliban. And dialogue should continue on major issues.
- ii. **Parliament to devise National Consensus on Pakistan's Policy on Afghanistan:** The expert panelists emphasized the need to develop a national consensus on the issues emerging out of the situation in the wake of the new dispensation in Afghanistan. In this context, while the elected Cabinet and the Foreign Office develops the foreign policy in this regard, initiating a comprehensive debate in the Parliament is certainly imperative to allow formation of a consensus policy on Afghanistan as was done in 2014 for policy against terrorism.
- iii. **Economic Challenges:** The issue of Afghanistan's economic challenges was among the most important subjects of discussion. The freezing of Afghan government assets by the international community has culminated into economic stagnation. The discussants in the Seminar underscored the need that Pakistan, Russia, China, Iran and Qatar may engage with the US for unfreezing of Afghan assets in order to avert the economic disaster. Afghanistan is in dire state where it does not have adequate exchequer to pay the salaries of government officials and even the payment of electricity it imports from Tajikistan and Turkmenistan is pending for some time. Though, the Government of Pakistan has allowed tariff and tax cuts to encourage exports from Afghanistan in addition to humanitarian assistance worth Rs. 5 billion yet the regional countries and world at large must offer economic assistance to preempt an economic catastrophe that can trigger a civil war in Afghanistan. The standing committees at the National Assembly and Senate as well as Pak Afghan Friendship Groups are imperative to guide the policy makers on both sides at this crucial time in history.
- iv. **Humanitarian Assistance:** In the wake of economic collapse, channeling of humanitarian assistance towards ordinary Afghan people was emphasized by the participants of the

- Seminar. Panelists suggested China, Pakistan and Iran joint efforts in this regard. It was emphasized that the international community should not remain indifferent to the humanitarian crisis and should play its role to help ordinary Afghans meet their basic human rights. The UN and other humanitarian aid agencies should play proactive role in avoiding a potential human catastrophe due to hunger and poverty. Pakistan has sent 260 tonnes of food supplies to Afghanistan in addition to supplies by Iran yet much coordinated effort by regional powers is required as still US heads the contribution viz a viz humanitarian assistance whereas region must be the biggest contributor.
- v. **Refugees' Influx:** In the context of refugees' movement across the border, the eminent panelists emphasized the need for enhanced border fencing as well as intelligence gathering in order to check the infiltration of terrorists. Panelists emphasized the need to register all Afghans residing in Pakistan.
 - vi. **Respect of Afghan Sovereignty:** The eminent panelists noted that Pakistan should treat Afghanistan as a sovereign country. All impressions of subjugation should be dispelled for furthering bilateral ties. Undue interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan must be discouraged. This shall enhance mutual trust among Pakistan and Afghanistan.
 - vii. **Elimination of Terrorist outfits:** Panelists commended the assurances of Taliban government that Afghan territory will not be used for terrorist activities against any other country. However, they noted the strength TTP and ISKP have gained as a result of regime change in Afghanistan. Pakistan must be prepared to deal with the security challenges in this context. The border fencing and specialized intelligence against terrorist outfits must be ensured.
 - viii. **Role of the United States:** The panelists of the seminar noted that though United States has withdrawn from Afghanistan along with the NATO forces, however, the US presence in the region has not ended. It is in fact still the top most country viz a viz provision of humanitarian assistance, therefore, Pakistan must engage with the US for mutual goals including regional and global peace as well as stability in Afghanistan and humanitarian assistance for its people. Chinese replacement as global superpower has not yet materialized nor it's seen in near future. Pakistan and US have worked closely in Afghanistan in the past. The US will continue to be a major stakeholder in the regional affairs as it has testified by inking agreements with the Taliban in Qatar, which is again a significant actor viz a viz continued US role in Afghanistan. Therefore, Pakistan must not ignore this fact while formulating its defense and foreign policies as well as its Afghanistan policy as there are innumerable issues where both the US and Pakistan have similar stakes such as peace within Afghanistan and the region at large so that its territory does not become vulnerable with regard to rogue international terrorist groups such as ISS, TTP and ISKP, etc.
 - ix. **Engagement with multiple factions in Afghanistan:** The panelists of the seminar on situation in Afghanistan emphasized the need to engage with all major factions operating on the Afghan soil. Rather than making favorites, Pakistan should adopt an inclusive approach in its dealings with Afghans.
 - x. **Indian influence:** With regard to the role of India, the panelists noted that though the Indian influence has been curtailed with the regime change in Afghanistan. However, Indian capabilities must not be underestimated. India has made significant inroads into Afghanistan over the course of past twenty years. India will continue to regain its loosing influence within Afghanistan. The recently held Afghanistan conference in the Indian capital, which was attended by high-level delegations from Iran and Russia besides the Central Asian countries, testifies to these Indian efforts.

During the question and answer session, participants raised various questions regarding the emerging situation in Afghanistan and US role in the region. While presenting the vote of thanks, Hon. MNA Ms. Zehra Wadood Fatemi, Member National Assembly Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, applauded the National Assembly of Pakistan and the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services as well as the learned panel for such enlightening seminar. She expressed her desire that Pakistan is well aware of the humanitarian needs of Afghanistan and it stands with the international commitments that peace, stability and territorial integrity of Afghanistan and all countries should be respected by every stakeholder.

On behalf of Hon Speaker National Assembly/ President PIPS Board of Governors Mr. Asad Qaiser and the Team PIPS; Muhammad Rashid Mafzool Zaka, Director General (Research) thanked the panelists, the Afghan Ambassador and a packed auditorium of participants including MNAs, Senators, Academia, government officials, media men and civil society for their set of way forwards to ensure peace, stability and cooperation in wake of the new Government in Afghanistan. He also informed that PIPS not only offers thematic capacity building sessions for Honorable Members of Parliament within Pakistan but internationally and it looks forward to offer on behalf of the Parliament of Pakistan knowledge sharing for the Afghanistan leadership and government functionaries viz a viz good governance and statehood. The absorbing session concluded with presentation of mementos to panelists and group photo at 2.30 pm with slogan of Long Live Pak-Afghan Friendship.



Honorable Syed Fakhar Imam, Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research's Inaugural Speech at PIPS Seminar on Situation in Afghanistan: Prospects and Challenges, Thursday, November 18, 2021

PIPS Round Table on Way Forward towards Free & Compulsory Education in Punjab

Hanif Khan Nasar
Deputy Director (Research), PIPS

The Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS), in collaboration with the Center for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) organized a Parliamentary roundtable on the topic of Girl Child Education on Thursday, November 11, 2021. The roundtable aimed to stimulate dialogue on the issues confronting girl child education as well as to provide a platform for the exchange of ideas in order to generate policy recommendations and a way forward for the Members of the School Education Committee of the Provincial Assembly of Punjab. Honourable Ms. Aisha Nawaz, Chairperson Standing Committee on School Education, Provincial Assembly of Punjab, chaired the 4-hour session, attended by around 25 participants including Panelists comprising MPAs from Punjab and seasoned experts. PIPS Research Wing hosted the event along with participants from the Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), representatives from Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) and Pakistan Youth Changes Advocates (PYCA) as well as members of civil society and media. Ms. Tehseen Khalid, Director (Research), Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services, moderated the session while Mr. Hanif Nasar Khan, Deputy Director (Research) PIPS, was the rapporteur, who recorded the Minutes and Proceedings.

The Proceedings commenced with the recitation of verses of the Holy Quran by Hon. MPA Chaudhry Sajid. Mr. Muhammad Rashid Mafzool Zaka, Director General (Research) PIPS welcomed the participants and gave a presentation on the overall effective role of Parliamentary Committees in legislative scrutiny. Mr. Zaka said that the Parliament has four major roles that include law making, executive oversight, representation of its constituency and budget. He said that the parliamentary committee has a crucial leading role to play in the executive oversight especially viz a viz scrutiny of education policy, review of budgets and assessing of existing laws. He also admonished the fact that the government functionaries should work in close collaboration with the MPs and guide them through issues being faced. Mr. Zaka also suggested two models that can be applied by committee members in scrutinizing any public policy on education and assessing the laws presently enforced to ensure universal and free education. Mr. Zaka, shed light on the key role of the parliamentary committees to hold line departments accountable. The implementation of education across Punjab can be made manifold more effective by strengthening parliamentarians' oversight in the implementation process.

Mr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ali, Executive Director, CPDI, deliberated upon the right to information and expressed the need to work more on the certain limitations that exist and its appropriate implementation with respect to the dispensation on the right to information. It was discussed that the Parliamentary Committees can take up major role on the issues revolving right to information.

Public finance expert and author of the recently published white-paper "*Public Invest in Education: An Appraisal of SDG 4 in Pakistan*" **Mr. Asim Bashir Khan** while providing an overview of the findings and recommendations of the white-paper said "Both the federal and provincial governments understand the fact that the current state of public investment in education is not up to the required mark. This is evident from the majority of the sector plans as well as the Vision

2025 document which pledges to allocate 4% of the GDP to education. However, in reality Pakistan has been unable to allocate more than 2.5% of its GDP in the last 20 years. The COVID crises have led to a further decline in public investment in education with merely 1.5% of GDP being allocated for education in the fiscal year 2020 - 21.”

PCE’s National Coordinator Ms. Zehra Arshad, while talking about equitable access to education said “Although our international commitment according to SDG 4 is to attain 100% literacy, we still have 22.84 million out-of-school children of which 12.16 million are girls. This number is further expected to increase by at least 4.2% in the aftermath of the pandemic.” She further warned that with merely eight years remaining until the conclusion of the United Nations Agenda 2030, Pakistan is on the verge of missing its targets under SDG-4 (i.e., quality equitable education) by a huge margin.

Commenting on the institutional and cultural barriers limiting girls’ education in the post-pandemic context, **PYCA’s Executive Director Ms. Areebah Shahid**, urged the parliamentarians to revisit the data of the beneficiaries of the *Ehsaas* Education Stipend Program, which is based on the lists of vulnerable households prepared almost a decade ago. She urged that “Thousands of households have fallen below the poverty line as a direct impact of the pandemic and it is imperative that the *Ehsaas* Education Stipend Program also takes stock of this new situation.” She also urged the members of the Punjab Assembly to adopt gender-responsive budgeting on the same lines as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa so that educational planning and spending could effectively prioritize girls’ access to quality education across the province.

Dr. Suhail Shahzad, Special Secretary Education Department, Government of Punjab, informed the participants that the overall spending of US \$18 spent on a child in the country, being not even the half spent on a child in India; it should be increased. He shared that Education Department has no less than 5 lac employees but only 155 teachers’ training centers. It was highlighted that vacancies in any department including education are rarely filled in a timely manner as a result the students are deprived of teachers. Dr. Suhail Shahzad also raised the need on enacting laws especially with respect to housing societies that rarely allocate or reserve plot or land for public schools but instead sell out the plots at lucrative price to elite private schools. The MPs and civil society experts reiterated that it is causing great social disparity in already existing big gap among haves and have-nots. The participants overall agreed upon the need to increase in the government’s annual budget on child education.

Key Takeaways and Recommendations:

- i. **Issuance of Notification of Punjab Free & Compulsory Education Law 2014:** “The constitutional amendment of Article 25-A, pledging free, quality and equitable education for every Pakistani child was passed in the year 2010. The Punjab Assembly passed the Free & Compulsory education Act in 2014. However, despite the lapse of seven years since the passage of this provincial law, it is yet to be notified. What then was the point of passing a law that the government did not intend to implement?” The Standing Committee on Education, Punjab, reiterated that the issuance of said notification will be taken up as a priority with the Government.
- ii. **Strategic Plan and Calendar of Meetings of Standing Committee:** It was highlighted that the parliamentary committee on education may draw up a strategic plan ahead in a

- year. This will make it easier for the Committee members to keep a track record of their workings and performance. MPs and experts agreed that there must a quarterly meeting of the Committee including two meetings on budget where the Education department should make a presentation around Nov-Dec., viz a viz budget allocation and revised budget; and then in Feb., regarding the total funds utilized, surrendered and estimates for new financial year. PIPS, CPDI, PYCA and PCE reiterated to provide technical assistance to the Committee.
- iii. **Policy to bring in Out of School Children:** The participants highlighted the issue of out of school children especially the girl child. They agreed that concerned departments including the local government and education must collaborate to diminish the number of out of school children in the Province. It is equally important to have clarity in the measure of responsibility led on a particular government department with regards to curtailing out of school children ratio, through effective legislation. Similarly, there is a major digital gap among upper, middle and lower-class household's that needs to be catered by the government. This digital gap has serious ramifications towards those girls that cannot go to schools due to any socio-economic reasons as 47% households faced cash crunch during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - iv. **Robust Enrolment Drive:** It was suggested that the Provincial Government should hold robust enrolment drive in close cooperation with partners and initiative should include Education and Local Government Department undertaking the same.
 - v. **Data Availability:** The civil society stakeholders also asked the parliamentarians to take-up the issue of the absence of the chapter on out-of-school children in this year's Pakistan Education Statistics report. Given that Pakistan hosts the second largest population of out-of-school children in the world, eliminating the chapter on out-of-school children deprives both the decision makers and the civil society from valuable data that is imperative to frame policies aimed at addressing the educational crisis in Pakistan. Panelists highlighted that Economic Survey should ensure that data on poverty alleviation and out-of-children is also shared so that parliamentary committees and stakeholders can plan and recommend interventions accordingly. Pakistan's Education Statistics should be part of Economic Survey.
 - vi. **Increase in Education Budget:** The participants overall agreed upon the need to increase the government's annual budget on child education. The overall mark of US \$18 spent on a child, being not even the half spent on a child in India, as Dr. Suhail Shahzad, Special Secretary Education Department informed the participants, needed to be increased. The participants also discussed certain matters within the budget that also needed to be fixed by the government.
 - vii. **Teachers Recruitment:** Vacancies in Education department are rarely filled in a timely manner as a result the students are deprived of teachers. Recruitment of education staff must be carried out on war footing as it will enhance capacity to teach more students and thus curb drop outs. 89% of Punjab's public schools are in villages and it is imperative that they have adequate number of teachers working.
 - viii. **Change in Private & Pubic Housing Societies By Laws for allocation of land for Public Sector Schools:** The participants also discussed on enacting laws and policy/bylaws especially with respect to housing societies that rarely allocate or reserve plot or land for public schools. This issue needs to be taken up by the individual Members of the Punjab Assembly, with respect to such allocation of plots in the housing societies in their

respective constituencies, and referring the same to the Education Committee and other relevant Committees of the Punjab Assembly to intervene and introduce bylaws and policies to make it compulsory for every society to allocate and handover land to government education department to construct a school.

- ix. **Teacher Trainings:** Punjab has 155 Teachers Training Institutes for employee strength of around 5 lac that is in itself inadequate. It was highlighted that the school teachers should have been given timely trainings on COVID-19 in relation to school and its pupil. Timely training on learning classes due to school shutdown in the wake of COVID-19 is currently an issue and is of prime importance, as its pupil are facing huge gaps in their curriculum learning.
- x. **Review of PEF Schools:** Around 40 students per class are imparted education in PEF schools that are given @ Rs. 550 per student in primary classes. The policy may be reviewed as it even violates the minimum wage set up by the govt. offered to teachers in a PEF school.

Hon. MPA Shamim Aftab, while talking about the need to curtail learning losses pointed at the need for piloting small digital and hybrid learning initiatives to make the country's education system resilient and better prepared in the face of emergency situations such as the current pandemic.

In her closing remarks **Honourable Ms. Aisha Nawaz, MPA and Chairperson Standing Committee on School Education**, shared that notification of Punjab Free & Compulsory Education Law 2014 remains the priority of the Standing Committee. She also desired to hold similar meetings in different districts of the Province especially the vulnerable districts viz a viz drop outs or education standards, with participation of all the stakeholders. She reiterated that such knowledge sharing meetings and roundtables would allow open discussions between all the stakeholders to reach for a common goal. She concluded that "The best way to move forward is to have greater engagement between legislators, education department officials and civil society activists so that the consequent policy direction is both participatory and inclusive." She also expressed interest in attending similar round tables to learn about the challenges in the education system directly from the district officials and community members.

ANALYSIS

The Glasgow Climate Pact: An Overview

Tehseen Khalid

Director (Research), PIPS

The two-week-long COP26 concluded on November 13, 2021, with around 200 countries agreeing the Glasgow Climate Pact, a global agreement to accelerate climate progress this decade. The COP stands for "Conference of Parties," and this was the 26th annual summit held in Glasgow. During COP26, the UK presidency focused on delivering the Glasgow Climate Pact with four goals: mitigation, adaptation, funding, and collaboration. The COP26 is regarded as the second most important summit following the COP21 in Paris in 2015, which resulted in member countries formulating Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Countries were urged to reconsider their climate pledges and submit next round of NDCs by 2020 to limit temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius and to explore measures to restrict it to 1.5 degrees Celsius. These NDCs are submitted to the UNFCCC every five years, however owing to the COVID epidemic, they were delayed a year. The goal is to continue reducing emissions until they reach net zero by 2050.

Pakistan is one of 153 countries that have put forward their new/updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) which cover around 80% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. Net zero commitments by all countries currently cover over 90% of global GDP and more than 85% of global emissions. According to the updated NDC document, the Government of Pakistan intends to "set a cumulative ambitious target of conditional and voluntary contributions of overall 50 percent reduction in projected emissions by 2030." To achieve this target, Pakistan intends to shift to 60 percent renewable energy and 30 percent electric vehicles by 2030, and completely ban imported coal. The report reveals that various initiatives implemented by the government have already resulted in an 8.7 percent reduction in emissions between 2016 and 2018.¹

During the COP26, 137 countries comprising 91% of the world's forest cover pledged to halting and reversing forest loss and degradation by 2030. The government of Pakistan also intends to improve protected area coverage from 12% to 15% by 2023, and states that the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Programme (TBTP) will sequester 148.76 MtCO₂e emissions over the next ten years. This is a very important initiative as increased forestation is directly related to increased CO₂ absorption by the plants. In another significant move, over 100 countries, including Pakistan, one of the top ten emitters, signed up the Global Methane Pledge to reduce global methane emissions by 30% by 2030. This is another vital initiative as one third of human generated warming is due to Methane.

The developed countries committed a US \$100 billion Green Climate Fund in 2009 to support developing countries in tackling climate change. This support was expected to be effective by 2020. However, it has been postponed again until 2023. The developing countries were hit hardest as the pledge was not realized. Recently in COP26, it has been recognized that "the global shift to net zero and resilient economies will require trillions of dollar investment." The UK has placed the commitment to raise US \$ 100 billion in climate funding each year from developing countries.

¹ Government of Pakistan, *Pakistan: Updated Nationally Determined Contributions 2021*, Available at: <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Pakistan%20First/Pakistan%20Updated%20NDC%202021.pdf>

For the first time, parties agreed to a report under the UNFCCC on progress toward the US \$100 billion target. It is expected that over the period 2021-25 around US \$ 500 billion will be mobilized for providing support to developing countries.² Some experts believe that if realized, this will help to build trust of developing countries and accelerate progress toward the net zero goal. Some Latin American and African countries, however, believe that not enough progress has been made.³ The COP26 also witnessed the commitment of doubling the 2019 levels of adaptation finance by 2025. The developing countries urged the developed countries to double their support through climate adaptation fund.

This is the first climate agreement in the UNFCCC's 26-years history that recognized fossil fuels as a reason of global warming and used the phrase "phase down coal power and end fossil fuel subsidies" rather than "phase out" because some petro states including India and China were hesitant due to their heavy reliance on coal power. However, by the end of 2021, all major coal-financing countries have agreed to end international coal finance. At COP26, 34 countries and 05 public financing institutions decided to end international funding for the unabated fossil fuel sector next year, freeing up finances and allowing trillions of dollars to be realigned toward global net zero. Furthermore, as expected by developing countries, international partners pledged to mobilize US \$ 20 billion for the transition from coal to clean energy including US \$ 8.5 billion dollars to South Africa for greening its power sector. The world's two biggest CO₂ emitters, the United States and China, have vowed to strengthen climate cooperation over the next decade in areas such as decarbonization, clean energy and methane emission reduction.⁴ The private sector, which controls US \$130 trillion, pledged to support clean technology and divert funds away from fossil fuel-burning sectors.

Despite these remarkable pledges at COP26, it has failed to obtain the establishment of a dedicated damages fund, which vulnerable nations were demanding as loss and damage finance, owing mostly to resistance from the United States, the European Union, and some other developing countries.⁵

Experts predict if countries meet their both conditional and unconditional NDCs for the near-term target of 2030, global warming will be 2.4 degrees Celsius by 2100 and that if countries only meet unconditional NDCs (that are not reliant on financial commitment or support from other countries), global warming would be estimated to be approximately 2.5 degrees Celsius. Furthermore, if governments follow through on long-term net-zero pledges, global warming might be decreased by 1.8 degrees Celsius by 2100.⁶ This is only possible if all countries meet their commitments, which cannot be guaranteed at the moment as it is not only linked to their own policies and plans but also on the funds from the developing countries. This is especially true for developing countries like Pakistan, which has minimum share in global emissions but is one of the hardest hit by climate change.

² COP26: *The Glasgow Climate Pact*, UKCOP26.org, <https://ukcop26.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/COP26-The-Glasgow-Climate-Pact.pdf>

³ BBC News, "COP26: What was agreed at the Glasgow Climate Conference?" *BBC News*, updated November 15, 2021.

⁴ U.S. Department of State, "U.S.-China joint Glasgow Declaration on enhancing climate action in the 2020s," Press release, November 10, 2021.

⁵ Megan Rowling "Climate loss and damage earns recognition but little action in COP26 deal," *Reuters*, November 14, 2021.

⁶ Carbonbrief, "Analysis: Do COP26 promises keep global warming below 2C?," *Carbonbrief.org*, November 10, 2021, <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-do-cop26-promises-keep-global-warming-below-2c>

Glimpses of Parliamentary Roundtable on Girl Child Education With Members of Standing Committee on School Education, Provincial Assembly of Punjab

Thursday, November 11, 2021





Group photo of participants of 8th Annual National Parliamentary Development Course at
Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services
November 01 - December 17, 2021



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