

Pakistan-India Legislators and Public Officials Dialogue on Sharing of Experiences on Governance and Democracy

October 06-07, 2015; Lahore, Pakistan

Joint Statement

1. **Pakistan-India Legislators and Public Officials Dialogue on Sharing of Experiences on Governance and Democracy** was convened in Lahore, Pakistan on October 06-07, 2015.
2. The Dialogue mainly focussed on three themes: **Agriculture, Business and Investment and Tourism**.
3. Participants from the two countries believed that Experience-Sharing on Governance through the Dialogue has been much more useful than anticipated, agreeing that experience sharing and dialogue on governance and democracy should not be hostage to political and diplomatic relations between the two countries.
4. Participants also believed that experience sharing may be extended between Pakistan's Provinces and other States of India as well.
5. Representatives of both Pakistan and India recognised and appreciated the initiative of PILDAT, and its partner in India, CSDS, to foster these Dialogues. They urged that this initiative be continued and reinforced.
6. Participants conducted candid and comprehensive discussions on the present status of the **Agriculture, Business and Investment and Tourism** in Pakistan and India. At the outset, it was acknowledged that, while there are no two views about the need of improvement of bilateral relationship among the two neighbouring countries leading to peace, stability and order in the region, the two countries, owing to their unique common history and similarities in models of Governance and Democracy, can and should, cooperate on learning from each other on good practices on improving Governance and Democracy focussed on improvement in the lives of the citizens of the two countries.

Agriculture

7. The two sides agreed that both countries must focus on improvement of Agriculture as a major sector of growth. Legislators and Citizens must join hands to lobby for comprehensive, growth-oriented reforms in agriculture in both countries.
8. Participants believed that a Joint Forum of Farmers between India and Pakistan should be created to facilitate mutual learning and exchange of good practices. They also proposed facilitating a Joint Kisan Festival among bordering areas in the two countries.
9. Participants also believed that focus must also be paid in both countries on organic farming, noting in this regard the example of Sikkim in India where the State is committed to 100% organic farming.
10. Land Reforms and the Mechanization of the Agricultural Sector were unanimously agreed upon as key areas that required concentration by representatives of both India and Pakistan. It was agreed that policies needed to be made such that through Land reforms and only smart subsidization of agricultural equipment the production and yield of crops could be increased.

11. Challenges, like the raising of net availability of food grains, tackling poverty and hunger, un-availability of water due to its misuse, adulterated pesticides, smuggling of seeds and their poor mixing, high electricity Tariffs, lack of awareness of existing agricultural schemes and subsidies, low literacy rate, and malpractices in the distribution of agricultural products and its affects on the development of the sector in both Pakistan and India, were also discussed. It was unanimously decided that there needed to be a presence of forums for the sharing of problems faced by farmers (Kisan) in both Pakistan and India.
12. Issues related to the politics of land acquisition in India were underscored highlighting the intensification of debate on the fair compensation of the land acquired for public purposes only.
13. Participants believed that the two countries must utilise existing forums to resolve water disputes

Investment

14. The two sides discussed in detail the business and investment scenarios and strategies in play in both countries
15. Focusing especially on the model of Gujarat in India, participants believed that greater avenues of learning could be used from the Gujarat model to understand how the State managed rapid industrialisation and investment in business.
16. Underscoring the need for equitable distribution of growth, the two sides agreed that lessons must be drawn from disparity in rapid progress among the Indian States. While economic growth is the key, it should be progress-oriented without losing sight of equitable benefit to the people.
17. Participants also believed that efforts should be made to utilise land route for trade between the two countries.

Tourism

18. Participants believed that even though both India and Pakistan have similar sites and heritage for promotion of tourism, India has better utilised the potential of Tourism and Pakistan may learn from successful examples of promotion of tourism from India.
19. Both India and Pakistan have a great potential of promotion of religious tourism and this can also be used by both countries as a source of promoting better ties. Joint Working Group on Tourism involving Legislators and Public Officials from both sides can be created to promote Religious Tourism.
20. Participants also highlighted the need to review and improve visa policies by both the countries to facilitate touristic movement.
21. Members of the State Legislatures from India and from Provincial Assemblies of Pakistan stressed that Visa-free travel of SAARC should also be extended to include Legislators belonging to Sub-National Legislatures.

Delegates from India included Members of Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha, **Mr. Mangi Lal Garasiya** (Indian National Congress) and Punjab Vidhan Sabha, **Mr. Kuljit Singh Nagra** (Indian National Congress) from India.

Experts who joined the Dialogue from India included **Professor Jagrup Singh Sekhon**, Chairman, Dept. of Political Science, Guru Nanak University, Amritsar,

Professor Hemant Kumar Shah, Head, Department of Economics, H. K. Arts College and **Professor Sanjay Lodha**, Professor Department of Political Science, University College of Social Sciences & Humanities, Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur, Rajasthan.

Delegates from *Pakistan's National Assembly* included **Rana Muhammad Afzal Khan**, MNA (NA- 82, Faisalabad-VIII, Punjab, PML-N), **Ms. Nafeesa Inayatullah Khan Khattak**, MNA, (NA-322, Women, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, PTI), and **Mr. Shehryar Afridi**, MNA, (NA-14, Kohat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, PTI).

MPAs from the *Provincial Assembly of the Punjab* included **Mr. Ali Salman**, MPA, (PP-168, Sheikhpura-Cum-Nanakana Sahib-I, Punjab, IND), **Mr. Amjad Ali Javed**, MPA, (PP-86, Toba Tek Singh-III, Punjab, PML-N), **Ms. Azma Zahid Bukhari**, MPA, (Women-318, Punjab, PML-N), **Ms. Faiza Ahmad Malik**, MPA, (Women-362, Punjab, PPP), **Dr. Farzana Nazir**, MPA, (Women-323, Punjab, PML-N), **Ms. Fozia Ayub Qureshi**, MPA, (Women-343, Punjab, PML-N), **Ms. Iram Hassan Bajwa**, MPA, (Women-344, Punjab, PML-N), **Mian Irfan Daultana**, MPA, (PP-234, Vehari-III, Punjab, PML-N), **Ms. Khadija Umar**, MPA, (Women-361, Punjab, PML), **Ms. Mehwish Sultana**, MPA, (W-309, Punjab, PML-N), **Mr. Muhammad Waheed Gul**, MPA, (PP-145, Lahore-IX, Punjab, PML-N), **Ms. Nabeela Hakim Ali Khan**, MPA, (Women-358, Punjab, PTI), **Dr. Najma Afzal Khan**, MPA, (W-320, Punjab, PML-N), **Ms. Najma Begum**, MPA, (W-324, Punjab, PML-N), **Ms. Nasreen Nawaz**, MPA, (W-301, Punjab, PML-N), **Engineer Qamar ul Islam Raja**, MPA, (PP-5, Rawalpindi-V, Punjab, PML-N), **Ms. Raheela Anwar**, MPA, (W-357, Punjab, PTI), **Ms. Raheela Khadim Hussain**, MPA, (W-345, Punjab, PML-N), **Mr. Ramesh Singh Arora**, MPA, (Non Muslim-368, Punjab, PML-N), **Ms. Rukhsana Kokab**, MPA, (Women-308, Punjab, PML-N), **Ms. Saadia Sohail Rana**, MPA, (Women-355, Punjab, PTI), **Ms. Salma Shaheen Butt**, MPA, (W-341, Punjab, PML-N), **Sardar Bahadar Khan Maikan**, MPA, (PP-38, Sarghoda-XI, Punjab, PML-N), **Sardar Vickas Hassan Mokal**, MPA, (PP-180, Kasur-VI, Punjab, PML), **Ms. Shameela Aslam**, MPA, (W-312, Punjab, PML-N), **Ms. Surriya Naseem**, MPA, (W-322, Punjab, PML-N), **Ms. Tamkeen Akhtar Niazi**, MPA, (W-333, Punjab, PML-N) and **Mrs. Zeb-un-Nisa Awan**, MPA, (W-300, Punjab, PML-N).

MPAs from the *Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa* included **Mr. Mehmood Jan**, MPA, (PK-07 Peshawar-VII, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, PTI), and **Mr. Wajeesh uz Zaman Khan**, MPA, (PK-56 Mansehra-IV, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, PML-N).

Pakistani Experts who spoke at the Dialogue included **Mr. Muhammad Asif Khan**, Agricultural Economist, **Dr. Hafiz A. Pasha**, Former Advisor to PM on Finance and **Mr. Aftab-ur-Rehman Rana**, President, Sustainable Tourism Foundation, Pakistan.