

ADDRESS OF WELCOME
By
ENGR. IFTIKHAR AHMAD, PRESIDENT
PAKISTAN ENGINEERING CONGRESS
On
WORLD WATER DAY
(Saturday, 22nd March, 2014)
At
Pakistan Engineering Congress

The Honourable Mian Mohammad Yawar Zaman Sahib
Minister for Irrigation, Govt. of Punjab
Distinguished Delegates
Fellow Engineers
Ladies and Gentlemen!

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

It is a matter of great honour and pleasure for me to welcome you all over here on the World Water Day. The significance of marking this day is directly linked with the vital importance of water in the life of the people and the nations and it was, therefore, that the United Nations Conference on Environment Development, in 1992 declared 22nd March as "World Water Day".

Accordingly, every year a theme is selected for deliberations for creating awareness through holding Lectures, Seminars, and Walks etc. The theme is carefully selected to cover various aspects relating to the development of water resources, conservation of water, maximum utilization of water, to formulate plans and policies to ensure for optimal utilization of this natural but limited resource. This year the theme is "Water and Energy" and undoubtedly no other topic could be more relevant if considered in the context of our Mother land.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

- Water is life. No living being, be it individual, animal or vegetation can exist without it;
- Water is essential for the survival of individuals as well as communities, is the force behind socio-economic advancement and should be valued and given due importance.
- It is precious and free bounty of nature and should be used economically and conserved.
- It is imperative that efforts are made to enhance the production of food and fiber.
- Water is renewable and is the most economical source of generation of electricity.

Pakistan Engineering Congress commemorates World Water Day every year on 22nd March along with the World, where technical papers on selected theme are presented and discussed to enlighten and educate the engineers, scientists and the public at large.

Since 2005 every year in March, Water Day event is convened by Pakistan Engineering Congress. The Papers presented at the event are printed in a book form and the recommendations made by the learned authors of these papers are formulated by a panel of experts, which are conveyed to the Federal and Provincial Governments for their consideration and implementation.

Keeping in view the importance of water in our daily lives, apart from celebrating World Water Day, Pakistan Engineering Congress continues to organize different seminars at different occasions at domestic as well as international levels.

An International Workshop on Floods in Pakistan-2010 was organized by the Congress, in collaboration with ICID (International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage), WWF (World Wide Fund) and Pakistan National Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (PANCID), in the year 2011.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

In 1947, per capita water supply was more than 5000 (five thousand) cubic meter which is to-day slightly over only 1000 (one thousand) cubic meter and is going to be even less than that. It is now on the brink of being classified as a water stressed close to water short country.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

There are various reasons behind this decrease in per capita water availability. After construction of Mangla and Tarbela Dams, at least one (1) mega dam was required to be constructed every decade. The country's planners and policy makers have shown a grave negligence and not a single Dam was constructed in the last 30 years. As a result of this negligence, the country is facing water shortage of forty (40) MAF.

We have preserved / stored only 12.5% of water as against world average of 40%. Moreover, as the country is an agricultural country and most of the canals are not cemented, water is lost through seepage from the canal beds.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

The Country cannot achieve sustained economic development and food sufficiency if we do not build large dams to bring more land under cultivation and use the water resources in the generation of electricity. The Country is already faced with energy shortage of 3000(three thousand) to 4000 (four thousand) megawatt which is resulting in closure of industrial units, decline in exports etc. The Country is blessed by nature with enormous coal deposits of 175 (one hundred seventy five) billion tons. It is heartening that the Government has realized the value of these resources and has entered into MOU's for construction of coal fed thermal electricity units.

I understand that today when learned speakers will present their papers. We shall not only stand wiser than before but shall hopefully be in a position to formulate and forward comprehensive recommendations for policy makers and implementing authorities for their kind consideration and needed actions. With this prelude, I would like to conclude my address of welcome by once again thanking you all, for granting me very patient hearing.

Pakistan Paindabad