

ADDRESS OF WELCOME
By
ENGR. IFTIKHAR AHMAD, PRESIDENT
PAKISTAN ENGINEERING CONGRESS
On
WORLD WATER DAY
(Sunday, 22nd March, 2015)
At
Pakistan Engineering Congress

The Honorable Engr. Syed Abdul Qadir Shah,
Chairman,
Pakistan Engineering Council
Distinguished Delegates
Fellow Engineers

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Assalam-o-Alaikum

It is a matter of great honour and pleasure for me to welcome all of you 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 Sustainable Development” and undoubtedly no other topic could be more relevant if considered in the context of our Mother Land.

Ladies & Gentlemen!

It is due to this vital importance of Water that Pakistan Engineering Congress commemorates World Water Day every year on 22nd March since 2005 alongwith the World, where technical papers are presented at the event and 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.

We should admit our extreme negligence and guilt in not constructing any large Dams in the last about 30 Years after construction of Mangla, Tarbela, Chashma and Ghazi Barotha. The result is that we are faced with extreme shortage of Water and more than 4000 MW of Power, that is adversely affecting our agriculture, industrial development and exports:

* According to International standards 40% of the River flows should be stored

about 58 MAF for Pakistan. However, our storage capacity is not more than 13.29 MAF, which is a dismal position and speaks of our negligence in conservation of water, which is harbinger of socio-economic advancement, food security and alleviation of poverty.

Ladies & Gentlemen!

The availability of water in the Indus Basin is heavily dependent upon melting of glaciers (which are reservoirs of water). However, due to use of fossil fuels, coal, oil, gas etc. in generation of electricity / other uses, by advanced Countries / China / India, there is excess emission of "Greenhouse Gases (CO²). It is resulting in increase in temperature by 3 °C to 4 °C which is leading to increased melting of Glaciers that would result in Floods, droughts etc. Hence, it is all the more necessary to construct Mega Water Reservoir for storage of excess water flows. Construction of Dasu, and Diamer Basha should be completed on war footings otherwise the Country will be faced with drought, food insecurity and declining growth rate (GDP) and export earnings etc.

In the end I am offering some proposals for the conservation and maximum utilization of water.

- * Laser Land leveling System and adoption of Drip or Sprinkler irrigation to save Water with maximum out-put.
- * Put a brake on the excessive abstraction of Ground water and enact laws for installation of Tube-wells (already 1.2 Million in operation).
- * Conservation of Water of Hill Torrents that contributes about 18 MAF (Million Acre Feet) Water out of which 13 MAF (Million Acre Feet) can be saved which would bring 5 Million hectares of waste land under cultivation. It could guide in an agriculture revolution in the Country.
- * Rain Harvesting should be made compulsory in construction of buildings. Already rain harvesting is being done on a large scale in Malaysia at buildings of Universities, Museums, Mosques and Rain Gardens.

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 put forward comprehensive recommendations for policy makers and implementing authorities, for their valued 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 PAINDA-ABAD