

**ADDRESS OF WELCOME
BY
ENGR. RIAZ AHMAD KHAN
PRESIDENT
PAKISTAN ENGINEERING CONGRESS
ON
WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 9TH JUNE, 2012
AT
“MASHHADI HALL” OF PAKISTAN ENGINEERING CONGRESS**

**Honorable Chief Guest Engr. Tariq Hameed
The Members of Executive Council
Members of Pakistan Engineering Congress
Distinguished Guests
Fellow Engineers
Ladies and Gentlemen!**

Assalam-o-Alaikum!

I take this opportunity on behalf of Pakistan Engineering Congress in general and on my own in particular, to welcome you all, to this gathering, for observing “World Environment Day” on the theme of :

“Green Economy-Does it include you?”

It is indeed an honour to welcome you all here. Your presence here is manifestation of the concerns of the global community on climate change and deteriorating environment. We have gathered here to deliberate on this issue and see what our experts propose to counter this situation so that this world remains a safe place to live in harmony with the Nature.

In the run-up to UN-Conference on “**Sustainable Development**” to be held in June at Rio, a galaxy of environmentalists, scientists, economists, business executives concluded that the “Earth” is under great stress due to myriad reasons such as :

- Climate change, the havoc of untimely rains, flashfloods, bio-diversity loss, receding glaciers, droughts etc.
- The spiraling population, particularly in Afro-Asian Countries and the grave issue of food security, poverty alleviation and economic development challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

We note that although numerous global Accords were signed such as Kyoto, Copenhagen, Cancun, Durban, Qatar, the world despite its pious commitments has failed to control global warming to UN-target of 2^o (3.6 degree Fahrenheit). It is mainly due to utter consumerism and Commercialism as well as the unchecked spiral growth in population. In a report issued at the coming UN-talks, in Bonn (Germany), the scientists have visualized that the increase in global warming will be of the order of 3.6^o (6.3 degree Fahrenheit). This phenomenal increase is subject to the big “if” that individual countries do fulfill their promised commitments in respect of reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. It has been estimated that the greenhouse gas emissions. (CO₂, methane) etc. will overshoot by 9-11 billion tonnes. At present, the world emits about 48 billion tonnes of greenhouse gasses vis-à-vis the annual 44 billion tones ceiling targeted for the year 2020. The United States of America accounts for 6-billion tonnes, China 7-billion tonnes, the European Union (EU) 5- billion tonnes, India’s emissions are 1.8 billion tonnes as against Pakistan’s contribution of 244 million tonnes (0.55%) only.

It is interesting to note that the countries being termed as most developed in the world are actually most detrimental to the environment and much needs to be done by them in emission reductions. The major reasons are their dominantly industrial based economy causal to the environmental upheavals. A shift to non-natural and non-organic mode of agriculture produce has also contributed a lot to the overall environmental degradation, mostly because of extensive use of toxic ingredients forming the part of fertilizers being used for enhanced production. Hence, if seen in totality it would be clear and obvious that shift to the green economy would not be a three dimensional but rather a six dimensional issue. It is just not easy now to prohibit the damage being caused through the flow of toxic fluids in the system of general hydrologic cycle.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

If we concentrate on the studies done on environment and green economy we will find it encouraging that a little care could produce good results. It has really been fortunate that the international organizations are now fully cognizant and conscious of the facts which have resulted in massive environmental degradation. A number of international statutes and conventions aimed at curbing such damages to the environment through various non-green economic activities have been formulated containing the related prohibitive clauses. Such international statutes and conventions which are being worked upon to this effect also include the reward strategy to encourage all those who opt for a shift towards green economy. The award of Carbon Credit to the various projects

which are alternative to the activities which cause more carbon emissions is one good example. The other is that of REDD, i.e. Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation. This is a mechanism which has been designed to provide reward for effective care and restoration of forests in a pattern similar to that of Carbon Credit.

Pakistan Scenario

The Country's GDP growth rate is 3.7% whereas in neighboring India it is around 8% and China is in high growth rate for almost a decade. The low growth rate in Pakistan is a matter of concern because the country had earlier achieved high growth rates. This unfortunate trend needs to be reversed if we want to remain in the company of present global competitive world. Besides other reasons, the unprecedented floods and rains are the major cause of the low growth rate. We have, therefore, to build disaster risk reduction strategy into our development plans to cope the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation. The need of the hour is to heavily invest in hydel energy generation as well as in the development of alternate energy generation such as wind and solar. In this connection, the observations of **Sheng Fulai** Chief of Research UNEP is highly pertinent which points-out that:-

Green economy vehicle has four wheels

- Green Technology
- Natural Resources such as eco-system
- Educated and healthy people

and above all

- A social protection system that is fair and equitable

It is highly desirable that our Country should embark on investment in "Green" technology. Recently, the FACES Pakistan a non-profit organization, did a commendable job of creating awareness among the masses by introducing a **"Fan fitted with Solar Cap" that propels the fan on exposure to sunlight. A Swiss pilot flew a solar plane across the strait of Gibraltar from Spain into Moroccan airspace** on the world's first intercontinental flight in a plane powered by the sun.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Pakistan although is a small contributor ranking 128th yet its vulnerability to climate change is high in the shape of floods, rains and droughts. The problem is further aggravated by unchecked increase in population. The present population of Pakistan is 180 million and with growth at 2.56 percent a year, it would touch 210-million mark by the year 2020 and it is projected at a staggering figure of 342-million by the year 2050. In China, there will be 24-million increase by 2020 and 21-million increase in India by 2035. Almost 1-billion increase in China/India/Pakistan and Bangladesh alone in about 25-years from now.

Another issue of alarm is that in Pakistan we have a negligible 05.31% of its land area as forest whereas it is 18.21% in China and 23.68% in India. By international standards, the Country should have at least 25% of its land area under forest cover. Pakistan has a vast opportunity of massive forestation and earning carbon credits under Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD).

Ladies and Gentlemen!

We will now hear from our experts various interventions in detail to conserve the environment and eco-systems so as to have sustainable infrastructure to meet our development, social and environmental objectives. I hope towards the end of this seminar concrete recommendations will emerge which we will take to the Government of Pakistan for adaptation. I thank you all once again for having spared your valuable time to participate in this event.

Thank you all.

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