ADDRESS BY THE CHIEF GUEST
The Honourable Mr. Shuja Khanzada
Minister for Environment, Govt. of Punjab
on
WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY-2014
on
Thursday, 5th June, 2014
at
Pakistan Engineering Congress, Lahore

Engr. Iftikhar Ahmad
President Pakistan Engineering Congress
Distinguished Delegates
Members of Pakistan Engineering Congress

Ladies & Gentlemen!
I feel extremely privileged for presiding over the august gathering of engineers, environmentalists, water resources experts, meteorologists. Pakistan Engineering Congress deserves high appreciation for assembling such a galaxy of experts to apprise us about the phenomenon of Green House Gas Emissions, Global Warming, Rising Sea Levels and the Consequent adverse effects on various countries especially the Small Island Countries commonly called SIDs. The theme is very relevant as almost 50-Million people inhabit in these Small Islands.

Ladies & Gentlemen!
The nature has bestowed on mankind the free gifts of ECO-System and Bio-diversity on which balanced economic development and wellbeing of human race depends. However, due to ever increasing population, over exploitation of resources, over consumption, commercialization, human avarice and over dependence and over playing of the value of higher and higher Gross Domestic Product (GDP) instead of welfare and wellbeing of common man the balance of ECO-System has been badly impaired resulting in horrific damages.

Ladies & Gentlemen!
The rich nations and the fast developing countries using huge quantities of fuel, coal and gas are responsible for the excessive emissions of Greenhouse Gases; Carbon Dioxide (CO_2), Methane (CH_4) etc. These gases trap heat in the atmosphere and raise the temperature of the earth. It is this ever increasing rise in temperature that is catalyst of accelerated melting of glaciers, floods, droughts, hurricanes, rising sea levels. Here I quote the following extract from a United Nations Report;

“The rate of decline in emissions was too slow to limit average World Temperature rises to 2 degree Celsius (3.6 degree Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial times, a ceiling set by almost 200 Nations to avert droughts, heat waves and rising seas”.

The irony is that for no mistake on their part, Nations like Pakistan which is amongst 12 countries most at risk (on the list of most vulnerable countries) contribute only 3% per capita GHG’s which comes to 0.2% of world average. Similarly all the 52 SIDs (38 on UN list and 14 protectorates of other countries) contribute 2% GHG’s per capita which comes to only 0.5% of world emissions. These SIDs which are remotely located, with

limited resources, limited export potential are the worst sufferers of global warming. Not only their economies but their very survival is at stake.No doubt some of these (Cuba, Singapore, Bahrain, Maldives, Mauritius) have shown remarkable economic achievements nevertheless their fragile economies cannot bear the onslaught of 3 to 4 millimeter a year rising sea levels and the consequent inherent devastation.The coastal zones will also surely be affected.

- Tens of millions of people in low-lying coastal areas of south and Southeast Asia affected by sea level rise and an increase in the intensity of tropical cyclones.

- Coastal inundation is likely to seriously affect the aquaculture, industry and infrastructure particularly in heavily-populated mega deltas.

- Stability of wetlands, mangroves, and coral reefs increasingly threatened.

The United Nations has been making efforts to economically help these small island countries and bolster their economies and has rightly chosen SIDs for the environmental discussion in 2014 to focus the global attention to their problems, short-term / long-term steps for mitigation of adverse effects of global warming, rising sea levels, tsunami's etc. as well as to generate financial resources for implementation of these resources.

Ladies & Gentlemen!
In the end, I congratulate Pakistan Engineering Congress for organizing the seminar on such an important subject. I hope the recommendations of the seminar would provide us with least carbon emission economy.

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