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REPORT EXECUTIVE SEMINAR

Improving Water Governance in Pakistan

August 2015

Partnering Universities

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Brief Introduction:

An executive seminar on ‘Water governance in Pakistan’ was organized by the US-Pakistan Centre for Advanced Studies in Water (USPCAS-W), in collaboration with Mehran University of Engineering & Technology (MUET), Jamshoro, and University of Utah, USA to enhance awareness about critical water sustainability issues facing Pakistan. The purpose of organizing this seminar was to bring together senior policy makers and relevant stakeholders to explore policy and research priorities for addressing water sustainability issues within the framework of water-development nexus and also to discuss opportunities and solutions leading to sustainable water resources management and provision of reliable water services.

Seminar Objectives:

1. To raise awareness about how water is positioned in the post-2015 global development agenda, including its relevance to achieving broader goal of poverty reduction in Pakistani context.
2. To provide a platform to share knowledge and best practices in water governance, as well as to raise the profile of water governance issues.
3. To identify research and policy priorities for improving water governance.
4. To understand how combined interventions under Water Environment & Food Security (WEF) nexus can impact poverty reduction.

The seminar was held on Monday August 03, 2015 in a Hotel at Karachi. The seminar was attended by around 120 participants belonging to Government of Pakistan, Government of Sindh, academia, representatives of civil society organizations / NGOs, Media and others from different walks of life. Seminar started with recitation of Holy Quran by Prof. Dr. Shafi Muhammad Kori.

I- Inaugural Session :

Senior Sindh Minister for Finance, Planning & Development (P&D) & Energy Syed Murad Ali Shah was chief guest of this event, whereas U.S. Consul General Karachi Mr. Brian Heath,

Dr. Mohammad Aslam Uqaili - Vice Chancellor Mehran University of Engineering & Technology Jamshoro, Director U.S.-Pakistan Centers





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for Advanced Studies Water (USPCAS-W) University of Utah Prof. Dr. Steve Burian, Prof. Dr. Mahmood ul Hasan Butt - Focal Person of Higher Education Commission (HEC) were guest of honor in the inaugural session.

Vice Chancellor MUET Prof. Dr. Mohammad Aslam Uqaili in his welcome address said that keeping the water needs and tackling the water crisis of Pakistan, U.S.-Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Water (USPCAS-W) has been recently launched in MUET with the assistance of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), this center with the technical support of University of Utah will achieve set targets successfully within the framework of time. This USAID supported water center is first and foremost state of the art and applied research based water center which will help out for the viable solution of water challenges of Pakistan. The Vice Chancellor welcomed and thanked all the distinguished guests who participated in this seminar.



Provincial Minister for Finance, Energy and Planning & Development Syed Murad Ali Shah said, “Pakistan is facing acute problem of water availability and water security including floods and droughts. Due to climate change we receive abnormal rains and consequently face heavy floods.” He in his keynote address spoke of the persisting issue of water wastage in the Arabian Sea because of a lack of dams in Sindh that consequently affected efficient and optimal use of water. He added that Sukkur Barrage is one of the most important barrages of Sindh so in order to enhance the capacity of irrigation system of the province; the rehabilitation work of this important barrage is direly needed. Minister said that our country needs technical as well as managerial support from institutions like USPCAS-W to address water related issues. He appreciated the efforts of USAID for establishing this water research center at MUET and also congratulated management of USPCAS-W and The University of Utah for organizing such timely seminar.



“I am very proud that USAID is partnering in these efforts”, said Brian Heath, U.S. Consul General Karachi. He further said that this center will collaborate to the fellow universities of United States on higher education and applied research in water-related disciplines, sharing of research, trainings and organization water workshop events. He appreciated efforts of the government for their support to the water research center. “We look forward to continuing work with MUET in finding ways to deal with the water related problems”, he added.





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Dr. Steve Burain, Director USPCAAS-W from University of Utah (UU) side said that the UU is fully committed to providing technical assistance to this center for upgrading higher education, research, and trainings. He said that UU is the partnering university of MUET Jamshoro in the establishment of this water research center called U.S.-Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Water (USPCASW). He also informed the seminar participants that the center is offering one-semester exchange scholarship opportunity to the MS/PhD students in UU along with a highly advanced teacher training programs to the faculty for their capacity building.



Higher Education Commission (HEC) focal person Prof. Dr. Mahmood ul Hasan Butt speaking in the seminar said that HEC is fully committed to support these centers for advanced studies in different fields including Energy, Water , Agriculture & Food Security which have been established in different public sector universities namely; Energy center at National University of Science and Technology (NUST) Islamabad, Food & Agriculture at University of Agriculture Faisalabad and Water Center at Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET) Jamshoro.. He said that U.S.-Pakistan Centers for Advanced Studies (USPCAS) is \$ 127 million USAID funded project. He said that it is one of the unique projects launched earlier in June this year for building partnership in higher education and research to support Pakistan’s economic development by strengthening universities and encouraging applied research.



1st Technical Session:

This session was focused on post-2015 water development agenda and the speakers highlighted the key challenges and requirements in implementing the water-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Mr. Arif Ahmed Khan, federal secretary for climate change chaired this session, while Dr. Mohammad Asalm Chaudhry, chief of party University of Utah, Prof Dr. Bakhshal Khan Lashari, project director USPCASW MUET Jamshoro, Mr. Muhammad Ashraf – chairman Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) and Dr. Fateh M. Marri, project coordinator Water Sector Improvement





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Project (WSIP) / Chief Economist Planning & Development Department, Government of Sindh were speakers.

In this session, Dr. Mohammad Aslam Chaudhry spoke about the strengthening, planning and implementation capacities while transitioning from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in water. He said that Pakistan has managed to achieve nine of the 41 indicators set in the MDGs. He maintained that SDGs would be easier to achieve as all developing countries could choose targets in accordance with their resources. He further suggested focusing on targets such as provision of safe drinking water, access to improved quality of water and effective water usage among others. Dr. Chaudhry added that increased political commitment, technological advancements, and identification of financial resources and capacities were the keys to achieving the set goals.



Dr. Muhammad Ashraf, chairman of the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), said Pakistan had, for the first time, touched the mark denoting water scarcity in 1991, and then in 2005. While delivering his presentation on managing water scarcity in Pakistan, he revealed that indicators suggest that by 2025, it will rank among absolute water-scarce countries. He said that the water poverty index of Pakistan shows that the majority of the country’s population did not have access to water even for the purpose of drinking and washing including clothes and utensils and as far as the quality of water was concerned, 80 percent of water available was unsafe for consumption. He further said that a constant increase in population, urbanization, industrialization and inefficient agricultural activities had led to a shortage of water by 11 percent in 2004 which can further rise up to 31 percent by 2025. Dr. Ashraf explained that these problems will continue to persist unless Pakistan chooses to follow the hard path which meant increasing water storage capacity and legislating on increased abstraction of water whereas an attempt to improve water productivity can also help.



Dr. Fateh M. Marri, identified the basic issues surrounding the water governance crisis in Pakistan and emphasized on policy correction and landscape institutionalization. According to his presentation talk on “water distribution plan”, Punjab received the lion’s share of 50 percent while there had only been two instances wherein Sindh and Balochistan had received their due share of water. Citing Karachi's water distribution as an example, Dr. Marri said the city received 650 MGD of water daily but its poor distribution system had rendered several areas of the metropolis waterless. An ageing infrastructure that included worn-out pumping machines, lack of maintenance, institutional incapacity and poor performance in addition to challenges such as climate change were some of the other factors identified by Dr. Marri.





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2nd Technical Session:

This session was mainly focused on policy and research priorities for improving water governance in Pakistan. Vice Chancellor Sindh Agriculture University Tandojam Prof. Dr. Memon Mujeeb-u-ddin Sahrai chaired this 2nd session, whereas Prof. Steve Burian, director University of Utah, Prof. Michael Barber, chairman department of civil and environment engineering, University of Utah, Dr. Arif Anwar, a senior researcher at International Water Management Institute (IWMI) Pakistan, Engineer Naseer Memon, chief executive officer, Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO), Islamabad delivered their presentation.



The first speaker this session, Prof Michael Barber, the head of the department of civil and environmental engineering at the University of Utah, shed light on a few issues and challenges faced by the US while negotiating and implementing water compacts and treaties signed between the states and countries respectively. He added that Treaties and Compacts generally span long periods of time. The challenge is to have a solution that will work over the same period – neither for just today nor for just tomorrow.



Dr Arif Anwar, a senior researcher at the International Water Management Institute, Pakistan, expressed his disappointment over lack of applied research in universities and an effective academia-industry link in Pakistan. He said that academia-industry link is a privilege and academia needs to show proactive leadership to develop this relationship.

“By no means would we be able to progress unless applied research was made part and parcel of such fields,” he added.



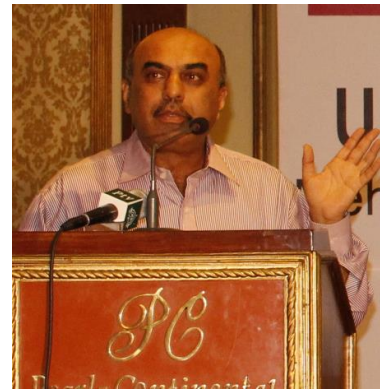


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Naseer Memon, Chief Executive Strengthening Participatory Organization, in his presentation, “Hydro-Climatic Disasters: Emerging Research Challenges”, said Pakistan was among the top 10 countries vulnerable to climate change. He referred to the severe heat wave in Karachi that claimed over 1,800 lives as a clear example of the fast-changing climatic conditions. Among a few causes affecting climate, he highlighted some key ones; including deforestation, glacial melt, loss of biodiversity and rise in sea level. Mr. Memon also dismayed over a dearth of research in higher educational institutes and suggested several principal research areas in water governance that needed to be worked on including the effects of climate change on livelihoods and health, climate changes in relation with hydro-climatic diseases, flood plain management and improving weather predictability. “If you cannot deliver on any front, then the least you can do is to improve the standard of houses in which the poor reside.



The speakers in the seminar were of the view that the available water resources in Pakistan are gradually shrinking due to the prevailing water governance trends and consequently declining the storage capacity of water. They said that the present social, economic and administrative system of water management lacks to address the water challenges of Pakistan. They were of the view that effective improvement of water governance in Pakistan is possible through the applied research, public-private partnership, improving institutional structure and informed decision making mechanism.



In the end the sessions Question & Answer (Q&A) session was held.



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Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Signing Ceremony:

In the last of the seminar the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) ceremony held in which Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET) signed MoUs with Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), Sindh Irrigation Drainage Authority (SIDA) and Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) Tandojam. On this occasion

Dr. Mohammad Aslam Uqaili – Vice Chancellor Mehran UET said, “Water governance is one of the prime concerns the country and these MoUs will go a long way for working together to improve water management and irrigation systems in the country”. The Vice Chancellor MUET signed the MoUs with Mr. Muhammad Ashraf - Chairman PCRWR, Mr. Nazeer Ahmed Essani Memon- General Manager (Transition) on behalf of Managing Director SIDA and Prof. Dr. Memon Mujeeb-u-ddin Sahrai -Vice Chancellor SAU Tandojam. Dr. Randy Hatfield, USAID’s Senior Policy Advisor and Program Manager, Sindh Basic Education Program, Project Director USPCAS-W Dr. Bakhshal Khan Lashari, faculty and other stakeholders witnessed the MoU signing ceremony and appreciated this move of future collaboration for applied research in water sector of the country.

