World’s Wetlands Day, Wetlands for Sustainable Urban Future

Event Report
1. Summary of the Activity:

Preservation and conservation of the Ecosystems is the most critical issue faced by humanity today. Wetlands are an integral part of the ecosystem. In order to highlight their significance and inform and educate the users World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on February 02. This year the theme was: Wetlands for Sustainable Urban Future. HASHOO Foundation, Islamabad and Department of Environmental Economics at Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad, jointly, organized a panel discussion to highlight the significance of this critical resource on February 02, 2018, Friday 2:00-4:00 PM. Renowned experts, like Ambassador Shafqat KakaKhel (former Deputy Executive Director at UNEP), Mr. Ayub Qutub (Executive Director PIEDAR), Mr. Tahir Rasheed (CEO SPFC) and Mr. Syed Nasir Mahmood (IG Forest, MoCC) were the main speakers for the event. Chairperson for the event was Dr. Asad Zaman, Vice Chancellor of Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE). Guests from various Universities, Ministry of Climate Change and Research Organizations were invited to participate in the event.

1.1. Participant’s Detail:

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<th>Participant’s Summary</th>
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<td>No. of Female Participants</td>
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Chairperson: DR. ASAD ZAMAN (VC PIDE).

Speakers:

| 1 | Mr. Shafqat Kakakhel. |
| 2 | Mr. Ayub Qutub.       |
| 3 | Mr. Syed Nasir Mahmood. |
| 4 | Mr. Tahir Rasheed     |
| 5 | Mr. Mehmood Akhtar Cheems |
Students from PIDE and other academic and researchers institution attended the event. Most of
the participants were students; however policy makers, professors, guests from planning
commission, IUNC, SDPI, LEAD, HASHOO FOUNDATION and other universities were also
invited to attend the event. The event was organized by PIDE society of Environmental
economists (PIDESEE) at department of environmental economics at PIDE with cooperation and
sponsorship of HASHOO Foundation. After the concluding remarks of Dr. Asad Zaman VC
PIDE, the members of PIDE society of environmental economists (PIDESEE) took oath from
Amb. Shafqat Kakakhel.

1.2. Narrative Summary:

The discussion focused on the title: Wetlands for sustainable urban future. The introductory
remarks, highlighting the importance of the day, were given by Dr. Rehana Siddiqui, Head,
Department of Environmental Economics, (PIDE), Islamabad. The country director of HASHOO
Foundation, Ms. Aisha Khan gave opening remarks and appreciated the collaborated effort of the
two organizations.

The first speaker, Amb. Kakakhel, pointed out 3 important factors closely connected to the urban
future and water bodies in urban areas. According to Amb. Kakakhel, given the water scarcity
problem, population growth and management are the biggest challenges for sustainable urban
future in Pakistan. He argued that high population growth has caused significant damages to
existing water bodies and it is the need of the hour to ensure that National Wetlands Policy is
effectively implemented to protect the existing water bodies. He also added that for
implementation and monitoring of national water policy coordination among multiple
Government Departments and other stake holders is critical.

Mr. Tahir Rasheed highlighted that conservation, protection and proper management are key for
sustainable urban future. Mr. Rasheed said that, if we want sustainable wetlands for better urban
future, we should change our policy towards restoration, conservation and management of
wetlands with shifted ownerships to make sure that stake holders consider it their own.
According to Mr. Rasheed it’s very important to add economic value to wetlands in Pakistan. For
the purpose of policy relevance and management there must be regulatory framework. In the
ending remarks Mr. Rasheed focused capacity building on district level and resource allocation for conservation on national level. Mr. Nasir Mahmood IG, Forest MoCC, said that wetlands have their own eco-system around. When the water was clean in streams and lakes there were lots of dragonflies around but due to pollution and other anthropogenic activities biodiversity is adversely affected endangering the future. According to Mr Mahmood, it’s our aim to create awareness among people about forest and wetlands importance and economic values to protect these resources and make it sustainable for coming generations. In last section of the seminar Mr. Ayub Qutub requested to all the young scholars and community to work, write, and ask critical questions on every dimension of environment.

Mr Mahmood A.Cheema also highlighted the importance of the wetlands and the critical role IUCN has played in conservation and protection of wetlands and in development of National Water Policy for Pakistan. He mentioned that National Water Policy focuses on the importance of wetland.

The event ended by a vote of thanks from Mr Arif Rehman, HASHOO FOUNDATION and Professor Rehana Siddiqui, Head, Department of Environmental Economics, PIDE. After the event refreshments and networking time was provided for all the participants of the event.

**Event Outcomes**

The following outcomes have been observed in past few days after this event:

- Improved collaboration between HASHOO FOUNDATION and Department of Environmental Economics, PIDE for organizing future events and support for student activities, including research.
- The awareness about the need to preserve and conserve the wetlands has improved. Now the students of all other departments at PIDE are asking the questions about the plans and policies required for the sustainable use of eco-system services.
- Increased interaction among students across departments.
- Students are focusing on doing research on this critical topic.
- Interaction with Ministries and other academic and research organization is expected to improve.

2. **Picture Gallery: ATTACHED.**