

Pakistan Society of Development Economists Secretary's Report

Honourable Mr Ghulam Ishaq Khan, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Professor Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi, President of the Pakistan Society of Development Economists, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalam-o-Alaikum

It is my honour and privilege to present the Secretary's report this year and to welcome you all to the Sixth Annual General Meeting of the Pakistan Society of Development Economists. It is a special honour that the President of Pakistan, Mr Ghulam Ishaq Khan, has, for the second year running found the time from his extremely busy schedule to be here with us to inaugurate the meeting. His presence here today symbolizes his continued interest and strong support for our work. Most of us know that the President himself founded this Society on October 19, 1982. He has, since that time, played an active role in the academic work of the society. It says a lot for his dedication to the profession with which he has been associated for so many decades. Honourable President, we are indeed very grateful to you for your strong support for the Society.

Judging by the large gathering here today, one can safely say that the Annual General Meetings of the Society have become an established tradition and the Society is now an institution in its own right – able to hold its own amongst the best academic societies of the world.

This has been due largely to the unstinting support the members have extended and the hard work of a large team of people. I would like to thank you all. I would like to thank, in particular, Professor Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi, the President of the Society whose constant mission to inculcate the spirit of academic reasoning in Pakistan is reflected so well in the work of the PSDE.

The Society was conceived to provide an institutional framework for the effective dissemination of the fruits of research among academic scholars, government economists and policy-makers dealing with economic matters. The society, as you all know, is based in the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics and is registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. This registration ensures that the Society maintains its autonomy and grows in its own right. Its autonomy is

guaranteed by its constitution and by the bye-laws that govern its functioning. Its decisions are taken independently without any interference from any quarter but with active consultation among its members. The Society has provided an extremely effective and proven academic forum for contact between economists associated with the Institute and those outside the institution. The Society aims at achieving professional excellence and at the creation and dissemination of knowledge in the field of development economics. According to its charter, the Society encourages perfect freedom of economic discussion. It does not take any partisan attitude nor does it commit itself to any position on practical economic issues. The performance of the Society during the last seven years of its existence has proved beyond any doubt that it has fulfilled and continues to fulfil the objectives for which it was created.

The Society has grown from strength to strength. From 252 members in 1983 this number has risen dramatically so that as of the 24th of December, 1989, the PSDE has 441 registered members of whom 260 are paying members and 181 are ex-officio members on account of their being on the research staff of the PIDE or its Board of Governors, Senior Fellows, Board of Editors or International Advisory Board. The members of the Society are predominantly from within Pakistan but its membership extends to almost all the continents of the world, and includes three Nobel Laureates: Professor J. Tinbergen from the Netherlands, Professor Arthur Lewis from Princeton University and Professor Lawrence Klein from the University of Pennsylvania.

At the first meeting of the Society in March 1984, which incidently was also inaugurated by Mr Ghulam Ishaq Khan, 27 papers and 1 invited lecture were presented. We have come a long way since then. Although in broad terms, the format and scope of the Sixth Annual General Meeting of the Society is similar to that of the earlier meetings, the number of papers to be presented and discussed this year is 43 which is much more than the number in the previous years. Moreover, we have this year eight invited lectures including the Quaid-i-Azam Lecture. We are honoured that these distinguished academics from all over the world have found the time to be with us this year. We are especially honoured that Professor Malinvaud will deliver the Quaid-i-Azam Lecture this year. The number of contributors from outside Pakistan has also increased over time. It is even more gratifying to note that the contributions from Pakistani social scientists has also increased markedly. This healthy trend is largely due to the increased confidence of Pakistani scholars generated by the activities of the Society. This trend is also reflected in the considerable attendance at the meeting and in the level of interaction. This has resulted in large from the members' willingness to participate more actively in the activities of the Society.

The Proceedings of the meeting are regularly published as a special issue of

The Pakistan Development Review. Although there is a strict page limit on the contributions, the increase in the number of contributions has resulted in several thousand pages of text. *The Pakistan Development Review* is widely and regularly circulated all over the world and results in the useful dissemination of the knowledge that is generated at these meetings.

Another important activity of the Society is to organize lectures on Development Economics which are delivered by distinguished development economists of the world. So far 15 such lectures have been delivered. These lectures are published by Pakistan Institute of Development Economic in a special series. The Society would be holding an essay competition every year from 1990 onwards with a view to encouraging young economists. The Society would also award gold medals to scholars making outstanding contributions in the area of development economics.

In the end, I would like to once again thank Professor Naqvi for his invaluable guidance in organizing the meeting and all the members of various organizing committees and various sections of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics who have assisted us in putting together this year's meeting. They are too numerous to mention individually but I am sure that they know that their tireless efforts have made our job so much easier.

We are deeply indebted to the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung which financed the visits of overseas scholars delivering the Quaid-i-Azam Lecture and the invited lectures. We are also grateful to the International Food Policy Research Institute for financing their scholars' visit to Pakistan and to the Netherlands government for financing visits of various scholars associated with the Erasmus University of Rotterdam and the Institute of Social Studies, Hague. We are also thankful to the National Bank of Pakistan for hosting a lunch in honour of the delegates and participants of the meeting. Finally, I thank you all for responding positively to our invitation to the Sixth Annual General Meeting.