

**Introductory Remarks by Secretary - Ministry of Local
Government & Rural Development
at
Workshop on Successful Models in Capacity Development for
Local Self Governance towards Urban Renewal and Rural
Reconstruction
At P.M. Secretariat Auditorium, Islamabad – 18 August 2008**

Honorable Prime Minister of Pakistan, Honourable Minister LG&RD, Vice Chancellor Beacon House Schools System University, Deputy Head of Mission Embassy of the United States Islamabad, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

2. We feel highly honored and encouraged by the keen response and participation in the Workshop today. We are most grateful to the Prime Minister for agreeing to grace the occasion as Chief Guest.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

3. Guided by the personal vision and direction provided by the Prime Minister himself at the briefing given to him by this ministry on May 30, 2008 the MoLG&RD has planned this workshop as a **wide-ranging dialogue** to cater for diverse views and opinions from elected representatives, administrators, donor agencies, researchers, civil society organizations and others concerned both from within Pakistan and outside Pakistan. We consider this workshop to be both special and timely, special because of your presence and the extensive support it has drawn from so many in such short of time. It is timely because we accept the workshop to contribute to the Government's stock taking in the area of

devolution and capacity development that is contemplated for local governance.

Ladies and Gentlemen

4. The overarching theme of the workshop is to identify Successful Models in Capacity Development for Improved Local Government Performance. The discussion under this overarching theme is structured around three carefully selected and interlinked themes of direct relevance to the domain of the local government, namely:

- a. Rural Reconstruction and Socio-economic Development;
- b. Urban Renewal and the Mainstreaming of Marginalized Communities; and
- c. Capacity Development for Local Governance.

5. The workshop is accepted to provide a candid and objective situational analysis, with inputs from scholars and practitioners from across the country and from abroad. This would include a stock taking of the national experience with de-centralization, and the state of the country's urban and rural spaces, how they sustain people and how they are governed. This is expected to lead to some **key lessons**; particularly in terms of what has and what has not worked out. The conclusions would highlight the gaps in the capacity for local governance. The emphasis on urban renewal has a similar rationale, and would challenge participants to speak to the long-standing problems of neglected slums, squatter settlements(Katchi Abadis) that in mega cities like Karachi constitute around 54% of the population, with the aim of better integration of marginalized communities. The un-planned and unchecked growth of intermediate towns as part of the urban sustainable development and renewal strategy will be addressed.

6. The rural reconstruction component envisages responding to the desperate need for renewal of values that have eroded over time, and for focusing on infrastructure and systems that have been either degraded or acquired urgency in view of changes that have not yet been addressed adequately. Finally, the capacity development theme, while emphasizing local self-governance, recognizes that their capacities are critical for improving local governance and service delivery. A crucial aspect of this would be a review of institutional and management structures and their capacities for research and training.

7. The workshop is also accepted to identify possibilities for change, focusing particularly on developing capacities for local governance to deliver on its functions. To the extent possible, the emphasis would be on identifying best practices and success stories.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

8. The findings of the workshop would identify areas for reforms, policy formulation and suggest integrated approaches and models for future programming. Here, Mr. Prime Minister, Sir, we would again be seeking your continued support in helping us take these recommendations to their logical conclusion.

9. Sir, in conclusion I would once again like to thank you once again for kindly honoring us with your presence today despite the

more pressing demands on your time. I would also like to express our particular thanks to the USAID, UNDP, DFID and RSPN for their technical, financial and administrative support and the ADB, UN FAO, ICMA and CIRDAP for sponsoring leading international experts to participate in the workshop. I also thank all the distinguished participants for joining us and thank my staff for their unrelenting efforts and support. I thank you.

I would like to express my particular thanks and appreciation to the USAID, UNDP, DFID and RSPN for their financial and administrative support, and the ADB, UN FAO, ICMA and CIRDAP for sponsoring leading international experts to participate in the workshop deliberations.