

**Speech by Minister for Local Government & Rural  
Development  
*at the*  
Workshop on Successful Models in Capacity  
Development for Local Self Governance towards Urban  
Renewal and Rural Reconstruction**

Honorable Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Yousuf Raza Gillani, Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Members of the Cabinet, Parliamentarians, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

2. On behalf of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development it is my greatest pleasure and privilege to welcome you all to this workshop. The theme of the workshop is multifaceted and broad based, but the main focus is on Capacity Development. We are particularly honored and encouraged, Mr. Prime Minister, by your presence amongst us today as the Chief Guest. Earlier, you were kind enough to receive a presentation from this Ministry, and approve special allocations for Local Government and Rural Development Sector schemes in the PSDP. Today's workshop is a consequence of your lasting interest in local government and rural development, going back to the time when you were the Minister responsible for

the much larger Ministry of Environment, LG&RD and Urban Affairs.

3. Mr. Prime Minister, under your direction the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development has consulted over the past two months with its counterpart ministries in the provinces as well as the NRB and the key donor institutions which have been supporting devolution. In the NWFP, because of the acute law and order situation, some changes have already been brought about through the constitutional process and a policy direction on reform has been approved by the provincial cabinet.

4. I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize that under the 1973 Constitution local government is a provincial subject. The role of the Federal Government is that of a coordinator/facilitator with a view to develop a broadly consistent approach across the respective provinces. Unfortunately, neither the provinces nor the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development featured prominently in the process of drafting the Local Government Ordinances (LGOs) 2001. Moreover, having been prepared as an offshoot of the Devolution Plan, the LGOs perhaps aimed at

too much, too soon, and with little consideration of local government capacities or the serious adverse implications which the radical changes in administrative structure created for effective governance.

5. All the major parties in the current Coalition Government stand fully committed to having effective local government institutions functioning in the country. Nonetheless, any institutional structure should be flexible and open to change on objective grounds. It should be able to deliver efficiently and effectively. It should strengthen local governance. And it should fully respect the constitutional mandate of the federating units.

6. The Inter-Provincial Committee of the Ministers of Local Government and Rural/Community Development has unanimously agreed to set up a sub-committee of all the four provincial secretaries of local government and rural / community development chaired by the Federal Secretary to carry out a review of the situation and develop considered proposals on changes for further processing and appropriate decision within the government. This broad-based workshop would greatly benefit the sub-committee of secretaries in its

work and endeavor to develop proposals that are widely acceptable and responsive to public sentiments.

7. Regardless of the decisions that may be taken by the Government on the larger issues, the need for capacity building remains foremost on the agenda of local governance. The critical importance of capacity building has been recognized by many during the last seven years. It has also been pointed out frequently in international literature. No matter what is taken to be the point of departure, Pakistan faces a long journey ahead in terms of capacity building.

8. This journey cannot be undertaken without having a network of high quality national and provincial centers of research and training. Such centers are needed to synthesize national and international experience, and feed into research, policy, laws, institutional development and other aspects of local governance. They are needed to keep local governance alive to the needs of the people and to the changing times in which we live.

9. The Akhtar Hameed Khan National Center for Rural Development (the NCRD), the Municipal Training and

Research Institute (the MTRI) Karachi and the Pakistan Academy for Rural Development (the PARD) Peshawar are a legacy of Dr. Akhtar Hameed Khan, the pioneer of people-oriented community development, who also inspired the establishment of the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (the BARD) at Comilla in the then East Pakistan. We need to take steps to live up to the legacy of Dr. Akhtar Hameed Khan and develop the mentioned national apex institutions into “Centers of Excellence” at par with regional centers of excellence like the National Institute of Rural Development (the NIRD) at Hyderabad, India and the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development at Comilla, Bangladesh. These Centers of Excellence together with the provincial government rural development institutes can form the core of the “National Local Governance Schools and Research Institutions System Network”.

10. In this connection, I would like to point out that NWFP remains the only province without such a specialized institution. Previously it was served by the PARD, but this institution is currently affiliated with the National School of Public Policy (NSPP). Considering the history and mandate of PARD and the needs of NWFP, it would be in the best

interests of the Federation if the mid-managers training academy (formerly NIPA) is separated and the PARD is transferred to the NWFP. The Local Government School and Research Institutions Systems Network will partner with institutions in the private sector and with public sector training and research institutes, national universities and training centers run by the ministries of Women Development, Social Welfare and Environment to run joint training programs and courses and conduct research on critical rural and urban development subjects. Mr. Prime Minister, we do not need to invest heavily in brick and mortar as the above-mentioned institutions are well placed with infrastructure and would mostly require upgrading of their facilities, equipment and human resources which can be easily covered from the scheme funded in the PSDP 2008-09, with appropriate supplementation of finances and intellectual capital from the international community.

11. Mr Prime Minister, capacity building is at the center of any effective system of government and public sector delivery. The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development seeks your continuing patronage and endorsement of the concept of capacity building that I have

spelled out in my submission, so that we may move forward on a fast track basis. I would also like to thank you once again for being with us today despite more compelling demands of State on your time. I do hope that at some early opportunity you would be able to also visit us in the NCRD to see for yourself the excellent premises of the institution; your presence there would also instill confidence in the staff of the institution. I also once again thank all the other distinguished participants at this morning's ceremony; and I would like to express my particular thanks and appreciation to the officials of this Ministry who have worked tirelessly to organize this workshop, and to all the institutions and donors who have contributed generously to the workshop.

Thank you.