

PRESS RELEASE

NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON GREEN ECONOMY, 18-19 MAY 2012 AT HOTEL MARGALA, ISLAMABAD

Eminent international experts and high level Pakistani officials and business representatives are meeting on Friday and Saturday in Islamabad to discuss the serious economic, environmental and social crises facing the world and Pakistan ahead of a major global meeting on sustainable development in the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro next month. The meeting, described as National Consultation on Green Economy on 18-19 May has been jointly organized by the Federal Ministry of Climate Change, the United Nations Development Programme and other UN organizations, the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Lead Pakistan to review the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development hosted by Brazil in Rio on 20-22 June, expected to be attended by more than 130 heads of state and government and thousands of delegates representing the UN, private business, cities, non-governmental organizations and the media.

The UN Conference is also known as Rio+20 Conference because it is taking place 20 years after the historic Environment and Development Conference in Rio in June 1992. At the 1992 meeting, a plan of action for sustainable development comprising economic development, environmental protection and social justice, called Agenda 21, was agreed along with the Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity.

Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani is expected to lead the Pakistan delegation at the Conference which would include the Federal Minister for Climate Change, Rana Farooq Saeed and Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar and senior officials of several Federal ministries. The objective of the June 2012 Conference is to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in implementation of the outcomes of the major Summits on sustainable development and address new and emerging challenges. A major theme for the forthcoming conference is green economy, a new paradigm of development that will ensure that economic development does not aggravate the global threat of

climate change and the loss of biodiversity, promote public health by producing energy from clean, non polluting renewable sources like solar, wind, and hydro, and create new jobs in urban and rural areas. Green economy was chosen as the major topic of discussion in recognition of a widespread consensus among economists and environmentalists that the challenges of climate challenge caused mainly by emission of huge amounts of carbon from fossil fuel-based energy ,the current economic recession in developed countries which also hurt developing countries, water and food shortages in many parts of the world and deepening poverty and malnutrition can only be addressed by a development model based on cleaner energy, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and integrated management of water resources.

UN agencies and member states have produced studies and organized dozens of meetings to elaborate the agenda of the June 2012 conference, especially green economy. Since early this year, the text of a document on the outcome of the Conference prepared by the co-chairs of the global preparation for the Rio+20 Conference has been painstakingly negotiated by representatives of member states. Green economy has been welcomed by both developed and developing countries. However, developing countries fear that the rich countries might use the green economy concept to impose non tariff trade restrictions on goods from developing countries alleging that they were produced by non-green processes. They, therefore, insist on guarantees against green trade protectionism. Developing nations also seek financial, technical, and technological support for producing and deploying green technology in order to reduce their dependence on costly fossil fuel imports and create new jobs and livelihood opportunities for their citizens. Developed countries recognize the need for enhanced cooperation but are reluctant to take the concrete actions on financial, technology and capacity building assistance sought by developing countries. The negotiations will enter a decisive phase in the last week of May and are to be concluded prior to the Conference.

The National Consultation will be inaugurated by the Federal Climate Change Minister, Rana Farooq Saeed. The programme of the two-day event comprise presentations by renowned experts like Dr Tariq Banuri, until recently the head of the Sustainable Development Division in the UN HQ in New York, Dr Adil Najam, currently Vice Chancellor of the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Sheng Fulai and Stefanos Fotiou, senior officials of the UN

Environment Programme, and Dr Hussein Abaza who retired recently years ago after leading UNEP's work on Environment and Economics for twenty years. Pakistani high officials who will make presentations at the meeting include Malik Amin Aslam, Minister of State for Environment, Farrukh Iqbal Khan, Counselor at Pakistan's UN Mission, Shakeel Durrani, Chairman WAPDA, Arif Alaud Din, head of the Renewable Energy Development Board (AEDB), the Managing Director Energy Conservation Centre (ENERCON) of the Ministry of Water and Power, and experts Dr Khalid Mohtadullah, Dr Arshad Abbasi. High ranking UN Officials based in Islamabad and representatives of the private sector will also contribute to the discussions.

The Consultation will review all aspects of Green Economy and identify the key elements of a possible Green Economy framework for Pakistan. It will also make recommendations on the outcome of the June 2012 Conference for consideration by the Pakistan delegation.