

National Consultations on Green Economy

Summary and Recommendations

1. The National Consultation on Green Economy was organized jointly by the Ministry of Climate Change, the One-UN Joint Programme on Environment, SDPI, LEAD Pakistan and Heinrich Boell Stiftung, on 18-19 May 2012. The objective of the consultation was to enable a broad spectrum of stakeholders to share perspectives and information on the green economy, compile recommendations for the Rio+20 process, and identify actions that could be undertaken by the Government of Pakistan, by Pakistani civil society, business, media, and academia, and by the international community in this regard.
2. The consultations were attended by over 100 representatives from Government ministries and agencies, UN representatives, and representatives of civil society, business, academia, and parliament.
3. The participants appreciated the initiative undertaken by the organizers, and looked forward to the outcome of the Rio+20 process for stimulating concerted action to implement new and past decisions by national stakeholders as well as the international community.
4. There was appreciation for the adoption of new policies, establishment of new institutions, enactment of new laws and regulations, conclusion of new international agreements, and investments in human and institutional capacities. However, there was also the expression of concern at the low pace of implementation and the slow pace of the transition towards sustainable development in Pakistan. The inability to manage the environment imposes huge and potentially catastrophic costs on the national economy and society.
5. While there was no consensus on the definition of the green economy, most participants viewed it as an instrument for facilitating the transition towards sustainable development within Pakistan and globally, including the urgent challenge of eradicating poverty, promoting social equity, ensuring economic growth, and protecting land, water, forests, rangelands, oceans and marine resources.
6. The two-day consultations led to a fruitful exchange of views as well as a number of recommendations respectively for national decision makers and the international community, which are presented below.
7. **Recommendations for actions at national level:**
 - a. *Green Economy:* Green economy should integrate and bind the three pillars of sustainable development, namely social equity, economic prosperity, and environmental conservation.
 - b. *National Priorities and Goals:* Participants highlighted the urgent challenges of sustainable development in Pakistan:
 - i. *Economic Prosperity:* The national growth strategy aims at stimulating a strong and sustainable growth process in Pakistan.
 - ii. *Decent Livelihoods:* The green economy should enable the creation of green and decent livelihoods and the eradication of poverty.
 - iii. *Gender:* The green economy should ensure the protection of women's rights, and the incorporation of women's perspectives, concerns, and interests in policy formulation and implementation.

- iv. *Population*: Reduction of the rate of population growth is an urgent priority in Pakistan.
- c. *Stakeholder Participation*: The adoption and implementation of green economy policies should be undertaken through an effective framework of participation by all stakeholders, including Government, Civil Society, Business, Mass Media, Academia, and Parliaments. Within Government, it should involve all relevant federal and provincial ministries and agencies, especially Planning, Finance, Agriculture, Water and Power, Foreign Affairs, Climate Change, Health, Education, Social Welfare, and Industries and Commerce.
- d. *Business*: A number of private sector initiatives have emerged to address and incorporate sustainability challenges. In order to provide further momentum to such initiatives, it was essential that the industrial chambers and groups should agree upon a concrete and coherent collective agenda for the future. It was equally important that governmental regulation be streamlined, strengthened, and made transparent. Participants called upon private sector representatives to initiate the preparation of a plan of action on the green economy in Pakistan. This could be based on a private sector white paper on green economy prepared with the participation from all chambers and industrial groups, which could be used to evolve recommendations for voluntary private sector actions as well as legislative and other actions by the government and legislatures.
- e. *Sustainable Development Policies*: The national and provincial governments were asked to support sustainable development and the green economy through a strategic approach, including:
 - i. *NSDS*: The participants appreciated the initiative of developing a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) and recommended that its implementation should seek to revive and update the recommendations of the 1992 National Conservation Strategy (NCS) through the effective participation of all stakeholders, especially youth, women, small and landless farmers, and indigenous people.
 - ii. *Devolution*: The government should establish an effective system for the pursuit of sustainable development and the green economy, consistent with the 18th amendment, including the respective and complementary roles of national, provincial, and local governments.
 - iii. *National Fund*: It was recommended that a National Fund on Climate Change and Green Development be established.
 - iv. *Investment*: The State Bank of Pakistan was requested to evolve rules and regulations for incentivizing green investment and loans through commercial banks;
- f. *Research and Development*: The green economy involves a strong investment in research and education in scientific analysis and relevant technologies.
 - i. *R&D Roadmap*: Participants called upon the government to develop an R&D roadmap for the green economy, including the commitment of adequate financial resources for research and development. We call upon the government and international agencies to invest in the capacities of existing national research institutions and independent research centres.
 - ii. *Work Programmes*: It was recommended that universities, national research and training institutions (such as NIPA/NDU, GCISC, PARC,

PCSIR, PMD, and NIO), and independent think tanks should review their work programmes and curriculums to integrate the three dimensions of the green economy.

- iii. *Research Network*: Participants welcomed the decision of WAPDA to establish a research centre on glaciology, and called upon all relevant actors to establish dedicated research centres and programmes on other relevant areas of the green economy, including transport, energy, urban development, monsoon analysis, and food security.
- iv. *Education*: Participants called upon increased investment in education, including graduate, post-graduate, and diploma courses on sustainable development and the green economy.
- g. *Energy*: Participants urged urgent action to ensure universal access to modern, sustainable, and affordable energy services by all segments of the society, especially the poor and marginalized groups.
 - i. *Alternative Energy*: There was appreciation for the new national plan for the development of renewable energy. Widespread use of renewable energy could make a major contribution to poverty eradication. Pakistan has immense resources of renewable energy, including hydel, micro-hydro, solar, wind, and waste-to-energy. In order to benefit from this potential, it was necessary to establish a level playing field based on a clear and transparent policy framework, including for example the feed-in-tariff approach, to incentivize the private sector to contribute to the national effort to provide safe, affordable, and adequate energy services in all parts of the country. Such a system should include the announcement of procurement prices for all relevant categories of renewable energy, the designation of purchasing authorities, and appropriate oversight mechanisms. There was appreciation and support for the plans to initiate a return to hydel power sources, as long as it is undertaken with due regard to social and environmental impacts and safety considerations. There was a call for the consideration of elevating this sector to a ministerial level in the government.
 - ii. *Clean Conventional Energy*: Pakistan should seek cleaner technology for conventional energy sources, including clean coal, carbon capture and storage, and carbon offset, and establish national clean energy research center and supporting centres in major universities.
 - iii. *Energy Efficiency*: There was a need to adopt policies, financing instruments, and information dissemination to promote energy efficiency in power generation and distribution, transport, buildings, and industry.
- h. *Food Security and Sovereignty*: Elimination of hunger and the ensuring of food security are the highest priorities of the country. Participants appreciated the “end hunger campaign”.
 - i. *Sustainable Agriculture*: In order to ensure food security in the short as well as the long term, there is an urgent need to shift towards sustainable agricultural practices, including integrated water management, provision of support to and enabling access to natural resources by small and landless farmers and women farmers, and enhanced investment in the protection of the natural resource base, including land, water, and biodiversity.

- ii. *Integrated water management*: The government needs to promote integrated and sustainable water management to ensure efficient and equitable use of water, proper balance between agricultural and non-agricultural uses, waste management and sanitation, and capacity to address emerging challenges, including challenges pertaining to climate change.
- iii. *Research and Extension*: It was essential to strengthen agricultural research and extension mechanisms and ensure that they address all three dimensions of sustainable development.
- iv. *Quality Control*: The concept of food security should include the concerns of health and food quality, including consumer protection.
- i. *Rural Economy*: The bulk of the poor people live in rural areas. It was necessary to ensure promote sustainable rural development, including investment in sustainable agriculture, support for small and landless farmers, especially women farmers, and integrated rural development programmes.
- j. *Urbanization*: Pakistan is the most urbanized country in South Asia. The challenge of sustainable management and development of these cities and urban configurations has risen to the highest level of urgency.
 - i. *Sustainable Urban Development*: The government should undertake reforms and policies sustainable urban development, including sustainable urban design, land use management, vertical development to limit urban sprawl, creation of second tier cities, definition of city limits, sustainable transport systems based on public transport instead of proliferation of private transport, sustainable waste management, energy efficient building design, and good governance.
 - ii. *Green Programs, Funds, and Institutions*: National and provincial governments should allocate adequate funds to support Metropolitan and City governments in undertaking sustainable urban development actions, including allocation from green funds, micro-credit programmes, support for sustainable transport, buildings, and waste management, and strengthening of relevant institutions at all levels.
- k. *Good Governance*: There was concern over the poor record of implementation of past decisions and policies, and the continuing weakness of governance mechanisms.
 - i. *Political Will*: The challenge of sustainable development required the patronage and support from the highest levels of the political leadership of the country.
 - ii. *Transparency*: It is fundamentally important that the pursuit of sustainable development and the green economy is based on the principles of transparency.
 - iii. *Parliaments*: Green Parliamentarians should take the initiative to undertake debate and discussion on matters relevant to sustainable development and the green economy at national and provincial assemblies, with a view to establishing suitable mechanisms for oversight of implementation and governmental functioning. The Minister for Climate Change may consider tabling a motion in the parliament in this regard.

iv. *Participatory Mechanisms*: The successful pursuit of sustainable development and the green economy requires the participation of all stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of relevant policies.

i. *Institutional Framework*: It was essential to establish and strengthen relevant institutions at national, provincial, and local levels, bearing in mind the accepted principals of institutional development.

8. **Recommendations at the international level:**

- a. Participants appreciated the strong leadership displayed by Pakistan in the international arena on sustainable development, including in the Rio Conference 1992, the climate policy process, and the WTO.
- b. It was reiterated that poverty eradication and sustainable development are the overarching goals and priorities of Pakistan. All national and international policies, including those on the green economy, have to support these goals and priorities. The position taken by Pakistan at international forums should reflect the issues, concerns, and priorities identified in paragraph 7 above.
- c. The global community must ensure that a roadmap towards the green economy is based on the national goals, priorities, and capacities of all countries, the availability of international financial and technical support, and the institution of adequate safeguards against potential misuse, such as the creation of trade barriers, protectionist measures, or unilateral aid conditionalities.
- d. The green economy framework is one of the elements in the economic tool kit, not a substitute for sustainable development.
- e. The international community must ensure that Governments and state are in the driving seat of the transition to the green economy. The proposed reliance on market base strategies is insufficient by itself, and is likely to lead to greater inequality and impoverishment. The green economy road map should lead to the enhancement of the policy space of developing countries.
- f. Any attempts to adopt market based instruments, including removal of subsidies, payment for economic services, or valuation of energy, water, or natural resources, should be based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and especially that they are supplemented by policies to protect poor and vulnerable groups.
- g. There is a need for renewed commitment to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.
- h. The question of intellectual property rights needs to be reviewed in order to ensure that they become supportive of the quest of developing countries for sustainable development and poverty eradication.
- i. The urgent implementation of the past agreements on sustainable development needs to be ensured, including the commitments to provide financial and technical support, and build the capacity of development countries. There is a need for a robust and coherent programme of capacity development involving all relevant UN institutions.
- j. International support is needed for the establishment or strengthening of the research and educational institutions in Pakistan for addressing challenges of sustainable development and poverty eradication.