



Report of Provincial Conference on Climate Risks and Children's Future: Perspective of children and Youth

Held on 30th September 2020, Quetta, Balochistan

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Provincial
Conference on
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1.



Introduction

Pakistan is the country most vulnerable to climate change. It is exposed to a number of server climate induced threats, including natural disasters. It is a cause to wide ranging effects on the people in Pakistan. Climate change brings considerable increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. in addition, floods and droughts conditions in the country impact productive resources of livelihoods of different walks of life. Children are particularly threatened by climate induced risks. As recurring droughts and floods worsen and the food production affected, consequently children have to bear the great burden of hunger and malnutrition.

In future climate change scenario, Pakistan is expected to experience increase in variability of river flows due to increased variability of precipitation and the melting of glaciers. Pakistan is signatory to the Paris Agreement that aims to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects.

To support the Government of Pakistan and Government of Balochistan's efforts of resilient development, national organization Research and Development Foundation (www.rdfoundation.org.pk) in partnership with German International Child Focused Development Organization Kindernothilfe-KNH is going to organize

this day-long conference in collaboration with the KNH Partners Community Uplift Program (CUP) and the RASTI, that aims to discuss climate risks to the lives of children and youth in Pakistan and find out an agreed upon way forward for the future. Being held in the provincial capital cities, where the experts, children and youth have to share their experience of climate change impacts, vulnerabilities and explore future actions to address these challenges from the children and youth respective.



Conference objectives

- Discuss how children and youth in Pakistan perceive climate and its impact on their future.
- Strengthening the intra-social exchange on climate change from a children's perspectives.
- Advocate for systematically taking the perspective of youths and children on climate change when developing policies and legislation in the field.
- Explore and develop joint possible actions for the future with children, youth and other stakeholders.

Held at the Boys scout Headquarter, Hali Road Quetta, Balochistan the conference was able of having participation of more than 250 people. Almost all key stakeholders like Minister Environment, Secretary Environment Department Govt of Balochistan, Pakistan meteorological department, school children from rural areas of Balochistan, students of the Balochistan University, students of Balochistan University of IT and Management Sciences (BUIEMS), Fazaya Degree College Quetta, Civil Society Representatives and media representatives.





2.

Inauguration of the Conference

Mr. Mitha Khan Kakar, Minister for Environment and Climate Change Govt of Balochistan inaugurated the conference with cutting of ribbon together with Abdul Sa- boor Kakar, Secretary Environment Department Govt of Balochistan, DG Meteorological Department Pakistan, children and youth.

Later, after Recitation the verses from Holy Quran by young girl, the conference was formally started with the national anthem. All audience stood up on their seats in reverence of the national anthem of Pakistan.





3.

Proceedings of the Conference



3.1 Inaugural Session and Speech by the Chief Guests

Key Speakers were:



Mr. Mitha Khan Kakar,
Minster Environment
Government of Balochistan



Ms. Kiran Shahzadi,
Country Coordinator-KNH



Mr. Ashfaque Ahmed Soomro,
Executive Director-RDF



Mr. Mohammad Riaz,
Director General- Pakistan
Metrological Department,

Welcome Remark by Mr. Ashfaque Ahmed Soomro Executive Director-RDF:

Mr. Soomro welcomed the guests and participants. He said that Pakistan is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change because it has generally a warm climate; it lies in a geographical region where the temperature is higher than the global average; during last year it touched 52 centigrade in different areas of Sindh. He added that about 60 per cent of the area receives less than 250 mm of rainfall per year and 24 per cent receives between 250-500 mm due to the climate changes. He said that the Children and the Youth are not only our future but they are present of the nation. Therefore it is need of the hour that we must take this issue of responding to climate change seriously with inclusion of children at every step to secure our present and future. He said that we can better cope the climate induced disasters specially in Baluchistan through involvement of children in our activities as well as at policy level.

Finally! he said that the Ministry of Environment Govt of Balochistan welcomed this initiative and Research and Development Foundation is really thank full for the support extended by the ministry and the department.



Remarks by Malik Rasheed Kakar, Kuchalak Welfare Society Balochistan

Mr. Kakar highlighted the climate change issues and its impacts on children with the facts and figures that Balochistan covers 44% geographical area of Pakistan. That primary source of income for 80% population of the province is agriculture. He said that being a tribal area, due to cultural constraints, there are restrictions on mobility of women and their participation in joint gatherings in Balochistan but he is happy to see large number of women in this conference and this is one of the great success of this conference that children and women are not only present but they are presenting their point of view on the theme which affects their lives. This is an indicator of positiveness towards the topic of climate change. He said we have high expectations from the minister that he will contribute to the good governance, particularly on climate change issues which is directly related to the livelihood and future of the people of the province.



Ms. Kiran Shahzadi, Country Coordinator-KNH in Pakistan

Ms Kiran said that the KNH is working with 20 partners through 23 projects since 1975 in Pakistan. She added that mostly beneficiaries target group is children of respective areas and we reached approximately 15000 children through different activities of projects. However, it is also important to raise awareness on children's rights in the country. She said that Girls, who continue to be vulnerable, are also focus of our work. We empower girls by forging strong communities. She further said that Climate change is not only an issue of Balochistan or Pakistan, but whole world is facing this issue and the most vulnerable group is children. She said that I hear that there is a main issue of security in Balochistan but climate change is also main issue.



Mr. Mohammad Riaz, DG Pakistan Meteorological Department-

The DG said that the climate change is an established fact and its impacts on water, agriculture, health, biodiversity, forest and socio-economic sectors are quite visible around the globe. The parameters of climate change are also related with geographical condition of the area, he added. changes in pattern of rain-fall, raising of temperature day by day, sea level raising, thunder storm are all manifestations of changing climate. He said that, we can't cope with these issues without the involvement of children because these are the change agent of society and messages are widely disseminating by children instead of over 50 years men. We can easily inspire, sensitize and mobilize the young minds of children and they can work with dedication and zeal on climate change.





**Mr Mitha Khan Kakarr,
Minster Environment, Government of Balochistan**

While thanking KNH and Research and Development Foundation (RDF) for inviting him and extending congratulation on arranging the event successful, honorable minister stated that Pakistan is most affected country from climate changes. Children are among the most vulnerable sections due to impacts of climate change. Counting the initiatives of the government of Pakistan he said that continuous efforts and initiatives

of large-scale afforestation, biodiversity conservation, investment in clean energy and The Billion Tree Project is a major contributor towards climate changes in Pakistan by the current government.

At the end of inaugural sessions the shields of participation and cultural souvenirs were presented to the guests by RDF.



3.2 Session 2: Panel Discussion: Children and Youth Led Climate Actions in Pakistan: Challenges and Success

Moderator

Miss. Tanzila,
Student of BS
Environment
BUIITEMS Quetta

Panelist

Ms. Sadia Sohail,
Student of MPhil in
Environment, SBK
University Balochistan,
Quetta

Panelist

Miss. Tahreen Irfan
Fazaia Degree College

Panelist

Mr. Asfandyar,
Student of BS
Environment, BUIITEMS
University

Ms. Sadia Sohail

Sadia Sohail Said that the main causes of the climate changes are Water Resource degradation and depletion. Counting the factors aggravating climate change she said that Global Warming, Flooding, haphazard construction spree in Karachi, Eco-Enzi tee, Eco-Famine are some of main factors in worsening climate change and environmental degradation in Pakistan. Suggesting sustainable solution she said that There is an urgent need to involve women in climate adaptation through training and awareness for protecting themselves from heat waves and addressing water scarcity by promoting rainwater harvesting. She said that Women are the change agents who can effectively combat climate vulnerabilities. Another important task is to make their voices heard at the policy level; the establishment of relevant platforms can help in addressing the issues, she added. She emphasized that Climate compatible development in right direction will help build women's



capacity to address the issue. Furthermore, in order to ensure the climate adaptation of women, the government should segregate data on a gender basis, which can help women at policymaking effectively.

Ms. Tahreen Irfan

Commented that Internationally, Pakistan needs to be at the forefront of fighting climate change and global warming, otherwise in a few years' time the country will witness further increase in drastic weather conditions and natural disasters. She reiterated that the authorities of Balochistan need to extensively engage students in all efforts that reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases and improve the adaptation. Further, she added that students also need to study global warming and understand the phenomenon in its entirety in order to know how to tackle or mitigate its effects and how well they can contribute their role in improving adaptation measures. She said, students can play a vital role in environment conservation and promote the word of



children security amid climate change.

Mr. Asfandyar

Mr. Asfandyar while talking to the conference audience said that Balochistan becomes worst affected due to drought. He said that he has planted 55 succulent plants at his home and also at his campus together with the faculty. This is minimum work that we can do to conserve environment we live in. He was of the view that many people are not well aware and sensitized of tree plantation and how to take care of plantation. So program for mass-scale awareness should be launched to engage children and youth in tree plantation campaign. He shared his story of plantation during COVID lockdown period. The other simple work that we youth can do is to motivate students and communities about the solid waste management and reduce the use of polythene bags that is an environment hazard in our areas.



3.3 Session 3: Panel Discussion: Provincial Policies and Programs addressing Child Security Amid Climate Change

Moderator

Panelist

Panelist

Panelist

Mr. Mohammad Riaz,
Director General Pakistan
Met Department

Mr. Nawaz Kunbhar,
writer and representatives
of civil society

Mr. Allah Bux Baloch,
representative of spate
irrigation Network of
Balochistan

Mr. Amjad Shad,
Director PMD in
Balochistan

The panel discussed common challenges faced by children

In his opening remarks Mr. Muhammad Raiz touched upon the main components of climate change including temperature, sea rising, change in weather patterns and so on.

He added that water needs of humans, livestock and plants are affected due to changing climate patterns.

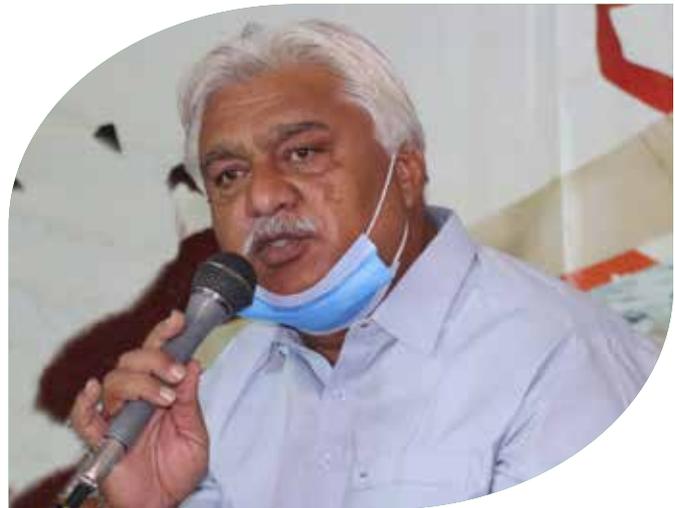
Mr. Allah Bux Baloch

While highlighting the main water related problems of Balochistan said that due to climate induced water problems wells are drying up, karezes are disappearing and underground water is depleting at alarming pace. He added that 32000 tube wells are putting immense pressure on underground water of Balochistan. Mr Allah Bux suggested that installation of tube wells should be regulated and NOC should be issued on the condition of keeping safe distance while installation of the tube wells



Mr. Nawaz Kumbhar

Nawaz Kumbhar Said that children and women are the first and most affected segments of the population during natural disasters. He added that floods and rising temperatures are directly related to climate change. He said that in 2011, 200 mm rain fall was recorded in Khipro, Sindh but recently 500 mm rain fall was recorded in same vicinity. He said that heavy rain has damaged crops and other social infrastructure in Sindh. He said that out of total 11 affected districts 8 districts are worst affected and water is standing in crops and schools are surrounded by water. He lamented that the livelihood of the disadvantaged segments of population was hard hit by Covid-19 and now flood had sapped remaining nominal resilience of the rural population. He feared that due to standing water and no drainage of the rain/



flood water, schools may remain close in those area and children's education will be main causality.

Mr. Amjad Shad

Mr. Amjad Shad From Metrological department said that his department has improved data collection and dissemination which will help in responding to climate related challenges on some extent.

Male and female students of environment department from various universities put lot of relevant question. One female student said the conference proved very informative for her and asked the panelist that is it possible that such events should be arranged at universities level that they can learn empirical knowledge related to climate change.



3.4 Questions by the Children and Youth and Answers by the Panelists

During question answer session majority of the youth were found excited and impressed about the conferences proceedings and information provided. But majority of them were angry about the role of government. Organizers realizing this trend, applied the strategy for the participants that besides putting forward question if anybody wants to share his/ story of contribution in reducing climate change impact he/she must share it. Ms Shahzadi Kiran led the personal story sharing

Questions:

One female student of environment university said that we are learning a lot theoretically at university but we lack such empirical information presented in this Conference, can RDF present such sessions at university level?

Mr. Allah Bux Baloch, replying to the question of the female student said that universities already have provision of providing opportunities to the students to do practical work and thesis on the related subjects but if they feel need they should write to the concerned

organization for dissemination of information

Another students put question to the panelist that how can information be made helpful in reducing impact of the natural disasters?

DG metrological department said that his department is improving information sharing about the weather forecast and now it can be disseminated in five minutes which can be of great help in improving early warning system.

Another participants put question to the panel that why involvement of youth in climate change issue is vital? Chair of the panel responded children and youth are most affected segments of population form climate change impacts thus their involvement and addressing their problems is vital. Moreover youth have potential and if their energies s and passion is harnesssed to play

their role in reducing climate change impacts their contribution can be surprisingly immense. Most of the questions were put forward by students and other participants about how deforestation can be checked, natural disasters impact can be mitigated and water table can be maintained. The participants during their questions also expressed their gratitude to the RDF and its donor for bringing involvement of children, youth and women in climate change discourse, policy and implemented which according to the most of the participants was new for them and appreciated the initiative



3.5 Play for the Planet: a tableau on Environment by the Children

Children presented an enlightening tableau on climate change focusing on importance of tree, deforestation and reforestation. The children used placards, songs and gestures to affectively convey the messages and representing feelings of children. One play card read poignantly “ like a tree stay grounded, keep growing, know when to let go. The children dressed like a tree sang melodiously. “Don’t cut me, it pains”. The children presented demo of plant trees and flower plants. The participants of the conference remained immersed in the song and gave standing ovation to the children who participated in tableau.





4.

Conclusion of the Conference

Youth participation and their enthusiasm during speeches created hope that youth can play important role in climate change challenges.

At the end shields were presented to children and youth who delivered their speeches and run the proceedings of the conference. The shields were also presented to the guest speakers from the Government and the Civil Society.

Mr Ashfaque Sommro, ED, RDF, while thanking the participants announced that next provincial conference will be held at Lahore, Peshawar and Karachi followed by national conference at Islamabad.

In the end, declaration of the conference was presented by a youth participant

4.1 Recommendations of the Youth and Children on Climate Change

The youth and Children presented their recommendations in their speeches, comments and questions answer session:

- Increasing deforestation in Baluchistan has deteriorated the environment so our trees should be protected. Sanobar forests, an indigenous and internationally recognized, are shrinking. Efforts should be made to conserve these natural resources of Balochistan.
- Due to water scarcity, the use of tube well is increased which is harmful for future so water should be saved by proposing suitable water schemes.
- Awareness programs should be arranged to provide awareness to students about plantation & other environment conservation activities.
- Women role should be considered important in taking care of plants at home & in surroundings.
- There is dire need to strengthen & implement environmental laws at provincial & national level.
- There is need to improve solid waste management to reduce pollution
- Environment should be focused in children's curriculum
- Ecological rights of children should be protected
- Children's education process should not be delayed during disasters
- Low carbon technology should be promoted
- Children's views should be included in formulating policies
- Strong system should be initiated for physical & psychological development of children
- Green school program should be introduced in Baluchistan.
- Students should be given internships in their relevant fields so that they could practically use their knowledge & gain experience as they can become productive citizen.

5.

Conference Declaration



This conference on Climate Change Risks and Children’s Security declares that the children’s vulnerability to climate change fundamentally threatens the realization of many of their rights as stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It multiplies their vulnerabilities. The conference opines that the children’s rights of dignified access to safe water, sanitation, quality education, food, health, socialization, participation and association are affected in any disaster.

The conference organized by Research and Development Foundation (RDF) in collaboration with Kindemthilfe (KNH) eV Germany, Community Uplift Program and RASTI significantly discussed climate change issues from the children and youth perspective that was first of its kind in Pakistan.

This conference affirms that there is a lack of child centered climate governance structures and programs that safeguard the dignity of children. Children particularly from vulnerable and poor communities are affected at large in any climate induced disaster, thus their future is at stake, mainly because of their immunity.

It is a matter of serious concern that generally children lack knowledge and skills to absorb the shocks and undergo severe psychological distresses.

In many cases, children couldn’t continue their education in the wake of any disaster. Disasters severely affect the learning and education of children. Usually in Pakistan schools are used as shelter or camps for flood affected people. The mental and cognitive development retards in many cases. Hence, this conference proposes that the learning of children should not be compromised in any case.

The issue is of the displacement of children due to any disaster. Children’s protection issues arise and they become at risk. All who have the responsibility of protecting the future of children should aggressively ensure the protection of children in any climate induced disaster.

It is evident that climate change threatens food resources, security, health and the stock, of that the children become first victim. The physical and psychological development deteriorates in disasters.

This conference proposes to the Government for the formulation of ‘Children Commission on Environment and Climate Change’ to take care of the rights of children at risk and assure the implementation of child centered environmental governance and policies.

Considering the policy implementation gaps, it suggests formulation of child friendly environmental policies and programs that safeguard the participation of children and their aspirations in environmental and climate change adaptation initiatives.

Furthermore, it recommends

1. to making Syllabus and curriculum environment sensitive and taking care of children’s adaption needs. Child-centered awareness programs for the children in climate affected communities and areas. Life skills for the children to strengthen their resilience and capabilities to absorb shocks and respond to the shocks. Recreational activities at the learning places, schools and playgrounds should be ensured.
2. Quality education with all required amenities for the joyful learning of children. Off-grid schools with greener energy have to be developed to protect the environment and improve study conditions for children.
3. Affective and efficient DRR mechanisms and relief programs that support the children at risk
4. Efficient traffic management to avoid children accidents on roads
5. Urban solid waste management that could improve children’s wellbeing and avoid children’s engagement and activities to collect garbage and avoid them as scavengers
6. Recycling of solid waste management for greener future of the children

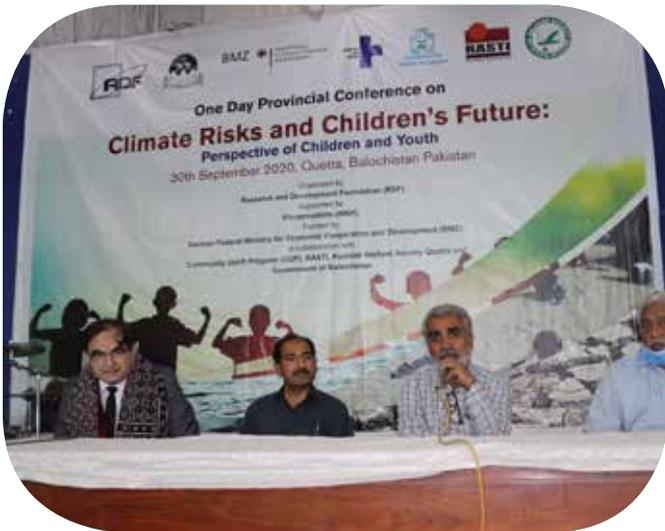
The conference partners and the participants declare to step up all possible measures and their will and the commitment to protect rights of the children amid Climate Change for the prosperous future of Pakistan.



7.

PHOTO GALLERY









One Day National Conference on **Climate Risks and Children's Future:** **Perspective of Children and Youth**

30th September 2020, Boys Scout Office Quetta, Balochistan Pakistan

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Research and Development Foundation (RDF)
A.50, Sindhi Muslim Cooperative Housing Society Qasimabad Hyderabad
Tel: 92-22-2102702-3 Fax. 92-22-2102704 www.rdfoundation.org.pk

