

Minutes of Pakistan Development Alliance Online Rapid Need Assessment on COVID-19 Response



AwazCDS Pakistan has organized an online meeting on 16th April, 2020 with Pakistan Development Alliance members from across the country. The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the ongoing situation of COVID-19 pandemic in different provinces and regions, its challenges, suggestions and way forward. The meeting was facilitated by Mr. Zia Ur Rehman-National Convener Pakistan Development Alliance and chaired by Mr. Riaz Fatyana- Convener National SDGs Task Force. Chaudhery Muhammad Shafique- Executive Director Parliamentarians Commissions for Human Rights also joined this online meeting and participated in the discussions along with the representatives of 45 other provincial lead organizations from all the four provinces and regions including AJ & K and Gilgit Baltistan.

The following are the key issues, suggestions and way forward shared and agreed by the PDA members from across the country which require immediate attention of the authorities.

- In Pakistan the harvesting season has been started from 1st of April, 2020. The government should facilitate farmers and especially women field workers in the harvesting of the wheat crop by providing gloves, masks and sanitizers.
- In these kinds of circumstances there is always challenge of price controlling. The Government should ensure to share approved rates and have strict check and balance on

the daily or hourly rates in terms of rent of machinery and other equipment which are required for the harvesting.

- There is need to have a situation analysis report regarding COVID-19. Although the government has introduced comprehensive stimulus packages under Ehsaas Program however there are challenges of online registration and accessibility to avail these relief packages for marginalized groups.
- The government departments should have strong coordination mechanisms within the departments so that the situation may be managed jointly and more effectively
- The authorities should have proper and effective planning based on the authentic and reliable data sources
- The health departments across the provinces are regions are failed to provide personal protection equipment (PPEs) to health care providers (HCPs). Besides the secondary and tertiary hospitals at district headquarters level there is a dire need to focus on the primary health care centers known as Rural Health Centers (RHCs) and Basic Health Units (BHUs) as well which are providing most basic services to the patients at grass root level. However, their medical staff are also vulnerable to Coronavirus due to the non availability of PPEs.
- The absence and non functionality of local government system across the country was severely criticized by the participants and termed it as a great challenge towards public management at local level. Therefore, there is an urgent need to restore and strengthen local governments across the country.
- Pregnant women, elderly people, people living with disabilities, transgender community and religious minorities are the most vulnerable under the COVID-19 regime and are severely suffering for their day to day needs.
- The authorities should initiate relief programs at Union Council level with special focus on deprived and marginalized groups
- There is a large number of population and specially women who do not have their CNICs registered. As the government initiatives i.e Ehsaas Program requires CNICs for the registration therefore a large proportion is not able to be registered in these relief programs. The government should allocate some temporary identity to these individuals so that they may have access to relief packages
- There should be special planning for PWDs in the pandemic of COVID-19 so that they may have easy access to relief packages and other programs. Person with Disability are neglected as a whole and even District authorities are not approaching them for relief packages. This is very unfortunate that they are not provided any support under Ehsaas program as well.
- The awareness campaign should be inclusive in a sense that special needs of PWDs should be taken into consideration i.e. adopting sign languages in awareness raising messages at electronic media etc.
- Social media is a powerful tool for campaigning, mass mobilization and sensitization.

- Booklets with authentic and reliable information should be published and disseminated in different local languages.
- There should be meaningful engagement of youth with defined roles at all levels i.e planning, implementation and facilitation
- There should be initiatives related to psycho social care or counseling for young people and the families affected by COVID 19
- The government should introduce such education programmes in these circumstances in which students of remote areas should also be able to get equally benefits. As online classes have many limitations in terms of access to technology, internet and other facilities therefore there is urgent need to see the effectiveness of such online classes.
- All the stakeholders should be taken on board in the consultations while designing and planning of relief programs
- There should be accurate and true reporting of the COVID cases and causalities at all levels
- The government should ensure to provide Personal Protection Equipment's to the doctors, other paramedic and support staff providing their services at the front line
- There should be special measures adopted to facilitate and provide relief to the marginalized groups of the society
- There should be relief packages for the farmers including the mechanisms of strict monitoring to control the rates of seed and fertilizers during the COVID-19 pandemic
- The District Response Centers on COVID-19 should be in access of general population and CSOs
- There should be comprehensive SOPs for engaging the marginalized segments of the society i.e PWDs, TGs, minorities. This was shared by many district partners that religious minorities are being deprived of support due to the fact that Islamic Zakat is legitimate for non-Muslim community.
- There should be special focus to ensure the continuity of food supply items in the remote and deprived areas of the country
- There should be strict actions taken on the corruption reported in Sindh while the disbursement of Ehsaas cash payments.
- There should be special focus on social distance while the disbursement of relief packages. As government has disbursed the pensions at the door steps to all the pension holders similarly this strategy should be adopted while disbursement of cash grants under Ehsaas Program as authorities have all the related data of beneficiaries
- The PDMA and DDMA should be activated and their institutional capacity need to be enhanced on immediate basis to respond on COVID-19
- The prisons and Dar ul Amaan/ shelter homes should also be focused by ensuring preventive measures as these are populated premises
- There should be COVID-19 testing kits and laboratories available at all health facilities

- The labor department should play a vigorous role in the implementation of the defined SoPs for the labor force working in the factories, textile industry and construction industry
- There should be comprehensive SoPs for factories, markets and mosques etc.
- The government should also ensure that the private school teachers and employees of the private sectors should be paid during the lock down as the employees in private sector are usually affected in these kind of situations
- The role of media is very important in this situation. Media should play their role by reporting the ground realities, missing facilities and gaps
- There should be the representation of CSOs in all the relief provision process as CSOs has the outreach at very grass root level communities
- The session of Parliament should be immediately called and the parliamentarians should play their support role in the area specific interventions related to relief
- Mosques and other worship places should be completely closed across the country for all kind of religious rituals until the COVID-19 situation gets better

Suggestions for Pakistan Development Alliance

- PDA should prioritize thematic areas for advocacy initiatives to address impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic
- PDA should prepare a situational analysis report and as per the key findings the advocacy efforts should be ensured by approaching line departments and policy makers
- PDA should have strong coordination with parliamentarians to highlight the role of parliament
- PDA should engage National, provincial and regional task force members in assessments, survey and area specific interventions
- PDA should prepare weekly E-Newsletter to highlight the efforts of its members in response to COVID-19
- PDA should initiate social media campaigns for advocacy and awareness raising on COVID related challenges
- PDA members should support govt. initiatives at district level
- PDA should disseminate the details related to govt. initiated district rapid response force names and details to community
- PDA members should participate in cluster meetings on COVID-19 response at provincial and district level

List of Participants:

1. Mr. Abdul Rub Farooqi- Jag Welfare Movement
2. Mr. Albert Patras- Society for Empowering People
3. Mr. Aman Ullah- Water Environment Sanitation Society
4. Mr. Amjad Hussain- Development for Health Education Work and Awareness (DHEWA)

5. Mr. Anis Danish-Legal Rights Forum (LRF)
6. Mr. Anwar Ali- National Advocacy for Rights of Innocent-NARI Foundation
7. Mr. Asif Chishti- Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) Pakistan
8. Mr. Aziz Ur Rehman- Al-Dua Organization
9. Mr. Aamir Sohail Saddozai- SAHARA VSWA
10. Ms. Bilquis Rehman- Council for Participatory Development
11. Mr. Chaudhery Shafique- Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights
12. Mr. Fiaz Hussain-Mehran Welfare Trust
13. Mr. Fsahat-Youth Advocacy Network (YAN)
14. Mr. Gul Buledi- Shifa Welfare Association
15. Mr. Hazrat Ali- Khapal Kore Organization
16. Mr. Hassan Hakim-SDGs Secreteriate
17. Ms. Huma Aziz-AwazCDS
18. Mr. Inam Ullah- Sada-e-Thal Welfare Organization
19. Mr. Krishan Sharma- District Development Association Tharparkar
20. Mr. Mustafa Chohan-Aika Theatre Group
21. Mr. Muhammad Yaqub- Takhleeq Foundation
22. Mr. Muhammad Shoaib- Dehi Tarqiaty Tanzeem
23. Mr. Muhammad Zahir- Allai Development Organization
24. Mr. Maaz Asghar Mastoi- Neelab Children and Women Development Council
25. Mr. Naseer Ahmed Channa- Bright Star Development Society
26. Mr. Riaz Fatyana-Convener Chair National SDGs Task Force
27. Mr. Raja Iftikhar- Area Development Organization
28. Ms. Rubina Massey- Integrated Community Development Initiative
29. Mr. Rafi Ullah- Khapal Kore Organization
30. Mr. Shahzado Malik- Advocacy, Research, Training and Services (ARTS) Foundation
31. Ms. Samina Nazir- Potohar Organization for Development Advocacy (PODA)
32. Mr. Tahir Malik-Legal Rights Forum
33. Ms. Ume Laila-HomeNet Pakistan
34. Mr. Zia Ur Rehman- AwazCDS