

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

Honorable Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Your Excellency, Ambassador of the United States of America, Members of the Cabinet, Parliamentarians, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

As the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development reminded us earlier, this is, indeed, a special and timely workshop. We all know the history of local government and devolution in Pakistan. In view of this history, I feel that it is important for us to learn at least one key lesson without further debate. That lesson is that the impact of policy depends on the legitimacy of the Government, its motives, and respect for the Constitution.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

2. Local government in Pakistan has been used in the past to circumvent political parties and elected representatives. Changes were imposed without due consultation with the Federating Units and as we heard the Minister for Local even sans the concerned Federal ministries. The views of the Provinces on constitutional issues were dismissed with scorn. The dispensation produced in the form of LGO 2001 badly mauled and disrupted the law and order by an alternate system that had neither the capacity nor the capability to take appropriate actions. The system of law and order was disrupted without an alternative being put in place.

Important links in governance between NWFP and FATA were overlooked. This perhaps is one of the key factor underpinning the serious law and order situation that pervades the NWFP, FATA and Balochistan.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

3. This Government faces the challenge of endowing local governance with legitimacy. We have been burdened with taking difficult decisions and measures however, as elected representatives we are not shy to go to any measure. In this connection, I want to emphasize, first, that we intend to proceed strictly in accordance with the Constitution of Pakistan as we have done in all other cases. Secondly, we will proceed with respect for the rights and sentiments of the Federating Units. Thirdly, there should be no doubt that members of the coalition government support local government and this is clear from their election manifestoes albeit, the government is not hesitant to carry out an objective review of the existing system and make every effort to establish a legitimate and sustainable system of local governance that is best suitable to our own conditions. Local government is key to the process of governance and must exercise its responsibility within its domain. The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan enshrines preeminence of the establishment of local government institutions and we respect that but, it is also the government responsibility to ensure the rule of law, delivery of justice and creation of an environment for national solidarity and prosperity. I am grateful to the Minister for Local Government and Rural Development for having moved on a fast track to develop a consensus proposal with the provinces. We keenly await the outcome of the efforts of the joint federal and provincial committee and the instant workshop on this matter.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

4. As a former Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, I also appreciate the challenge of capacity building. I am painfully aware of the state of neglect in which we have left our leading institutions, including NCRD, MTRI and the PARD and subjected them to cannibalization through arbitrary decisions handing over the historical and apex national institution of the PARD outside the local government system. We cannot allow this state of affairs to continue. I would like the Secretary Establishment to move early on the Minister Local Government's proposal for transfer of the PARD Peshawar to the Government of NWFP.

5. I also fully endorse the proposal by the Minister for Local Government and Rural Development on the setting up of the National School of Local Governance and Research Institutions Systems Network for capacity development as well as his proposal to upgrade the NCRD Islamabad and the MTRI Karachi as the National Centers of Excellence at par with comparable international institutions. There should also be a coordinated effort to strengthen provincial and other relevant institutions of the government. I assure that my Government would provide all necessary resources required and assist in obtaining support of the donor community for this purpose. However, the government alone may not be able to mobilize resources to the extent required. Every effort should be made to optimize use of all available national resources be they available in the public or the private sector. Without denying the need for developing human resources internally, wherever possible these should be outsourced for.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

6. The rural areas and urban slums are home to the large proportion of our population who not only have to eke out their livelihood from these areas but also support the national economy significantly. We will not allow continuation of the large population resident in these areas to live in perpetual poverty afflicted by hunger, mal-nutrition and endemic diseases. The proposed Centers of Excellence should move post haste on evolving special strategies and packages for total rehabilitation, renewal and reconstruction of these areas. This government belongs to the people and draws its strength from the people. We cannot be other than being totally driven to meeting the needs of our people. The three pronged themes of the workshop are most appropriate and we keenly look forward to the recommendations from this workshop. This may be considered a high expectation but is absolutely necessary. It is time to address some of the long-pending challenges in local governance without further delay. I urge the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the provinces to rise to the challenge creatively. The people's government will support them in this national endeavor. I wish the workshop all success and fruitful deliberations. I hope that the stay of the visitors from outside Pakistan would be fruitful and enjoyable.

7. I thank you all. Pakistan Zinda Abad.