



National Round Table Conference  
on

# VALUING WATER AND RESTORING FOREST;

FUTURE STRATEGY OF PAKISTAN

POST EVENT  
REPORT

20th March, 2021

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## Introduction:

Ever since the dawn of 1990s, a more inclusive and wholesome approach to traditional notions of national security is being adopted by countries. It is today as much imperative on governments to see *freedom from fear* as not the only driver of their national security policy. *Freedom from want*-embodied in concepts like food security, water security, and conservation of natural resources to ensure environmental sustainability etc. is equally an essential component of national security. In the 21st century, a nation is secure when its people enjoy all aspects of human security.

Considering the above, on the twin occasions of International Day of Forests on 21st March and the World Water Day on 22nd March, The Human Security Institute (THSI), a non-profit venture, committed itself to focusing on bringing up fresh discourse from multiple stakeholders on primarily the environmental issues being faced by Pakistan including climate change, water quality, land and soil degradation, deforestation and forest degradation, natural disasters, loss of biodiversity and protected areas, floods, water conservation, challenges of water management and governance and institutions for environmental and natural resource management. In this regard, the Human Security Institute had arranged a National Round Table Conference on 21st March to contribute to the existing paradigms through new ideas and policy inputs of prominent scholars, practitioners, and policy experts with a view to find more workable solutions which that are inclusive and based on public-private partnership.

## Welcoming Remarks by Director General The Human Security Institute (THSI)

Mr. Rafique Ahmed Qureshi, Director General THSI in his welcome speech said that today, we all are gathered here on National Round Table conference on “Valuing Water and Restoring Forests: Future Strategy for Pakistan” to look at the emerging issue of deforestation and water scarcity that has become a major problem for global security. Today, the stakeholders must recognize that freedom from fear is not the only driver of their national security policy. Freedom from want, as embodied in concepts such as food security, water security, and conservation of natural resources to ensure environmental sustainability, among others, is equally important component of national security. In the 21st century, a nation is secure when its people enjoy all aspects of human security.



This year, the theme of World Water Day 2021 is valuing water. Water has enormous and complex value for our households, food, culture, health, education, economics, and the integrity of our natural environment, so its value is much more than its price. If we overlook its value, we risk mismanaging this finite, irreplaceable resource. Without a comprehensive understanding of water’s true, multidimensional value, we will be unable to safeguard this critical resource for the benefit of everyone.

In the same manner, World Forestry Day raise public awareness about the importance of forests in human life. The environmental challenges stemming from variety of reasons highlight the need of preservation of forest to mitigate the global warming and soil erosion. We as responsible citizens should play our due part in order to develop integrated policies, and integrated solutions that are sustainable in nature.

The days in consideration are also among the 17 SDGs, SDG number 6 which is “Clean Water & Sanitation’ and SDG number 15 known as “Life on Land” which includes the preservation of Forests. Pakistan was the first UN member state to fully adopt the Agenda 2030 and through Vision-2025 aims to achieve these development goals.

While keeping above in view, the Human Security Institute wants to contribute to existing paradigms through new ideas and policy inputs from prominent scholars, practitioners, and policy experts in order to find more workable and sustainable solutions.

## Introductory Presentation by Khizer Rehman (Research Assistant):

The conducting officer of the event, Mr. Khizer Rehman, Research Assistant at THSI gave a formal presentation to the house. He presented the fact sheet about the emerging issue of poor forestry and water scarcity. He highlighted the concerns related to poor environment and climate in Pakistan and thrown light over the growing need to find remedies and solutions to tackle with these soaring issues. Then, he shed light on the THSI's aims and objectives with regards to conducting the National Round Table Conference that was to gather recommendations and suggestions by the panellists to address the issues of deforestation and growing water scarcity.



## SESSION: Panel Discussion

### Opening Remarks by Chair of the session

Dr. Saima Ashraf Kiyani

Dr. Saima Ashraf Kiyani moderated/chaired the panel discussion and briefed the topic of Human Security. She pointed out the non-traditional security threats that are being posed to the globe. She talked about the post-cold war period the concept of security has dramatically changed and the dynamics of security shifted significantly. She also highlighted the non-traditional security aspects for Pakistan and the need to adopt the policies prioritizing Human Security. She accentuated the key importance of water and forests for sustaining human life and preserving environment. According to her, the traditional security threats are affecting the globe's environment drastically. The use of arms, weapons, coal burning satellites is somehow sabotaging the climate. That is why understanding the non-traditional threats is very cardinal in the present world. Dr. Saima further pointed out the major reasons behind the poor forestry and water scarcity that has hit Pakistan and requested the practitioners, academicians, and researchers to put forward quality policy inputs to crackdown further deterioration of the climate.



Speaker 1:  
Mr. Zafar Khan

Mr. Zafar started his discussion by emphasizing upon the non-traditional security. He presented the farmer's perspective on water, land, and forest issues. Mr. Zafar pointed out the flaws in agriculture system of Pakistan and further stated the facts that agriculture contributes 20% to the GDP and 90% of water is used in improper irrigation system. According to Mr. Zafar, various reasons for poor agriculture system in Pakistan are growing water intense crops with traditional techniques and using out dated methods of irrigation. He gave various suggestions like spreading awareness among farmers and bringing them in the loop for better implementation. According to him, to cope with the underlying issues of agriculture, modern methods and techniques are needed. At the end, he said that Pakistan needs to value water more by pricing water more.



Speaker 2:  
Mr. Kaleem Shah Khattak

Mr. Kaleem Shah pointed out the importance of water and forest in Pakistan. He endorsed the efforts of practitioners working to safeguard the climate and environment. Moreover, he appreciated the effort that THSI had put in highlighting these key issues regarding water and forests. Further he signified the tourism in Pakistan attracted due to rich forests in Northern areas of the country. According to Mr. Kaleem, there is a need to take appropriate actions and spotlight the need to grasp maximum funds in preserving environment. Moreover, he appreciated the current development projects of government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as recently KPK government has prioritized water and forest concerns. At the end he suggested that the forums should talk about the way forwards on how we can utilize our forest and water resources in a sustainable manner.



### Speaker 3:

Dr. Muhammad Irfan Ashraf

Dr. Irfan indicated the main issue of population growth in Pakistan. The population of Pakistan has increased six fold in last seven decades and that it is putting a lot of pressure on natural resources. He pointed out the contradiction in international and national statistics that differ significantly. The forest coverage area in Pakistan is said to be 0.2%, but the numbers differ in World Bank and government reports. He lamented upon the lack of focus on water and forestation in past and complained that the related institutions do not welcome inputs from technical persons especially in the operational sector. He highlighted the need of professionals and practitioners for the technical input. According to him, the Miyawaki planting techniques are not feasible at a massive level. It may be feasible on household land but not at a major scale because its cost is huge. He proposed the idea of a public-private partnership to cope with the underlying issues as government cannot solve them solely. He pointed out that 60% land in Pakistan is grassland or marginal land. In Baluchistan, most of the land is a wasteland. We should focus on utilizing these lands and suggested that the “drought tolerant grass” and more tree species must be introduced in these regions.



### Speaker 4:

Mr. Shakeel Ahmad Khan

Mr. Shakeel suggested that opportunities for young generations must be generated in these sectors of agro-industry and engage them in finding solutions to make the industry prosper. He then pointed various reasons for poor agriculture system in Pakistan like growing water intense crops with traditional techniques and using out dated methods. Mr. Shakeel emphasized upon adopting modern techniques in agriculture, sericulture and irrigation system in Pakistan. Furthermore, he criticized the top-down approach in which decisions and policies are generated from a small group and a majority of locals are neglected in policy formulation process. Mr. Shakeel at the end suggested that we need to empower local government system as this will allow the farmers and other stakeholders involved in agro-industry to have their say in the betterment of environment and agriculture.



### Speaker 5:

Mr. Syed Mahmood Nasir

Syed Mahmood congratulated THIS's effort in organizing the Round table conference and gathering social and bio-scientist at one platform to discuss and gather inputs. He pointed out different species that are destroying the country's forests and added that the government must focus on addressing these issues. Mr. Mahmood congratulated on bringing young people in the conference and suggested that young intellect should focus on research and challenge the existing knowledge or put an addition to it. He clarified various misconceptions and demonstrated that Pakistan has 3% of area covered with forest and we need 20% forest coverage for sustainability. He pointed out that some countries have banned tree plantation unless groundwater approval is given to them by the government. According to him, it is the rain that dictates the ecosystem but we rely on reverse engineering. Moreover, the Council of Common Interest is a constitutional forum that passed a complete ban on standing auction of trees and it was good system designed to stop illegal auctions and cutting of trees. He concluded that forestry is a provisional subject and the federal government cannot intervene into this matter. He further suggested Pakistan to adopt "welcome flood policies" like china did in the recent past. He recommended that in *silt area*, we can grow agriculture and there is no need of fertilizers. The policies of dam building have affected silt areas and flood plains areas. At the end, he also proposed gene editing techniques for better plantation.



### Speaker 6:

Dr. Bashir Ahmed

Dr. Bashir Ahmed emphasized that the irrigation system is inefficient in Pakistan and proposed the Hindu Kush–Himalayan (HKH) mountain system in the context of a changing climate as an alternative to current irrigation system. He suggested adopting water harvesting techniques and recommended ameliorating the water storage system. He noted that the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) programs, that run in Pakistan were successful and it can be enhanced further. He expressed that Pakistan is far away from adopting modern technologies and methods. According to Mr. Bashir Ahmed, free water system in Pakistan has resulted in devaluing water. He again suggested Water harvesting technique as it is one of the most suitable techniques that we need to implement. He said that Polymer pipe trials have been taken and it is efficient in use, and one more thing is *rays-bed technology* that we need to implement in Pakistan.



### Speaker 7:

Ms. Mahroona Hussain Syed

Ms. Mahroona talked about the theory of social capital, and elaborated its social factors. She emphasized that we borrow ideas from western countries for policies but most of them are not applicable in our country. Moreover, she added that language barriers are impeding research. As a common man cannot give his/her input. It is important to talk with native/local people and bring them together in the research orientation and policy making. She criticized top-down approach and suggested that the youth should be involved in research and policy suggestions.



### Speaker 9:

Mr. Hasnat Sheikh

Mr. Hasnat elaborated the importance of natural habitat and resources. He mentioned that it's easy to make policies but difficult to monitor and implement them effectively. Moreover, he recommended the need of legislation. Attributing natural personhood approach must be adopted and state should protect their rights. At the end, Mr. Hasnat emphasized on making environment friendly policies. Projects like RSA recent carbon-positive urban development "The Line" should be adopted at micro levels to curb the further damage to greenbelt in Pakistan.



### Speaker 10:

Mr. Danish Kumar

Mr. Danish pointed out that Pakistan has insufficient data to propose solutions to safeguard our environment and also the lack of accountability. He mentioned the National water policy and its flaws in the implementation at provincial level. According to Mr. Danish, there is an immense absence of dedication from people of Pakistan to preserve our nature and environment. It is the duty of people along with the government to conserve water and preserve environment. He also criticized top-down approach in our policy-making process. At the end he mentioned the importance of Wet lands in Pakistan and the importance to safeguard them.



### Speaker 11:

#### Mr. Syed Hassaan Irfan

Mr. Syed Hassaan highlighted the flaws in decision-making process in Pakistan. Policies are made by the upper tier whereas the lower tier gets affected the most and they are not inculcated in policy-making. Mr. Hassaan suggested that we need to empower local government system, this will allow the farmers and other stakeholders involved in agro-industry can have their say in the betterment of environment and agriculture. He further stressed upon philanthropic approach towards preserving humanity through preserving environment.



### Concluding Remarks by Chair

#### Dr. Saima Ashraf Kiyani

Dr. Saima Ashraf thanked the panel for the enlightening discussion. She concluded while saying that the mixture of traditional and not traditional security ideas, recommendations, suggestions were very helpful. The top-down approach is not favourable policy formulation idea according to most of the participants. The Panel agreed that we have bulk of policies but there is an immense need for the implementation of those policies to bring positive change in preserving environment and conserving water. So there is dire need to work and work in right direction in order to formulate the workable policies for masses/public.



## **Vote of Thanks by Director General THSI**

At the end, on behalf of The Human Security Institute (THSI) I would like to express my gratitude to our distinguished guests who took time out of their busy schedules to attend the conference on “Valuing Water and Restoration of Forests: Future Strategy for Pakistan”. We hope that you found the conference informative and worthwhile. The primary goal of this conference was to bring together national participants as well as friends and partners of THSI in an open dialogue, under one roof to discuss the issues facing our nation related the water and forest restoration and to develop possible future strategies and concerning remedies and way forward.

I believe that our diverse and dynamic group of speakers and panellists provided in-depth insight, as well as, actionable and practical tools of engagement strategies, methods and mechanisms that could be utilized for effective developments. Your presence helped to make this event a great success and your enthusiasm and positive spirit helped make our time together productive.

I wish you all the best and hope that you continue to be engaged with the THSI for future events as well.

*Thank you all.*

## **Key Findings and Recommendations**

Following are the solutions suggested on by the academicians/ practitioners and researchers:

1. Bottom-up approach should be adopted while formulating the policies so the lower tier in our society have their say in the decision making process.
2. Pricing the water can become an important factor in valuing the water.
3. The policies of dam building have affected silt areas and flood plains areas and also proposed gene editing techniques for better plantation, so dam building policies need to be implemented.
4. Pakistan needs to adopt latest/non-traditional technologies and methods in its agricultural sector.
5. More research should be carried out to avoid vague and ineffective policies. Furthermore, the role of youth is most important and they should take lead in research of human security issues.
6. The government must design people-centric approach to solve problems and issues related to forestry and water management.
7. Kalabagh dam and other controversial issues need to be resolved through a healthy political debate.
8. Government should improve the implementation of policies because Pakistan lacks at the implementation phase of policy cycle.
9. Non-traditional irrigation system should be adopted by Pakistan as this is the most suitable technique.

## Profiles of Guest Speakers

### 1. Dr. Saima Ashraf Kiyani

Dr. Saima Ashraf Kiyani is chairperson at department of Defence and Diplomatic Studies at Fatima Jinnah Women University. She has done her Ph.D. in Asian Civilization from QAU. She worked as a Link coordinator for INSPIRE project: Capacity Building for the women parliamentarians of Pakistan (2009-2012) in collaboration with University of Bradford (UK) funded by British Council.

### 2. Dr. Bashir Ahmed

Dr. Bashir Ahmad is Director Climate, Energy and Water Research Institute (CEWRI), NARC. He has completed PhD in civil engineering from Tokyo University. He is an expert on Integrated Water Resources Management, Hydrological Modelling, Remote Sensing Applications and Climate Change Adaptation. He is also Program Leader of “Climate Change & Geo-Informatics” at CEWRI. He has 25 years of professional experience in research, academia and consultancy services. He recently completed regional project known as HI-AWARE (IDRC/DFID funded) on climate change, which was implemented in Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Netherland.

### 3. Mr. Syed Mahmood Nasir

Syed Mahmood Nasir is a Former IG Forest Ministry of Climate and holds a PhD degree in Anthropology at the Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad. Experienced former Inspector General with a demonstrated history of working as a true multi-disciplinarian in forests, biodiversity, climate change, species conservation. He has been CEO of two companies, is a fellow of LEAD Pakistan and has served as Board member of WWF and Islamabad Wildlife Management Board. He has well mixed experience as a forestry and environmental practitioner and at the policy, practitioner, and research levels.

### 4. Dr. Muhammad Irfan Ashraf

Dr. Muhammad Irfan Ashraf is working as Assistant Professor Forest Department ARID University, Islamabad. He has done PhD in Forestry from Canada. He has work experience of over 18 years and is an expert of Climate Change, Forest Ecology, Forest Management, Environment, Plant Ecology, Natural Resource Management, Community Forestry.

### 5. Dr. Kalim Shah Khattak

Dr. Kalim Shah Khattak is a Deputy Director Forest department, KPK. He is a graduate of university of Peshawar and University of Purta Malaysia (UPM). He has done his PhD from University of Purta, Malaysia. He has 19 years job experience in forest department.

## 6. Ms. Mahroona Hussain Syed

Ms. Mahroona Hussain Syed is a sociologist and a PhD scholar in Government and Public Policy with a large number of publications to her credit in the fields of national security, Counterinsurgency, military sociology and regional stability and socio-economic development. She teaches at the National Defence University of Pakistan and currently an Advisor to THSI.

## 7. Mr. Shakeel Ahmed

Mr. Muhammad Shakeel Ahmed is a Sericulture Expert and director retired with vast experience in various fields of Punjab of almost 30 years.

## 8. Mr. Zafar Khan

Mr. Zafar Khan is Research Officer at The Human Security Institute. He has done M.Phil. in International Relations. Previously, he served at the High Commission of Canada, Islamabad.

## 9. Mr. Hasnat Sheikh

Hasnat Sheikh is a civil society activist, writer & speaker. He has served and been engaged with various government & non-government entities, as Policy aide to former Prime Minister AJK Sardar Attique, head of Research at Kashmir Policy Institute and as a strategic, legal and government relations consultant with various other non-government organization.

## 10. Mr. Syed Hassaan Irfan

Syed Hassaan Irfan is an expert practitioner, social entrepreneur, development practitioner and executive director of Rizq Foundation.

## 11. Mr. Danish Kumar

Mr. Danish Kumar works at Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives. He has studied at University of Southern Indiana and was a Cultural Ambassador at U.S Department of States. He is a researcher, practitioner and academician and has work at climate change, water management and environment control.

# Glimpses from the event













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## ABOUT THSI:

In 21st century, the discourse on security has evolved where along with the traditional concept of national security, the discourse on Human security has gained equal relevance in which life, liberty, and dignity of individual are to be respected and ensured. While taking this into consideration. The challenges facing Pakistan in terms of human security are multifaceted. The Human Security Institute aspires to provide the foundational basis for an integrated approach focused on various aspects of human security. By generating intellectual discourse and advocacy, THSI aims to highlight the issues of human security and provide sustainable solutions.

### FOR FURTHER QUERIES

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