



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Pakistan needs effective planning and strategies to overcome water scarcity for the future: Experts revealed on the occasion of World Water Day Conference 2015**

To mark the World Water Day (WWD) 2015, the Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform the Government of Pakistan together with multi-stakeholders has organized a conference on March 27 focusing on this year's global theme, 'Water and Sustainable Development - Role of Youth for Sustainable Water Resource Management'.

The conference aimed at sensitization of key stakeholders on critical water issues and challenges; engaging stakeholders especially youth; advocating with the Government of Pakistan for approval of National Water Policy and building consensus for the adoption of Islamabad Water Day Declaration 2015. The conference is organized in collaboration with World Youth Parliament of Water (WYPW), UNESCO, Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), Pakistan Water Partnership (PWP), International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Economic Cooperation Organization Science Foundation (ECOSF), Asian Development Bank (ADB), UNICEF, FAO-UN, UN-HABITAT, Plan International, Muslim Aid, Helping Hand for Relief and Development, GLOF Pakistan, UNDP, RSPN, ICARDA, Riphah University and WaterAid.

Mr. Sardar Tariq, Chief Executive of Pakistan Water Partnership while delivering a message on behalf of President Islamic Republic of Pakistan said that investments in water and sanitation services results in substantial economic gains. He expressed that water is crucially important for the socio-economic sustenance and development of any country especially for Pakistan that has agriculture based economy. He mentioned that water resources of the country are subject to all kinds of quantitative and qualitative issues, which need to be addressed on priority basis.

Mr. Bart Devos, President of World Youth Parliament for Water said "Access to clean water and sanitation as well as water scarcity, are among the most pressing challenges for any generation. The creation of Pakistan Youth Parliament for Water will contribute to unlocking the potential of Pakistani young people as solution provider for the water problems"

Speaking at the inaugural session, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Minister of Planning Development and Reforms said that water is the key element for the socio-economic development of any country. He said that we must not only view sustainability as a problem of science, engineering, or economics; it is also founded on values, ethics, and the equal contributions of different cultures. He also emphasized that our country is blessed with human capital in the form of youth which comprises about 50 percent of the population and engaging Youth for Integrated Water Resource Management must be a foremost part of our water resources strategy. While quoting quotation of Dr. Mahbub ul Haq, he said "Sustainable development is a question of quality of life for the rich countries but is question of life for the poor countries".

Earlier, the Ambassador of Tajikistan Embassy, Mr. Sher Ali; Cooperation Attache of French Embassy, Mr. Olivier Huynh-Van; Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro, President ECOSF and Ms. Mukta Akter Representative of GWP Bangladesh also addressed the gathering.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Vibeke Jensen, Representative/ Director, UNESCO Islamabad highlighted that a total of 748 million people worldwide still do not have access to improved drinking water sources and quality water. While highlighting the critical role that Youth can play in participating in developing their countries in a sustainable manner she also stressed the academia to pay more attention to water research and its sustainable management. She mentioned that UNESCO Supports research and concrete projects on water related issues through its International Hydrological Programme (IHP), which is the only intergovernmental programme of the UN system devoted to water research, water resource' management, and education and capacity building.

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