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Ahsan for building new water reservoirs to avoid Thar like drought

ISLAMABAD, March 12 (APP): Federal Minister for Planning Development and Reforms Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday stressed the need for building new water reservoirs in order to avoid Thar like drought situation in the country. Inaugurating an 'international workshop on the use of modern technologies against flood' here, he said water shortage might be worse than the ongoing energy crisis as the phenomenon of climate change might reduce water availability up to 40% pushing Pakistan to be a water starved country. "If available water resources are not managed, Pakistan may face Thar like drought in half of the country", he remarked. The Planning Commission, in collaboration with Ministry of Water and Power, will organize 'Pakistan Water Summit' on March 20, 2014, in order to develop country's first National Water Policy for proactive development and management of the country's water resources.

The workshop was organized by Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), the National Space Agency of Pakistan, in collaboration with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, and supported by Government of Japan. "Natural disasters are major risk to country's sustainable development", he said adding that the impact of some of these disasters such as floods could be reduced if accurate and timely early warning and forecasts are issued thereby enabling better planning and execution of evacuation and rescue operations.

He added that recent advancements in space and remote sensing technologies and its various applications have proven to be valuable tools to help in prevention, monitoring and mitigation of disasters, as well as in relief operations. GIS has assumed very important role in development sector.

"It is no longer a tool rather has become way of work and the concept of G-Government has to be adopted at all levels for better design, planning, management and delivery of development programmes" said the Minister.

Ahsan Iqbal appreciated SUPARCO for its significant contributions to the socio-economic development of the country, especially in areas such as agriculture, forestry, water resource management, environmental monitoring and crucial role played by it in recent disasters like the 2005 earthquake and the floods of 2010 to 2013.

He further appreciated the Government of Japan and UNESCO for the support they have provided in strengthening of Flood Warning and Management capacity in Pakistan.

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