



100 Days - Water Action Plan

By Zohair Ashir on behalf of Hisaar Foundation's Think Tank on Rational Use of Water



Preamble

Pakistan's water must be a source of development, dignity and prosperity for all citizens. Land and water belong to the people of Pakistan and form their endowment and entitlement. They are Pakistan's main natural and economic resources for which there is substantial physical infrastructure available and where a very large segment of population is provided livelihood opportunities. The current "crisis" of water is not one of insufficient water resources or supply but one of poor governance and mismanagement. The strategy proposed here is based on making critical choices and prioritizing our water options rather than being overly ambitious and attempt to respond to all the challenges at once.

Priorities

In the first 100 days critical selected water actions should be taken to embark on path to water independence and security. One priority will be to formalize and strengthen the water economy of Pakistan which can be engine for business and job growth in the country. Second priority will be to address those actions that can bring immediate and visible relief to the common man in Pakistan through strengthening of water institutions/utilities in the major urban centers of Pakistan . Another key area of emphasis will be changes in certain agriculture practices and programs.

Five Key Focus Areas

1. Improve access to water for all uses, especially for the poor and the landless.
2. Finance the urban and rural water economies and the water value chains, for bringing prosperity and enhancement of job opportunities.
3. Store, conserve and manage water at all levels from grassroots upwards (storage, dams, reservoirs).
4. Safeguard the Indus Basin, its aquifers and its infrastructure, repairing, maintaining and adding as needed.
5. Improve governance and management of water institutions.
6. Build a base for science, technology and social aspects of water.

Action Plan for Next 100 Days - Immediate Relief, Visibility and Delivery

1. National campaign on making water safe for drinking in homes -to teach people how to clean water at point of consumption on national media, supply of low cost water purification materials through pharmacies, government health facilities and government schools.
2. Fast track supply of water and sanitation to government schools through mobilizing education departments, water utilities, PHEDs and Local Government Departments.
3. Establishment of Water Advisory Council consisting of mix of water experts, economist, businessmen, media, lawyer, management specialist and a public representative.
4. Review of major water institutions in the country like IRSA, WAPDA, KWSB and water utilities of major urban centers. The review will be completed within 90 days by a " crack" team of management experts.
5. Key strategies for changes in the agriculture practices and programs linked to the goals cited above.
6. Valuation of the Pakistan's water economy and its potential to contribute to the national economy.
7. Selection and identification of 50 "water champions" in the fields of water sciences, social sciences, engineering, hydrology, media, project management , water technology and information technology.

Considerable work in this regards is already underway and with the support of the government, many of the strategies can be quickly actioned for results. For further information contact Zohair Ashir at z.ashir@aasaconsulting.com or at +92 300 8230246

Long Term Plan - National Water Goals for Next 10 Years

The short term action plan (for 100 days) is based on a sound and fully researched long term plan by the Hisaar Foundation Think Tank on Rational Use of Water. This Think Tank consists of water experts, economists, lawyer, management specialist, businessmen and media expert from across Pakistan representing each of the provinces. The long term plan includes the following proposed national goals.

1. Bring 5 million new acres of land under cultivation and distribute to poor and landless farmers in defined arid districts of all provinces (eastern Sindh, southern KPK, eastern Baluchistan and southern Punjab).
2. Mobilize 5 million acre feet (MF) of surface water to reach farm gate by third year and 10 MAF each year by the seventh year (water storage and conservation strategies including dams, part of this strategy).
3. Improve water efficiency from current 33 percent to 43 percent .
4. Achieve US\$ 1 billion output for every MAF of water.
5. Preserve, maintain and add to existing water infrastructure.
6. Revise abiyana to reflect real value of water.
7. Control withdrawal of groundwater.
8. Generate additional 10,000 megawatts of indigenous and renewable energies including hydro.
9. Institute coordination among water, agriculture and industry for maximum benefits.
10. Make investments in water infrastructure and alternative energies, a core part of CPEC.

Hisaar Foundation Think Tank has been working diligently since 2014 in developing a Framework for Recommendations on Water Policy and our work and research is available for review by the government.

Members of Hisaar Foundation Think Tank for Rational Use of Water: Dr. Salman Shah (Punjab, Economist, Ex Finance Minister), Khalid Mohtadullah (KP, Engineer and Internationally Recognized Water Specialist, Dr. Daanish Mustafa (Punjab, Geographer, Professor at Kings College, Water Expert), Simi Kamal (Sindh, Geographer, Internationally Recognized Water Expert), Jamal Ansari (Punjab, Petroleum Engineer and a Leading Businessman), Rafay Alam (Punjab, Lawyer Expert in Water Law), Seema Taher Khan (Sindh, Media Owner and Water Warrior), Dr. Noman Ahmed (Sindh, Architect, Dean at NED University) and Zohair Ashir (Sindh, Management Specialist).