



PAKISTAN

Ishrat Husain, Temporary Alternate Governor

Excellencies

The Chairman of the Board of Governors of ADB,
President of the Asian Development Bank,
Fellow Governors and Alternate Governors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalam-u-Alaikum,

I feel greatly privileged to attend the 52nd Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of ADB. Let me, on behalf of the Government of Pakistan, extend my profound gratitude to the ADB and the Republic of the Fiji Islands for this event in this magnificent City.

Mr. Chairman,

I would also like to commend ADB for selecting an important theme for this year's Annual meeting i.e. "Prosperity through Unity". We all know that in a rapidly evolving world, where economies can reap immense benefits of global growth rebalancing through ever greater integration and shared prosperities amongst the developing world, we need to continuously enhance our partnerships in Asia and the Pacific. Excellencies, please allow me to rephrase the theme as "Shared Responsibilities, Shared Prosperities"

Asian societies are undergoing rapid change in their economic, social and cultural spheres. These rapid and often multiple transformations put Asian societies under tremendous pressures to respond to the challenges of regionalization and globalization. To improve the current situation Mr. Chairman, faster growth with enhanced integration within the region through capital flows, trade & investment and people-to-people contact is imperative. The development challenges will have to be transformed into opportunities by economic cooperation, technological progress and research to compete in competitive and sophisticated markets.

The role of ADB becomes ever important to move ahead and to help member countries reform their governance structures, remove structural disparities through growth and development in an equitable and sustainable manner. This also necessitates that the ADB management must reflect on contemporary global economic realities and adopt accordingly, if it has to remain as effective in the future as it has proved in recent times.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistani nation re-affirmed its commitment to democratic tradition last year. The new governments at national and sub-national levels that took office in August, 2018 after the

general elections have generated hope and optimization in the country. They are concentrating upon economic and social progress to strengthen the economy and enhance its inclusiveness.

The new government has adopted strategies to overcome the country's macroeconomic challenges. The incumbent government is now in its first year and has embarked upon reforms agenda in economic and financial sector which includes: (i) Restructuring of Public Sector Enterprises (ii) Power Sector Reforms (iii) Debt Management (iv) Fiscal austerity to reduce fiscal deficit (v) Tight monetary policy to check inflation (vi) Building foreign exchange reserves to stabilize the exchange rate (vii) Promoting exports (viii) Incentivizing home remittances (ix) Promoting growth and raising domestic revenues (x) Rationalizing subsidy regime to reduce pressure on the budget and (xi) Tax administration and policy reform to mobilize domestic resources.

Mr. Chairman,

It is the government's strong political commitment and resolve to accelerate the pace of reforms in Pakistan. We expect at the same time that the international development community will step up its support to the new government in undertaking much needed investments in infrastructure, energy and social development sectors. Such investments, underwritten by bold country-owned economic and governance reforms, will bring sustained growth and prosperity to the country. Pakistan, in this regard, has always considered ADB as a frontline development partner that is both trustworthy and dependable.

Mr. Chairman,

Seventeen goals. One Hundred and sixty nine indicators. A population of over seven billion people. One deadline. That in summary are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs cover a broad range of sustainable development issues, including ending poverty and hunger, improving health and education, making cities more sustainable, combating climate change, and protecting oceans and forests. They are a step forward, if development is to be inclusive and just. Financing these goals is a major issue for developing countries like Pakistan. Lack of coordination, disjunction between different departments and lack of capacity at state institutions are serious impediments in advancing the SDGs.

But Pakistan has accorded the highest priority to achieving the goals which will enable Pakistan to join the league of upper middle class countries by 2030. As far as the social safety is concerned, we have allocated US\$ 900 million during the year 2019 for cash grants to 5.7 million families. We are proud that in addition to this through social Health Protection initiative 6 million families living below the poverty line, each family will be provided indoor health care services worth up to US\$ 5,180. Launching of the Ehsaas programme recently marks strong commitment of the present government to invest in development of human capital.

Mr. Chairman,

Keeping in view the current economic challenges, it is essential that development institutions like ADB should not only provide project financing but also support the member countries through enhanced technical assistance and policy-based lending for their reform initiatives to ensure sustainable growth. The increase in financial flows would help member countries to pursue economic recovery and to retain the required level of spending on social sectors.

Additionally, the ADB ought to play a role of catalyst in promoting private sector investment flows amongst the member countries besides fostering connectivity and regional trade and reducing vulnerabilities to natural hazards.

We appreciate ADB's efforts in generously supporting Pakistan in our efforts to put the economy on a high growth trajectory by bringing about necessary structural changes for a sustained and inclusive growth. I would like to place on record the Government of Pakistan's deep appreciation of ADB's support to Pakistan in energy, transport, agriculture and urban sectors and particularly, in alleviating poverty through provision of financing for social protection development programme.

Mr. Chairman,

I conclude by re-affirming our resolve to further strengthen the close cooperation with ADB and fellow member countries. Our joint efforts can go a long way in bringing about prosperity and peace in Asia and the Pacific. We greatly value our close economic relations with ADB and hope that in future we will witness further consolidation of these relations and reinforcement of the Bank's support for important policy reforms in Pakistan.