

## CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS:

If the ambitious Agenda 2030, spelt across 17 goals and 169 targets is to be realized, a well-coordinated policy and implementation mechanism is required with a clear vision of national priorities, particularly as regional and global challenges from the MDG era have multiplied or taken on new, more complex dimensions. Access to justice, equality in outcomes, and institutional accountability require a lot of work starting with political will, putting into place coherent policy and implementation mechanisms, and ensuring a strong civic participation that converge to guarantee rights for those furthest behind. Further, a whole-of-government approach is required to put flesh on and pulse into the Vision, 2025 with an emphasis on accountability which is currently missing from its 7 pillars, in order to realize transformative change in the fast-deteriorating human rights situation across the country.

There is also a pressing need to bind economies to dedicating resources for human development as a result of bilateral trade deals, and to hold the private sector accountable for giving back to the public sector to compensate what they take away in the form of externalities<sup>12</sup> of their business activities.

Based on the above analysis, the following recommendations are made to the government of Pakistan and regional civil society:

### For the government of Pakistan:

- 1) Build on Vision 2025 to shape a clear operational strategy for realizing sustainable development for all;
- 2) Determine intersectional ties across goals and targets for policy coherence, allocation of responsibilities, and efficient mobilization of funds;
- 3) Build capacity of parliamentary taskforces for policy coherence and effective accountability at all levels;
- 4) Build capacity of implementing State institutions for well-coordinated and responsive inter-sectoral synergies;
- 5) Ensure gender-just legislation and policing, and gender-responsive governance mechanisms;
- 6) Democratize the planning and review processes with active civil society participation; and
- 7) Support the development, institutionalization and democratization of robust follow-up and review processes.

### For National and Regional civil society:

- 8) Civil society should recast itself in the role of a torch-bearer, and not merely act as a retrospective watchdog, by sharing resources proactively and building national and transnational solidarity movements around human rights;
- 9) Civil society needs to remind Governments and re-emphasise obligations under the International Bill of Rights (UDHR, ICESCR and ICCPR), and ensure that these commitments counter regression at every opportunity; and
- 10) Regional civil society and solidarity movements should capitalize on diplomatic spaces to strengthen bilateral ties between countries in the region.

<sup>12</sup> Externalities are costs incurred by third parties (not including producers and consumers) from an economic activity. These may include individuals, organizations, property owners, or resources that are indirectly affected.



Shirkat Gah – Women's Resource Centre (SG) is a leading Pakistani women's rights civil society organization formed in 1975, working from the grassroots to the international arena. SG's mission is to: build the capacity of women as rights claimants; advocate and mobilize for positive changes in policies and practices from the community to the national level; and holding the state accountable. It has four main thematic areas of women's rights namely: Communications & Leadership (capacitating individuals to claim democratic rights and social justice); Bodily Rights (including SRHR, VAW/G, Personal Status Laws); Peace & Pluralism (understanding and promoting peace, democracy, pluralism and sustainable development); and proactively developing a feminist learning culture. This research was carried out by SG as part of an 8-country project on monitoring and Review of the SDGs with the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD).



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## Monitoring and Review of the Sustainable Development Goals & Development Justice

Reviewed by  
**SHIRKAT GAH**

### COUNTRY CONTEXT

Pakistan's official 2013 progress report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) attributes the country's wholesale failure to reach the goals to a variety of factors, including natural and man-made disasters, administrative and political instability, weak commitment to economic reforms, reduced Official Development Assistance (ODA), and ineffective translation of MDGs in provinces.<sup>1</sup>

Recurring natural disasters and terrorism have caused immense damage to infrastructure as fiscal deficits and foreign borrowing rise with high buoyancy between the tax revenue and GDP.<sup>2</sup> Geo-strategic interests in the region pose further challenges. They have strained relations with Pakistan's neighbors, particularly India, where relations are affected by three wars within 24 years of independence, non-resolution of occupied territories to date, and consternation over withholding, diversion or unannounced release of floodwater into the Indus River causing repeated flooding along the river and its tributaries.<sup>3</sup> Porous inter- and intra-country borders have caused unchecked infiltrations of arms, drugs, refugees and militancy whereas other Muslim-majority countries near or afar, influence the country's religious culture. Becoming an ally in the War on Terror has ignited proxy wars across Pakistan, costing the country an estimated USD 68 billion in 2010/11 despite billions in foreign aid and debt relief from coalition partners.<sup>4</sup> Efforts to root out militant non-state actors have diverted resources: social sector spending has remained largely stagnant, while disproportionate ascendancy is seen in defense budgets. Pakistan enjoys good relations with China, from which it is receiving the biggest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in its history, a USD 51.5 billion economic proposal; the details of which remain elusive, however.



<sup>1</sup> Pakistan MDG 2013 report, available at: <http://www.pk.undp.org/content/dam/pakistan/docs/MDGs/MDG2013Report/final%20report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Chief potentiating factors for low revenue generation to counter high borrowing are weak tax administration mechanisms and concessions/ exemptions for the top 10 percent.

<sup>3</sup> The Indus River is the largest river system in South Asia and the life-source of Pakistan's predominantly agrarian economy. It flows through Indian-held territories in Kashmir, and four provinces in Pakistan.

<sup>4</sup> Pakistan Economic Survey 2010-11

# PAKISTAN



**Palma Ratio (Income Inequality)**

**1.1**

**UNDP Gender Inequality Rank**

**121**

**PAKISTAN'S HEALTH BUDGET USD 115 MILLION VS  
MILITARY BUDGET USD 8.2 BILLION USD**

**PAKISTAN'S MINIMUM WAGE IS USD 1,608  
(PER ANNUM) VS RICHEST INDIVIDUAL NET  
WORTH USD 2.6 BILLION**

### OVERVIEW OF SYSTEMIC & STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TOWARDS ACHIEVING DEVELOPMENT JUSTICE

Politico-religious actors<sup>5</sup> hold sway over Pakistan's constitutional and legislative framework, policing institutional culture and social narratives. The divinized social control by the majority religion (Islam) intersects with culture, traditions, nationalism, and pre-existing patriarchy to negatively impact human rights, especially those of women and girls, evident

<sup>5</sup> Fundamentalists or extremists, purposefully seek to reduce dissent and debate within religion as well as civil and political spaces, and emphasize punitive actions for any transgressions of parameters imposed by them. They deploy religious ideology in pursuit of other, nationalist and populist, political goals across all religions.



through the prevalence of a number of regressive legislative precedents and social norms. Narratives emanating from these sources have impeded, and in some cases rolled back, progress, especially in terms of civil rights, violence against women and girls, access to education and health, and economic activity across urban and rural settings. Further, lack of knowledge of constitutional and legal guarantees, poor access to remedies, and institutionalized gender discrimination have kept women far behind. Despite increased representation of women in the National Assembly (one of the three MDGs targets that Pakistan met under Goal 3), gender outcomes reveal huge disparities in education, labor force participation and pay (including the invisibility of home-based workers in the economy).<sup>6</sup>

The emerging emphasis on public-private partnerships (PPPs) in Pakistan is troubling as the State relegates its obligation to guarantee universal access to essential services to the private sector, even though recent research suggests that: PPPs entail higher costs due to high interests on private sector borrowing, introduction of or increased transaction fees; that public dispensation of services ensures better coverage and reduced costs for end-users; public sector services create and provide more job security for healthcare providers. The privatization of essential services disproportionately affects women due to their shouldering of the burden of unpaid care work.

Though Pakistan's fiscal balance improved in 2013-14 compared to 2012-13, revenue deficit has persisted, indicating that the government is not only borrowing to finance its development expenditure, it is also partially financing the added loss. Within the SDG framework, which observes a disquieting silence on debt sustainability, distress reduction, and 'structural adjustment policy reforms', all these factors are likely to keep Pakistan amongst developing nations that are struggling to resist deregulation of labor markets to expand investment in the social sector.<sup>7</sup>

## ARCHITECTURE FOR SDGs IMPLEMENTATION

Pakistan, one of the 193 member States to adopt the Agenda 2030 in September 2015, has been proactive; developing Vision 2025<sup>8</sup> (dubbed a national blueprint for SDGs) as early as 2013. The document is ambitious, envisioning Pakistan amongst the top 25 economies by 2025 by aligning national priorities against the Agenda 2030. However, where it declares human development as central to the country's growth, it also pushes for a reduction in social sector expenditure, rationalized subsidies, and the introduction of incentives for the private sector. It does not provide any insight into planned structural reforms, in terms of tax and revenue systems, debt sustainability and distress reduction to better manage its policy objectives, or comprehensive legislation to combat illicit financial flows that amount to a staggering half-a-trillion USDs in offshore accounts.

The bulk of law-making was transferred to provinces under the 18th Constitutional Amendment in 2010. Provinces have the power to set up institutional mechanisms under the guidelines provided the Federal government through the Vision 2025 document. The Federal government has also constituted a Parliamentary Taskforce and notified the establishment of four Provincial Taskforces (comprising mainly Parliamentarians and Provincial legislators) along with Provincial Units for implementation and reporting against the SDGs.

Assessment shows that progress has been slow and uneven across Provinces, with a lack of clarity on roles, functions, mandates, and how to address the intersections between SDG goals and targets. SDG Taskforces replace the MDG Taskforces with roughly the same functions. Further, Provincial SDG Units established under the Planning Commission (PC), a financial and public policy development institution under the Federal Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms, have not been provided TORs, resulting in lack of clarity on their mandate and purpose. Indicators against SDG targets set by the PC reflect several gaps in understanding: some global indicators have been added to the national list, some require language changes to adapt to the national context; some require sex-disaggregated data; no data is presently being collected against 173 indicators out of 231. Currently there are no defined roles for and participation of civil society within the government's SDG architectural set up.

Civil society in Pakistan is cherry-picking targets in line with their thematic focus. In order to contribute to the planning phase and acting as an effective watchdog for monitoring implementation and reviewing progress, civil society needs to make a concerted effort towards understanding the intersections amongst goals and targets more broadly.

<sup>6</sup> Despite the passage of the National Policy on Homebased Workers, 2009, both the Federal government and Provincial governments have been unsuccessful in legislating on the matter.

<sup>7</sup> Sadeque, N. (2013). What structural adjustment does to us. How they run the world. Shirkat Gah

<sup>8</sup> <http://fics.seecs.edu.pk/Vision/Vision-2025/Pakistan-Vision-2025.pdf>

## INITIAL FINDINGS ON SELECTED SDGS GOALS & TARGETS

World Economic Forum Gender Gap Ranking	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
	143	144	141	135	134	133	132	132

Source: the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap Report.

Pakistan ranks poorly in terms of parity between men and women in four main areas: educational attainment (135/145), health and survival (125/145), economic opportunity (143/145) and political empowerment (87/145).<sup>9</sup> It consistently scores poorly on the Human Development Index, being amongst the bottom 10 countries assessed in areas of life expectancy, access to knowledge (including expected years of schooling and mean years of schooling) and a decent standard of living (including GNI per capita).<sup>10</sup> Dismal progress towards greater gender equality in Pakistan underscores the need to improve multi-directional accountability to overcome pervasive gender-based discrimination and institutionalized violence. Low scores expressed in global ranking systems reveal the exclusion of half the country's population from access to information and services, as well as from active participation in decision-making at all levels of social, economic and political life, leading to unequal outcomes for women and girls.

**Goal 3 Target 3.1, 3.7 and 3.8** - Case stories collected across four provinces of Pakistan reveal a bleak picture in terms of women and girl's access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, covered under Goal 3 of the SDGs. In Target 3.1 addressing reduction in Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR), the country reported 276 deaths per 100,000, almost double the MDG target of 140 per 100,000. National aggregates subsume high levels of provincial disparities. For instance, Baluchistan's MMR exceeds the national average by three times as many deaths amongst women. Case studies indicate a variety of persistent problems. These include deaths due to poor basic infrastructure even in Punjab which had the highest achievements in terms of MDG progress among provinces. It is not surprising then that many women like, Nooran, a mother of 12 children from Sindh province, are demanding answers in terms of national policies around universal access to sexual and reproductive health care, family planning, and universal health coverage, covered under target 3.7 and 3.8 of the SDGs. Evidence strongly suggests that rural areas are not covered in terms of family planning and basic health services, depriving millions of women and girls of vital SRHR information and services.

**Goal 5 Target 5.1 & 5.3** - Strong opposition from conservative and religious quarters means that three out of four provinces in the country do not have a law on domestic violence, which falls under target 5.1 of the SDGs. Because of dual legislative frameworks (Pakistani Penal Code and Sharia Laws), there is persistent compounding in cases of honor-killing, with courts being complicit in allowing the acceptance of blood money and allowing heads of family, preponderantly men, to drop charges. Convictions in rape and sexual violence cases are extremely low, dwindling between 2 to 4 percent amongst all reported cases. About 50 percent girls are married below age 20 years, while one in 10 girls between the ages of 15-19 years is either already a mother or is pregnant, in direct contravention of Target 5.3 which mentions elimination of child marriage in no uncertain terms.

**Goal 17 Target 17.12** - the Generalized System of Preference or GSP+ status was awarded to Pakistan giving it tariff-free access to EU markets.<sup>11</sup> This trade deal has yielded over USD 1 billion in gains in 2014. However, ratification and implementation of major human rights conventions and treaties, which are central to the award and maintenance of this status, continue to be given low priority in terms of investment, budgetary allocations and systematic strengthening. There is no clarity in terms of how and where profits reaped from this deal will be ploughed back to strength compliance with international human rights standards or how the government sees itself accountable in the event of non-compliance.



<sup>9</sup> <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR2015/cover.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/PAK.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> A special arrangement in the buildup to SDGs