

# PPAF hosts roundtable for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth in Chitral



*Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Reform, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal addressing at a roundtable organized by PPAF for Support and Development of Chitral.*

The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) in collaboration with the Federal, Provincial and District Governments of Chitral, hosted a roundtable, 'Devising our own Destiny: A Model for Collaborative Partnership for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth in Chitral'. The participants included representatives from all three tiers of the government, the donor community, foreign missions, civil society organizations and the communities from Chitral.

Chitral today is at a cross-roads and has the opportunity to develop a growth trajectory which is relevant and inclusive of its people and their potential. The joint stakeholder roundtable in Islamabad is the first step to invite the perspective of the key stakeholders in forging the growth strategy and ensuring that the people of Chitral are an important player devising their own future.

Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Reform, said in his key note address, "Chitral as a border district has strategic importance for us and its unique culture, history and social diversity makes it pivotally important for us that Chitral be preserved and promoted. It is wonderful to see such a diverse group of stakeholders come together to commit to the sustainable development of Chitral. We must link Chitral to the tremendous trade and

economic opportunities that will arise from the opening of the Lowari Tunnel and the CPEC projects.”

He added, “Chitral District is particularly vulnerable to natural disasters with the frequency of such disasters increasing every few years. The organizations gathered here are critically important in helping mitigate the effects of climate change and build disaster resilient communities and structures. It will take the full support, technical assistance and resources of all the stakeholders present here to ensure that Chitral is protected from the effects of climate change and natural disasters. The preservation and promotion of the unique cultural heritage of the region and sustainable planned economic growth that does not damage the fragile social balance of Chitral is also a concern.”

Qazi Azmat Isa, CEO of PPAF, said in his closing remarks, “PPAF has invested in the social capital in Chitral for 15 years and now we are convening all the stakeholders to create a unique model of sustainable and inclusive development which will make Chitral a model district in KP. We are grateful to all the participants who have taken time out of their busy schedules to be here and particularly the people from Chitral who braved the inclement weather and blocked roads to be part of this roundtable.”

He added, “Chitral has been cut off from the mainstream because of the location throughout the year and the climate in winters. We are at a juncture in time when the Lowari Tunnel and the CPEC routes will make travel to and from Chitral much easier and therefore much more frequent. We can all come together to leverage this change in circumstances while ensuring that the development in Chitral is ecologically and culturally sustainable. The key to this is going to be a transparent governance structure for the utilization of funds which will be through the Chitral Development Forum designed to coordinate, steer, guide and monitor the process of the development of the district.”

Mr. Haji Maghfirat Shah, District Nazim Chitral gave a development overview of Chitral, Mr. Shahzad Aftikhar Uddin, MNA Chitral presented the challenges facing the district while Mr. Inayat Ullah Khan, Sr. Minister for Elections & Rural Development KPK shared the opportunities in Chitral.

H.E. Stefano Pontecorvo, Italian Ambassador to Pakistan spoke about the Italian commitment to Pakistan and development in Chitral. He said he believes that Pakistan will be one of the most leading countries in the next 10 years.

H.E. Thomas Drew, British High Commissioner to Pakistan spoke about his many visits to Chitral which he saw as a haven of peace, diversity and natural beauty. He fully supported the stakeholder commitment to sustainable development in Chitral.

A Chitral Declaration to pledge their commitment to the strong, inclusive, sustainable innovative and resilient economic growth of the district was signed by Haji Maghfirat Shah, District Nazim of Chitral and Qazi Azmat Isa. Ms. Fozia Bibi, MPA Chitral, presented the declaration to the participants. PPAF will subsequently hold a follow-up conference in Chitral with the communities.

A group of Chitrali students and members of the Kalasha community presented their traditional folk songs. Gulnaz, the runner up in masterchef Pakistan, created traditional cuisine

for the participants to taste. Stalls displaying traditional jewellery, woodwork, textile art, dry fruits and shu weaving were also present.