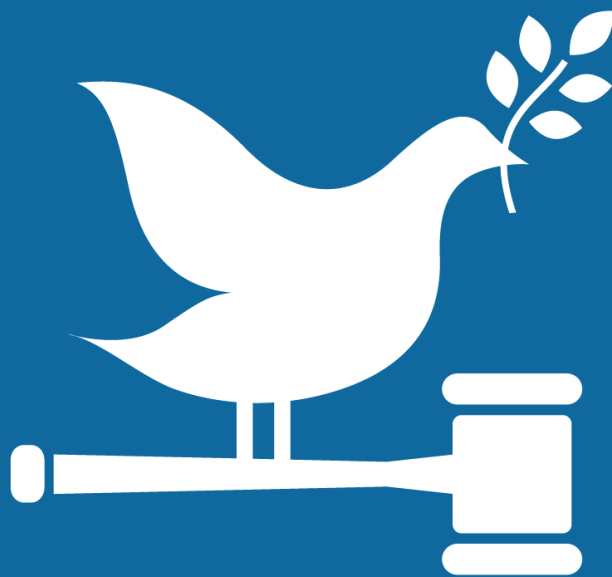


Goal 16

Peace, Justice and Strong Institution

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Country Context

Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the fifth largest population on the planet with 213.6 million people,¹ is a sovereign state situated in a geo-strategic location at the junction of middle East and central Asia. Bereft of Quaid's dream for a welfare state, social development has been off the mark with 22.4 million Out of School Children,² 56.3% Out of Pocket Expenditure in health,³ and 29.5% population living below poverty line.⁴ Exclusionist policy patterns marginalizing governance has led to country ranking at 147th out of 188 in Human Development Index⁵ and 143rd out of 144th in Global Gender Gap Index.⁶ Moreover, marginalization of key strategic sectors has led to funding diversions away from social development, barely allocating 3% of the GDP each for Education, Health and Social protection.⁷

With a GDP of \$279 billion (2017 est.),⁸ Pakistan is categorized as a lower middle-income country. Economic stability has been a constant uphill battle with public debts and liabilities escalating up to 74% of GDP.⁹ The country is ranked at 171 out of 188 countries in terms of GDP per capita (PPP) of \$5,400 (2017 est.)¹⁰ while unemployment stands at 6% without factoring in statistics from informal economy which employs almost 70% of the country's workforce.¹¹ Gini index estimates 30.7% inequality with disparities as wide as the income share held by the lowest 10% at 4% against that of the top 10% at 26% (2013 est.)¹² in Pakistan.

In hindsight, political institutions in their formative years - mainly adapted from the colonial rump - were barely able to withstand extraconstitutional maneuvers¹³ in the absence of a strong nation-building consciousness. This resulted in successive instability of civilian governments followed by political proxies and status-quo representatives, beguiling under democratic pretexts. Weak democratic structures led to the absentia of populace from democratic processes and crippled country prospects in socio-economic and political spheres with implications long into its future. This is evident of the country rankings at 110th in Democracy Index¹⁴ and 20th among Failed States rankings in 2018.¹⁵ Fret over it not though, for Quaid's optimism guides our course:

The story of Pakistan, its struggle and its achievement, is the very story of great human ideals, struggling to survive in the face of great odds and difficulties.ⁱ

Amid international isolationism, national calamities and social fragmentation, democratization of state and social institutions is the moral and political imperative. It is essential that we promote critical education and discourse to bring forth analysis that helps adequately influence policy mandates for a just, peaceful and prosperous Pakistan.

ⁱ M.A. Jinnah, Address to the people in Chittagong, March 23, 1948

Governance and Strong Institutions

Pakistan requires a concerted policy action to democratize state and societal institutions complementing governance reforms process.

1. Electoral system needs to be digitalized for efficiency along with expansion of postal ballots reaching out the rural communities within and overseas Pakistanis abroad.
2. Political parties should entrust candidates based on merit rather than patronage and wealth. Educated candidates, especially from smaller constituencies, should be protected from persecution and victimization by the feudalists.
3. Youth must be recognized as a major cross-cutting constituency and each party should ensure at least 20% seats for young candidates.
4. Fundamentalist narratives should be curbed backing it with strong political will and disciplinary governance.
5. Politico-religious forces should to be regulated to prioritize national interests ahead of sectarian loyalties.
6. Concrete rehabilitation strategy should be put in place for those interested in social reintegration and peace-building.
7. Hate speech needs to be condemned in policy and practice to rebuild narratives on appreciation and celebration of cultural diversity.
8. The government must enact sensitization campaigns to encourage intra and interfaith harmony for cohesive social outcomes.
9. The rich residue of Sufi wisdom could be used as an effective counter-narrative against fundamentalist precepts in the society.

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