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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I express my heartfelt gratitude to the Forum for granting me the opportunity to address such an august gathering, which is graced by honorable delegates. By providing us with an occasion to listen to the voice of so many peoples of the world and to let the voice of Pakistan be heard, the Forum has indeed won the gratitude of all of us. With fifty years of experience in federalism coupled with a variety of government systems, the past and present of Pakistan can offer penetrating insight into the successes and failures of third world countries.

Pakistan's experience in federalism and the shape it gradually assumed, need to be understood in the backdrop of its unique situation in many respects. Like every other nation, Pakistan has its own particular ambience in which it emerged and progressed. Her national vigour and future aspirations, dreams realized and deferred, would be understood best with this unique situation in background.

As a professed ideological state, it has a philosophy of life that shapes its political, cultural and social objectives. This philosophy naturally grows out of the beliefs & cultural mores of its people and the historical character of the Muslim community in the sub-continent. When Pakistan was created, its Founding Fathers articulated its raison d'être through the key words of Islam and Democracy. Beginning their journey to prosperity and honor, with the ingenious admixture of religion and liberal democracy, the people of Pakistan had to further grapple with the question of a workable blending of federalism with the norms of an ideological state. Whereas federalism accepts the rights of the federating units in policy making and social agenda, ideology acts like a string of rosary connecting and permeating through all the layers of a multilevel state. We succeeded in developing a federal set up, with ideology giving conceptual homogeneity to all levels of the state, without compromising on the rights of sub-cultures, federating units and religious and ethnic minorities. The right to choose and the right to enjoy the fruits of freedom from the colonial yoke was not for the federal government alone -- and so it was allowed to flow down to each constituting community. However, in the process of evolving a federal paradigm

while remaining ideological, a new and distinct form of federal state has emerged. Events and ideology have precipitated a federal state that is fully ideological and continues to exert its presence in the global perspective.

Another reality that places Pakistan in an even more unique situation is its commitment to the defense and security requirements. With the chronic dispute of Kashmir, the region has bled for more than half a century. Its strategic importance for Pakistan is vital and uncompromising. Pakistan has always wished for, and has taken concrete measures to, arrive at a peaceful solution in the light of international norms of behavior, but the problem has survived and even aggravated. With such a longstanding dispute at its doorstep, Pakistan has to remain alive to its defense priorities and security considerations. While the international community has successfully intervened elsewhere to eliminate oppression and ethnic and religious cleansing, the Kashmiri people are left to their own devices to face mounting oppression and deprivation of fundamental human rights. In any case, in these conditions, we are driven to maintain a defense budget and to give precedence to national solidarity and integrity. As a developing country, Pakistan, therefore, allocates its national resources to social services in the light of its heavy commitment to security and defense. These financial obligations assume the form of quite a rigid set of parameters for Pakistan, insofar as its thrust towards social development is concerned. Its journey to economic prosperity and happiness for its 130 million people continues while struggling with the issues of resource constraints. To this may be added its efforts of half a century, to build and sustain long lasting national institutions and infrastructure for development.

With dwindling roles of government in the world, the government in Pakistan has also embarked upon the agenda of sharing responsibility and authority -- sharing responsibility amongst national institutions, sharing responsibility amongst different levels of the state hierarchy, between Government and the Community and between Government Departments and NGOs. The spirit of sharing this responsibility has infused so deeply and pervasively that responsibility is now being shared amongst the international community towards their struggle for fundamental human rights, social development, against terrorism and for the environment. In line with the spirit of our age, we have also restructured our administrative systems to ensure the maximum participation of the community and make delegation and decentralization the cornerstones of our initiatives in the next century. Future governments would no more be like the patronizing hands of nineteenth and twentieth century governments. With rising levels of awareness and confidence among the people, they are to be empowered and motivated to share responsibilities. The concept of Big Brother is soon to be replaced by participative government in Pakistan.

Upholding the principles of democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights despite its checkered political career, has given us confidence in these principles and we are taking democracy as a responsibility to the people within and without the

country. Within, as a responsibility towards community for social uplift and eradication of menaces such as poverty, terrorism, and child labor, and without, as a responsibility to international peace and prosperity. This ideal is being realized in the management of national resources through decentralization of authority and responsibility.

The policy of previous Governments to recruit generalists to the senior staff level in the Education sector has undergone a drastic change in the present Government. It was thought that only generalists can better appreciate political and administrative situations and respond accordingly. The specialists were considered to carry a prejudice of their own expertise and hence were unable to see the vital political implications of their work. They were not considered good administrators. The policy of the present Government, however, is based on adaptation to changes and the new challenges. In the past the generalists were needed because the situations offered in civil services were few and those who were appointed had to do several tasks. At that time the specialized public services almost did not exist.

The situation has changed almost in all the countries wherein all public sector functions are regarded as specialized ones. They require professional and technically trained personnel. The demands of the public have also risen and the services are now being judged according to the standard of whether they meet the public expectations or not. It is for this reason that modern organizations have specialists and highly skilled professionals as their top executives. The advice of the specialists in the public services is now seen as essential. There is little doubt that drastic changes are required to induct specialists in the field of education. The Education Department in the Province of Punjab has therefore taken the decision to induct professionally trained and specialist administrators to administer the schools system.

Particularly in social sectors, we have effectively brought down the level of decision making to the districts. Fully autonomous bodies at district levels to dispense social services are now almost in place in School Education and Health Sectors. The strategic decision-making was previously done at the Provincial Level in a country with large provinces such as Punjab with a population of over 70 million. The users and the decision-makers were far apart with complete apathy for each other. The present government has taken far-reaching measures to bridge this gap and to bring down the levels of authority and responsibility to the district level. The oppressive bureaucratic structure is being gradually replaced by empowering the communities. We do not expect it to happen overnight. Actually the Government has taken a cautious and gradual approach towards introducing these structural reforms so as to ensure that the new institutions are well established before the older ones are dispensed with, thereby not risking the stability and continuity of public functions.

Political leaders are responsible to the people for their Government's actions and

this means that there must be full respect for accountability within Government. This principle is more often repeated as a meaningless slogan than actually put to practice in developing countries. Accountability means holding public officials responsible for their actions and aims to improve services to society by promoting value for money in Government decision-making and enhancing organizational performance. In the field of Education in the Province of Punjab with which I have remained associated for the last 2 1/2 years, the facet of accountability has been the topmost priority. In March 1998 the services of the Pakistan Army were requisitioned to carry out the biggest ever third party validation by conducting a physical survey of 56000 Primary Schools in the Province of Punjab. The scrutiny provided the Government with an insight into the crumbling system, enabling us to take far reaching measures for reinvigorating it both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The role of the Pakistan Army, which is a federal agency, in the social sector of a province is a classical example of promoting national cohesion and integration between the federating units and the federal Government.

The debate between federal and provincial powers raged strong for decades in Pakistan without any signs of abating. In the form of Non Government Organizations we have found nuclei for local authority, substituting distantly placed inert centers of centralized authority. The NGOs and Community Based Organizations are closer to the heart of people because they are exceedingly participative and consultative in their very nature. Government has introduced a number of measures through which public money is actually spent by NGOs. There are other models through which we seek assistance of NGOs to assist the Government in the management of social service units such as schools. The results have delighted the community and have given confidence to the growing NGOs. The appearance of large NGOs that almost parallel the governments in size, and far exceed in efficiency, is now awaited. Unlike developed countries, where the growth of NGOs was spontaneous, in Pakistan, the government is actually and actively promoting this development. We hope that they would further resolve the question of extent and legitimacy of provincial and federal governments.

Accountability in the functioning of government has always been understood as an instrument of efficiency and resource conservation. But the classical methodology to achieve effective accountability through the creation of special institutions has been found to be skin deep only. Accountability in Pakistan had remained rather weak and the present government had to transform the character of management to show that accountability is a process involving not one or two institutions but through a multi-pronged attack involving the entire government. Not only through making accountability the mission statement, but also through involving the community-based organizations have we been able to instill a real fear for the deviants. We created Committees for every small locality with wide statutory powers to serve as watch dogs for government functionaries.

Statutory bodies have also been created at Federal and Provincial levels to unnerve the delinquent functionaries if not to threaten them. We have succeeded in affecting cracks in the empires and fiefdoms in bureaucratic realms, if not in bringing them down. Bureaucracy was traditionally seen in Pakistan as the tool of Federal Government to carry out errands in the Provinces. It was not through its statutory or structural role that bureaucracy had assumed such a role, but through the abuse of the civil service by consecutive shortsighted rulers. By effectively alienating government functionaries from political maneuvering, we have achieved a level of neutrality and impartiality. In the meantime, large scale cleansing efforts have led to the identification of thousands of functionaries and politicians, backed by concrete evidence, and legal proceedings have been instituted against them. While taking action on such a large scale, unprecedented in our national history, we have to guard ourselves against even an impression of political victimization. The process has been kept transparent, and the accused individuals have every right to seek recourse to the judiciary.

The judiciary in Pakistan has maintained its untainted prestige despite political storms and upheavals. In a federal structure, the judiciary does not only perform the function of conflict resolution among individuals and corporations but also among the federating units and between the units and the Federal Government. It helps clarify and interpret the constitution and through its creative judgments evolves and defines the functions of each entity in the federally governed arena. The judiciary in Pakistan has carried out this role with deftness and wisdom setting up new standards of excellence.

The future of federalism in Pakistan has to be protected and made secure. We have to assess the possible threats and we have to thwart them. The Hydra of terrorism and fanaticism in the garb of ethnicity and religious sectarianism has raised its ugly head in many countries. Pakistan has ceaselessly made efforts to curb this menace through rule of law, equitable distribution of resources, and reforms in the education system. Strict measures have been taken wherever necessary. Ethnic and territorial disturbances have been studied to identify the feelings of deprivation. Instead of concentrating on the elimination of such feelings, we have put in all our efforts to remove the deprivation wherever it exists. In most of the cases, uneven development in different units, segregation of communities, poverty and unemployment have led to such feelings. These issues are now being addressed by pooling in all resources of Federal and Provincial governments.

At the same time we are alive to the opportunities for federalism the new age offers. The globalization of culture and the ubiquitous penetration of communication and information technologies have reduced the territorial aspect of problems so often faced by federal states. The common threats faced by mankind have also helped shrink the distances. Environment, terrorism, military adventurism, obscurantism and infringement of fundamental rights are dreaded and despised by all. They have brought the peoples of the world even closer. The

gradual homogenization of cultural values like humanism, saving the earth, respect for human life, property and honor, and individual freedom, have developed common grounds among people living in different provinces -- grounds whose cementing strength is far greater than the disrupting centrifugal forces of petty vested interests. We therefore look forward into the 21st century with new hopes.

I would be failing in my duty to the fellow participants if I do not stress the threats that federal states like mine are likely to encounter in the next millennium. These threats include the shrinking pie of resources available to developing countries. Financial constraints weaken the relationships amongst units and also promote centrifugal tendencies. Other threats are ethnic, racial and territorial prejudices and false prides. The international community has to attend to these threats and take measures to resolve them through long-term plans. Otherwise, such tendencies are likely to destabilize the fabric of such countries in Asia and Africa, and threaten international peace and stability. Thank you.

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