



## Local Government and Rural Development

Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MoLG&RD) plays a vital role in co-ordination, priority setting and national policy development on local self-government, rural development and municipal administration. It works with international cooperation and technical agencies dealing with civil administration and governance.

An outstanding feature in this sector was the devolution of power for which provinces were authorized to independently manage this vital area of activity to provide a third tier of governance, as provided by the 1973 Constitution. The law to transfer local governments to provinces was enforced on December 31, 2009 and Provincial Governments were, accordingly, given the mandate to enact necessary laws through legislatures, conduct party-based elections, and launch local self-governments to solve problems and ensure progress and development at the grassroots level in consultation with the people.

### Establishing Effective Local Government Institutions

The ball of devolving these powers to provinces was set rolling by the Prime Minister who chaired the "National Workshop on Successful Models in Capacity Development for Local Self-Governance towards Urban Renewal and Rural Reconstruction" in August 2008. Subsequently, the Prime Minister directed MoLG&RD to reform the system. In the light of the recommendations of the workshop, the Federal Minister for Local Government and Rural Development discussed priorities with provincial ministers and secretaries. Based on the close scrutiny of the system and its performance over the past seven years, the Minister submitted a set of recommendations

to the Federal Government for an action plan.

A 'Committee on Devolution' chaired by the Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs with appropriate representation from the federal and provincial agencies concerned at the highest level is actively examining legal and administrative changes in the system. The local government system was reviewed by the inter-provincial committee of ministers for local government in 2008 and 2009, and proposals made for revamping the system within the frame-work of provincial setup as envisaged in the Constitution. The assent of the President was sought to enable the provinces to proceed further with changes in respective Local Government Act, 2009 drafted according to their specific situations and requirements.

### Capacity Development

The avowed aim of this exercise was, and is, to ensure that the newly elected local government institutions are effective and responsive to the needs of the people. A major program for Local Government Capacity Development was funded under the PSDP 2008-2009. The Municipal Training and Research Institute of Karachi, an attached department of MoLG&RD, conducted 26 training courses and workshops from March 2008 to date, to raise the working skills and knowledge of elected heads, officers and officials of local governments and NGOs working for local development and welfare of the people.

Under a Rs.40 million project, approved for implementation in four years between 2006 and 2010, capacity-building of the physical infrastructure was undertaken in the Akhtar Hameed Khan National Centre for Rural Development and Municipal Administration (NCRDMA), Islamabad. The NCRDMA

## Local Government and Rural Development

organized 57 training programs to benefit district and municipal administration officials and elected representatives of local government in 2008-2009. This created awareness and sense of competence among 1,658 participants.

### Future Plans

For further development of NCRDMA and making it an apex institution of the country, a new project valued at Rs.491 million has been approved for implementation during the next three years. A network of local government schools, consisting of Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, Municipal Training and Research Institute, Regional Provincial Academies at Tando Jam, Lala Musa, Quetta and Peshawar, is scheduled to be established for coordinated training research throughout the country.

### People's Works Program

This program, in fact, is the continuation of KPP-I under which Rs.10 million per parliamentarian were allocated in 2008-2009 to Treasury as well as Opposition members. During the same fiscal year, 3,932 schemes were approved on the recommendations of parliamentarians and Rs.3.329 billion were disbursed among EAs. Similarly, in 2009-2010, as on December 15, 2009, as many as 641 schemes have been approved and Rs.667 million disbursed to the EAs.

### Model Village Development Project

The project, initiated in 2004 to develop model villages across the country, was designed in consultation with the executing agency NRSP according to a directive of the

Prime Minister. Prior to launching the project country-wide, a pilot project was marked for 26 constituencies. The distribution of the villages was made according to the National Assembly constituencies in provinces and one village each in Islamabad Capital Territory, FATA, AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan with a total outlay of Rs.142 million, each village getting Rs.5.475 million for these projects. The project was completed in entirety by the end of December 2009. Construction of physical infrastructure to make the existing villages as model villages, basic facilities like water supply, sewerage system, street pavement wastewater collection, household latrines, sanitation, and electrification, have been ensured.

### Gender Justice

Quick and inexpensive justice is one of the foremost responsibilities of the State. The MoLG&RD proactively remained engaged with the Provincial and District Governments through a UNDP-ADB supported gender justice program. Musalihati Anjuman (reconciliation bodies) project in 20 districts (five in each province) of the country covered 1,068 union councils and resolved 8,093 disputes relating to household violence, land disputes and other non-cognizable family offences. About 14,500 stakeholders have been trained on gender sensitization, legal literacy and record-keeping. Steps were also taken to ensure better living conditions for the poor in rural areas.

### Special Initiatives

The MoLG&RD has also initiated a project for the preparation of a regularization and rehabilitation plan for *katchi abadis*. A new project of institutional strengthening, capacity-building and database preparation was launched for better rural development.