

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind



April 10 2016

Health Facilities Must Improve

7th April was celebrated as World Health Day by World Health Organization (WHO). Every year the day is celebrated with a particular theme and WHO organizes international, regional and local events related to that theme. This year's theme was Diabetes and United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon marked the Day with a strong call for stepping up global efforts to halt the rise in diabetes and improve the lives of those living with this dangerous but preventable and treatable disease.

The First World Health Day was celebrated in 1950, after the First World Health Assembly in 1948. It is basically held to mark WHO's founding, and is seen as an opportunity by the organization to draw worldwide attention to a subject of major importance to global health each year. World Health Day is acknowledged by various governments and non-governmental organizations with interests in public health issues, who also organize activities and highlight their support in media reports, such as the Global Health Council.

Good health is one of the most important considerations for the human beings today. And, a healthy life guarantees an active and better life. With the advancements in science and technology and particularly in medicine and medical facilities, human beings should have been able to control or completely eradicate many diseases. However, that has not been the case and serious issues still persist.

Mostly, it has nothing to do with the incapacity of human beings to deal with these diseases. There have been many major breakthroughs in the medical field and most of the diseases can be cured easily by the doctors, but the main issue is of sociological and political nature. Unfortunately, there are many who do not have access to medical facilities as most of the medical facilities have been privatized and only privileged class can have access to them. The poor people around the world can never even think about those facilities.

Only some of the countries have managed to provide quality health facilities through government programs while the rest still have very expensive doctors, medicines and facilities. The underdeveloped and developing countries suffer the most in this regard. Afghanistan is one of the countries that are suffering from the dearth of better medical facilities for most of its people.

The health facilities are not proper and most of the diseases that people suffer from stay untreated even in the large cities of the country.

At the same time, the quality of services provided by government hospitals is really very low, their number is not sufficient and they are not established in most of the remote areas; therefore, most of the people do not have access to them.

On the other hand private hospitals have been established that can, in no way, be afforded by the people who do not have enough food to eat.

Most of the people are compelled to go to other countries for treatment. They mostly go to the neighboring countries like India and Pakistan and there again they have to spend a large sum of money. Apart from the health services they avail they have to pay for the travel expenses as well.

If there are such facilities provided in the country, the people would never require to go out and would not take money out of the country as well. However, it is important to note that such facilities can only be acquired by the rich people. As the ruling class in our society can pay for those facilities they mostly do not care whether the poor people in the country can have better access to health facilities.

Such a scenario is really dreadful and there should be serious efforts to deal with the situation. Short-term projects will never solve the health issues in Afghanistan. Afghan government and the supporting nations must pursue long-term strategies to handle the issue, if they want to help the people of Afghanistan.

At the same time, corruption and loose control, regarding the quality of medicine that is sold in the country, is another major issue, which is responsible for further debilitating the health of the people instead of supporting them during their ill health.

An earlier investigation by Independent Media Consortium (IMC) Productions showed that though millions of dollars have been poured into the health sector, there are many Afghans who have their nearest health center at a distance of three days and unfortunately two-thirds of pharmacies do not have professional staff. Such a scenario is really dreadful and worth special attention; moreover, only lip service would do no good to change the scenario.

Therefore, the authoritative people must take necessary measures and must curb the situation as the issue is very delicate and it is related to the lives of the people. Carelessness in this regard is a type of indirect murder.

Migration Crisis Should Be Tackled

By Hujjatullah Zia

Political and financial plights have forced Afghan people to seek refuge in foreign countries and migration remains a serious issue. The escalated violence and emergence of the self-styled Islamic State (IS) group on one hand, and the mass unemployment on the other hand narrowed down the opportunity for a safe and comfortable life. Being weary of war and violence, Afghan citizens head for developed countries in the hope of heaving a sigh of relief. A rise in civilian fatalities is one of the main reasons behind the current exodus. As a result, on August 2015 United Nations found that in the first six months of the year Afghanistan witnessed a 23 percent spike in women's casualties and a 13 percent jump for children, compared with the previous year. Militancy and terrorist attacks in populated areas and major cities were described as the main causes of civilian casualties in 2015, underscoring a push by Taliban militants into urban centers "with a high likelihood of causing civilian harm". Including Taliban-claimed attacks, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan assigned responsibility for 62 per cent of total civilian casualties in 2015 to anti-government elements.

Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan constitute the largest and most protracted refugee population under UNHCR's mandate. Up to January 01, 2014, Pakistan hosted 1,615,876 refugees, and Iran 840,158. The majority have been resident in both countries since fleeing the Soviet War in Afghanistan during the 1980s. Despite the success of voluntary repatriation programs both in Pakistan and Iran, many Afghan refugees have specific needs, vulnerabilities and protection concerns that prevent their return. In addition, the volatile security situation and human rights violations in Afghanistan remain an ongoing concern. In May 2012, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and UNHCR adopted the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR).

The SSAR outlines the need for increased voluntary repatriation, but also for enhanced resettlement as a means of international responsibility sharing, assistance to refugee affected and hosting areas and alternative stay arrangements for refugees in Pakistan. Resettlement is considered to be a strategic component of the SSAR and a vital tool for maintaining adequate protection space.

However, in December 2014, there was a terrorist attack on a school in Peshawar, and over 100 school children were killed. Following the attack, Afghan refugees in Pakistan began to encounter serious harassment and often were told to return to Afghanistan. There was a mass exodus of tens of thousands of refugees.

It is said that Pakistan's constant demand for an early return of over 3 million refugees back to Afghanistan will be raised at the first World Humanitarian Summit in Turkey. The repatriation of the Afghan refugees will be discussed in the two-day summit - which is going to be organized at the

initiative of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on May 23. The Istanbul summit will bring together governments, humanitarian organizations, people affected by humanitarian crises and new partners as well as the private sector to propose solutions to the most pressing challenges and set an agenda to keep humanitarian action fit for the future, UN sources revealed to the international media.

In June 2014, following military operations in North Waziristan Agency, Pakistan, more than 13,000 families crossed into Khost and Paktika provinces in south-eastern Afghanistan. Similarly, a large number of Afghan families were displaced internally due to escalated militancy and terrorist attacks in restive parts of the country.

As a result, Afghan nation suffered great casualties last year due to the Taliban's spring offensive and forced to abandon their homes.

The Kunduz takeover in late September 2015 - which was the first time the Taliban fighters managed to capture a major city since 2001 - the heavy attacks in Sangin district of Helmand province and the terrorist activities, carried out by the self-styled Islamic State (IS) group, in Nangarhar caused internal displacement.

Despite repeated promises, the National Unity Government (NUG) failed to pave the way for returning Afghan refugees. The election was no more than a flash on the pan and people's hope faded away with the rise of militancy, civilian casualties and mass unemployment, mainly following the establishment of NUG. Bearing the brunt of financial and security crises, a large number of youths immigrated to Europe. Scores of Afghan citizens have been living in international camps with the hope of getting foreign citizenship. But their fate is still unclear. What if they return to country after long waits?

Afghan officials have repeatedly asked foreign countries to repatriate Afghan citizens. However, there is no strategy for providing them job and shelter while being returned. As a result, a number of significant posts, including ministry of defense, is still being controlled by acting heads. Following the withdrawal of foreign troops, many NGOs and private investors left the country - which narrowed the job opportunity for the youths.

There is much manpower in the country, mainly those who gained their university degrees, but no job available for them. So, the first step the government must take is to tackle the unemployment, as people are wrestling with, and protect people's life and liberty.

Secondly, every citizen of the world has the right to migration and gaining second citizenship. Therefore, Afghan citizens are no exception. Rather than asking for their repatriation in an inappropriate condition, the government has to tackle the financial and security crises so as to get the citizens not to leave the country.

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Will Britain Choose Irrelevance?

By Dambisa Moyo

When voters in the United Kingdom go to the polls on June 23 to decide whether their country should leave the European Union, the issues they will have to reckon with will include the impact of their decision on unemployment, trade flows, and the stability of financial markets. But there are other less quantifiable considerations that must also be weighed in the balance.

The economic arguments against a British exit from the EU - or Brexit - have been well rehearsed. Many have suggested that if the UK were to leave, manufacturers would secure continued access to the European market by fleeing across the English Channel, costing the country millions of jobs. Similarly, withdrawal from the EU risks undermining London's position as a global financial center, which depends on the city's integration into European markets. Trade agreements, too, would have to be renegotiated in the wake of a Brexit.

Another area of concern for many voters regards the UK's sovereignty - the idea that independent countries should have ultimate decision-making authority over what happens within their borders. Membership in the EU sometimes requires ceding control to a complex web of often-inefficient Brussels-based supranational institutions.

I hold a doctorate in economics and work with businesses whose employees and operations benefit from the UK's membership in the EU. I also have a pronounced disdain for red tape and inefficiency. And yet I do not believe that economic considerations or concerns about sovereignty offer compelling arguments for Brexit.

Much more important is the potential impact of such a decision on the UK's global standing. Membership in a European community of 500 million people provides the UK with considerable influence over geopolitics and the global economy. As the world becomes ever more daunting and complex, maintaining that influence is clearly in the country's interest.

The referendum campaign is playing out against a global economic and political backdrop that is nothing if not foreboding. The International Monetary Fund has warned that global growth is unlikely to return to the levels that it attained before the 2008 financial crisis. Indeed, the global consulting firm McKinsey predicts that global growth rates during the next 50 years will be half of what they were over

the previous five decades.

Meanwhile, Martin Dempsey, a retired army general and former Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said that the world has entered the most dangerous period he has ever witnessed. Developing countries are home to roughly 90% of the world's population, and some two-thirds of their residents are younger than 25. Stagnant growth or shrinking output in many emerging economies has serious consequences. The UK's Overseas Development Institute predicts that by 2025, roughly 80% of the world's poor will live in fragile states.

Job-eroding technological advances, worsening income inequality, demographic shifts, dwindling natural resources, and environmental depletion are adding even more straws to the camel's back. The world is already undergoing the worst refugee crisis since the end of World War II, with some 60 million people having been driven from their homes. The mounting instability will only exacerbate the problem.

Leaving the EU will not shield the UK from the vagaries of the global economy. It will only deprive the country of a leading voice in shaping the response to new and existing challenges. The UK is far better placed to influence the global policy agenda from inside the EU than from outside it.

To be sure, leaving the EU would not strip the UK of its historical prominence in international organizations - most notably its permanent membership of the United Nations' Security Council.

But a non-European Britain would be less likely to secure the same standing and influence in whatever institutions emerge in the years ahead.

Within the EU, the UK is a critical part of an influential economic and political bloc with undeniable heft. Amplified by the EU, its voice can influence world events, providing the country with what the British like to describe as an ability to punch above its weight.

Should the UK leave, however, its influence would be limited to its true size on the global stage: a relatively small country with limited economic and political power. As British voters prepare to cast their ballots, they should weigh carefully the consequences of international irrelevance. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

Dambisa Moyo, an economist and author, sits on the boards of several global corporations.



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