

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

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In Harmony with Nature

April 22 was celebrated internationally as Mother Earth Day so as to emphasize the importance of the earth and its environment and highlight the challenges it is facing by the growing population, pollution and degradation.

The United Nations General Assembly, recognizing that Mother Earth is a common expression for the planet earth in a number of countries and regions, reflecting the interdependence that exists among human beings, other living species and the planet we all inhabit, and noting that Earth Day is observed each year in many countries, decided to reserve April 22 as International Mother Earth Day in 2009, with resolution A/RES/63/278.

However, the Earth Day was first celebrated in the United States in 1970 and it is organized by the Earth Day Network. Its mission is to extend and diversify the environmental movement worldwide and to activate it as the most effective vehicle to build a healthy, sustainable environment, address climate change, and protect the Earth for future generations. With this year's theme - Harmony with Nature - it tries to ensure inclusive, equitable and quality education on taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts and to inspire citizens and societies to reconsider how they interact with the natural world in the context of sustainable development, poverty eradication and climate justice, so as to ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in Harmony with Nature.

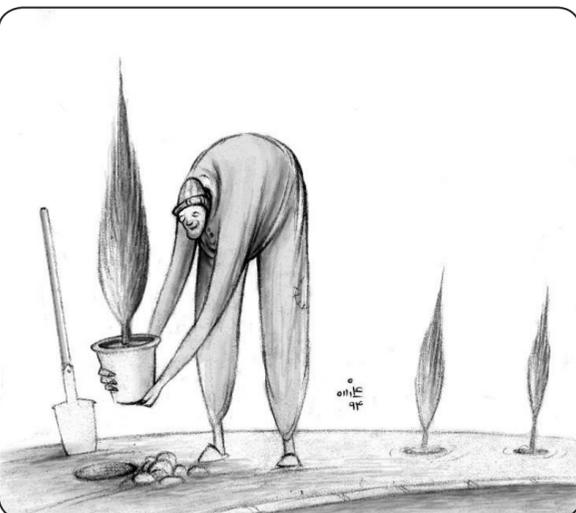
On the Mother Earth Day, for all the inhabitants of the earth, it is crucial to understand that our earth's environment has been experiencing large scale degradation due to addition of excessive pollutants. These pollutants are basically the result of chemicals and products that are being invented and used with a great speed in the modern world. These evils have the ability to disrupt our environment and introduce disorder within the ecosystem which is crucial for the life to exist on earth. It is of vital importance to note that the possibility of life to exist within the known universe is limited to the planet earth alone. The distance of the earth from the sun, its temperature and other physical conditions exist in such an ordered manner that life is guaranteed here. Furthermore, the dependence of living beings on one another, their interactions and their reaction and influence over the environment have certain proportional arrangement, which is termed as eco-system by the scientists. If this eco-system is disturbed in some way or the other, the life is disturbed and the contaminants that are let loose by human beings in the environment has the capacity to disturb it greatly and has the capacity to endanger existence on earth.

The contaminants basically form pollution, which can influence environment in many different ways. Though from the very inception of human beings' civilized life, pollution has been influencing human beings, nonetheless, in today's world of ours, there has been extensive increase in it. With the industrial revolution, the release of pollutants within the natural environment has kept on increasing. Today, we are standing at a stage where many serious minds think that we have to be serious about saving our earth from the menace of pollution.

There are some important concerns that most of the environmental scientists believe should be pondered upon extensively. The first one is the degradation of natural environment to the extent that can prove fatal for most of human beings. Already, the pollutants within the environment have been able to introduce different kinds of diseases in the living beings, which, if left unchecked, can go out of control.

The other concern is regarding the overall warming up of the globe; this concept is known as "global warming". This concept suggests that with the increase in pollution, there will be considerable rise within the average temperature of the world that may, at maximum, result in the liquefying of the glaciers on the poles and may drown the whole world. Moreover, considerable rise in temperature may disturb the conditions of living on earth and may disrupt the eco-system and jeopardize the existence. However, there are scientists and thinkers who believe that the climatic changes may take thousands of years. There has been cycle of changes and there will be such changes in the future as well. The climate of the earth will not keep on rising rather it will keep on experiencing fluctuations after certain years. In fact, they do not seem much convinced regarding the theory of global warming. Nevertheless, it must never be forgotten that the uncontrolled release of pollution can cause serious damage to earth and its environment.

The need of time is to save the earth by adopting appropriate policies. Any effort in this regard needs to be two-dimensional. Firstly, every individual must feel his/her responsibility towards the earth and must make sure that he/she does not become a reckless being and must prove helpful for the environment. However, extensive awareness programs in this regard can be really helpful. Mother Earth Day can be used very positively in this regard and much can be taught to the people through different sorts of programs and techniques. Secondly, there have to be efforts on national level as well. The governments in different countries can adopt strict laws regarding the safeguard of the environment and can make sure that different industries and enterprises adopt atmosphere-friendly attitude.



Difference between Words and Reality: Access to Health Care and Its limitations in Afghanistan

By: Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Last Saturday April 20, 2019, Afghanistan and Pakistan jointly inaugurated a 200-bed, hospital in Kabul, one of three major health care facilities being built and funded by Islamabad as its contribution to reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. Named "Muhammad Ali Jinnah Hospital" under name of Pakistani founder and it took 12 years to finish at a cost of more than \$24 million. As reflected in media reports, Officials of both countries cited deteriorating Afghan security, continued mutual political acrimony and institutional as well as bureaucratic inefficiencies for the delay in the completion of the second-largest hospital in Afghanistan.

Second vice President Sarwar Danesh, Minister of Public Health Dr. Feroz, Pakistani minister of state for parliamentary affairs Ali Mohammad Khan, Pakistani ambassador to Kabul Zahid Nasrullah Khan, a number of lawmakers and elders participated in the ceremony. Danesh on behalf of the government and people of Afghanistan thanked the government and people of Pakistan. Pointing to Pakistan's part in key infrastructural projects in Afghanistan, he said Afghanistan government hoped Pakistan government would also play constructive role in maintaining security and peace in Afghanistan and the region. Pakistani minister of state for parliamentary affairs Ali Mohammad Khan also spoke and considered completion of Jinnah Hospital as an effective step towards sympathy between the people of the two countries. He recalled of completion of other hospitals in Logar and Jalalabad by Pakistan, stressing that Pakistan was making efforts to help Afghanistan in security, stability and lasting peace.

The Second Vice-President criticized the related ministries for failure to provide equal and quality healthcare services to all people of Afghanistan. "Today health for all, justice for all and education for all are the motto of all of us, but in action, we're facing with serious obstacles to implement such mottos," Danesh said, stressing on balanced development in health sector as Ministry of Public Health is provided with considerable national budget. He said that most of people even in areas like west of capital Kabul were deprived of proper health services as the people preferred to visit private hospitals for treatment, but their health services' quality was also very low.

He also called for national participation in the public administrations and termed lack of national participation as one of the key causes of the gap between the government and the people in the country. He pledged that the NUG would take all the necessary measures to ensure national participation in the public administration. West of Kabul is unfortunately deprived of most of proper city services and has been sidelined," Danesh said, adding that central institutions including municipality, education and water supply companies have failed to act upon their commitments, which caused distance the people and government.

As voiced by the second vice president, there are many objections in social media networks indicating huge differences between words and reality in terms of providing public services both in terms of inclusion and quality. As to health quality is-

ues, people mostly choose to go the neighboring countries for serious health problems. They normally choose to visit Pakistan and India for better medical facilities. Few days ago, Tolonews showed a man from Balkh province taken a patient to Pakistan for treatment and kissed hand of Imran Khan imploring to build a hospital in Afghanistan. In fact, it is big shame for the related ministries as their citizens are compelled to beg healthcare services from the neighbors.

Going abroad may be convenient for the ones who are financially strong or have a strong talent of begging, but others remain untreated and mostly neglected. It is really tragic for them as their own country cannot provide them even their basic rights. It can be said that from each five resident of Kabul at least one had travelled outside Afghanistan to seek the healthcare service they required.

However, both quality and quantity of healthcare services have improved in nearly last two decades but people expect as we could do better within this long period of time. Specifically, they are not satisfied about the poor quality of public health system, including staff and services; lack of appropriate drugs; and an improperly functioning referral system. They reported that often they had to wait a long time to be treated or that health facilities were open during hours that did not correspond to medical needs.

Women and girls face more barriers to accessing proper and timely health services, both for themselves and their children. These include, due to low literacy rates, a lack of knowledge of health problems and practices and restrictions of their movement and their access to money. Usually Women need to be accompanied by a male, which doubles travel costs and makes the financial burden of accessing health services larger for women than for men.

Informal fees or corruption are another worrying problem, considering that costs pose an important barrier to access healthcare. People reported that they often have to pay bribes in order to be seen by a doctor in a public clinic. Others spoke of doctors in public clinics pushing people to their after-hour private practice, saying that it was better equipped. People also regularly complained that public clinics in remote areas sold their drug supplies to pharmacies, so that patients had to buy them instead of receiving them free in the clinic.

Consequently, the quality of public services is often distrusted, even if this is not always the case. Therefore, many people prefer private clinics, private doctors and eventually going abroad that are perceived to be better in terms of quality. While there are also reports of overprescribing, multiple price, misdiagnosing and even malpractice and medical mistakes by private practitioners. Many private providers seek to benefit from the bad reputation of the public sector and ask high fees for their services. It is therefore essential that public health facilities offer quality care as an accessible and affordable alternative.

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Why India is the Favorite Destination for Afghan Refugees

By: Amit Raaj

When Firdaws was kidnapped and brutally whipped by Taliban militants in Kabul, he fled to India with his whole family from Afghanistan due to the threat of severe. Firdaws is among thousands of the Afghani refugees who have settled in India with his family and do not want to go back to his home.

India is a Home of Refugee, where more than 200,000 asylum seekers are living in different parts of the country. As a home of refugee, India has long been a safe haven for South Asian countries like Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan. But, when we talk about the Afghani refugees in India, it becomes the favorite destination for them. South Delhi's Lajpat Nagar looks like a mini Kabul where thousands of the Afghani refugees can appear on the roads and streets. Many Afghani refugees run their hotels, travel agencies, mobile shops, medical shops, saloons, beauty parlours, and so on. Smiles on Afghani refugees prove that they have a quite better life compared to their own country in India.

Firdaws told me, Taliban kidnapped him just because of working at an American center as a translator. He said, 'not only Taliban but there are many problems in Afghanistan which force us to leave our own country. Apart from the fear of life, there are no jobs, no education, no health, and no future at all in corrupt administration.' He further said, 'I and my brother had a job, we had a home and farmland, but once Taliban captured everything and destroyed our property and threatened my family to kill, therefore we decided to leave our country.'

'When I arrived in India, I saw there is a hope for life. However, as a refugee finding job and home are the major problems in India. I gave many interviews in different companies in Delhi, they select me but at the last moment, they refuse to give me a job, as I don't have any work permit. I know India

is also facing a job crisis but at least here's no threat to life like Afghanistan. I have never faced any harassment from any Indians and it feels me as an old Home,' Firdaws said.

Another young refugee, Shehzad, met me in Lajpat Nagar, who entered India six months ago. Shehzad said, 'except India, nobody wants us. I would like to thank India who allows us to live here in a very peaceful manner. I want to keep my family's life secure and I believe India is the only place where I can feel like my own home. Ever since I came to India, I am looking for a job but I could not get so far. But now I decided to start my study in India and will try again to get a job.'

'The situation in Afghanistan is very devastating that's why nobody wants to stay there. Today, young Afghans are being forced to flee their own country and becoming refugee. Nobody wants to live like a refugee but also no one wants to go back to a war-torn like Afghanistan.

Shehzad's family has also suffered from Taliban's harassment just because his father was the part of the Afghan Army. Shehzad said, 'Taliban once tried to kidnap my younger brother and was threatening to murder my father, me and my younger brother. Therefore, we decided to flee from our home.

While coming to Delhi from Jaipur, an Afghanistan businessman name Mehroof met me on the train. He said, I am in India for the last two weeks and I will stay here until the elections. This is my first visit and I can tell you it's feeling like an old Home. We Afghani believe India is one the countries in the world that really concern about Afghanistan and want peace on our soil.

'India has sacrificed a lot for our nation. That's why we have a very strong and friendly attachment to India,' he further said.

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