

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



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The Challenges Faced by Economic Sector in Afghanistan

The role of economy is of immense importance for a nation. Economy is for a country as circulatory system is for a body. As in the absence of circulatory system, blood cannot be pushed through different parts of the body, similarly, without economy, currency and other rudimentary necessities of life cannot reach to various parts of a country. Mostly, the other systems in the country, like social and political systems are greatly reliant on the economic system. Certain thinkers even believe that the nature and features of others systems are determined by the economic system. Consequently, it is imperative that all the countries in the world must sustain strong economy so as to have constancy and reliability.

There are diverse facets of an economic system.

Businesses or trades form one of the most important ones. If within a system there are steady investments and different businesses take roots, the system is believed to be on a track to growth and richness. From the inception of human society, human beings have required businesses so as to have their necessities satisfied. During the course of human history, businesses have taken different forms and features and presently have touched today's advanced form.

The under-developed and developing countries of the world that require founding durable economic system need development and sustenance of different businesses to a great extent. The authoritative people in such societies have to ensure that the businesses have every opportunity to flourish.

There are certain requirements for businesses and investments to advance. Amid them stability and security play the most compelling roles. If different systems within a country are steady and there are not major fluxes every so often, the ground is said to be prepared for the investors and businessmen to take the plunge and launch their businesses.

Businessmen want unwavering results from their investments and they detest seeing political and social changes interrupt their businesses. The evil like insecurity also plays major role in dispiriting businesses and investments. Different incidents of terrorism and killings force the businesses to go bankrupt, and terrify the investors to invest. The societies marked with insecurity do not have consumers going to the markets and relishing the luxury of shopping different products. Afghanistan is one of the same types of country where insecurity has been influencing the economic life to a high level. Both national and international businessmen are not willingly eager to invest in all the sectors and they do not see confident prospects of their businesses. As insecurity has been devastatingly influencing the country, the expansion in the basic infra-structure has been scanty. The worries and reservations of the Afghan market have made the international investors to think several times before they take an initiative to start their businesses in the country.

Although there can be great opportunities in Afghanistan as the country is blessed with different types of mineral and other natural resources, the economic infra-structure has not been able to get enough attention. The lack of infra-structure developments has incapacitated different business to flourish. Since, there are no ready raw material for the industries; no reliable sources of energy, particularly, fuel and electricity; no well-developed networks of roads that should transport them to the industries on time; no skilled labor available to work within the industries; and no proper mechanisms that can ensure the transportation of the finished goods to the local, national and international markets, the industries in Afghanistan have to face myriads of challenges. Therefore, the investors are not galvanized enough to invest their capital for industries and other economic initiatives. Afghanistan needs to have strong economy so as to stand on its own, especially after the most of international troops have withdrawn.

The international aid and assistance that have been coming to the country for the last some years have been reduced and Afghan economy will be tested to a large extent. The country has to start from the basic infra-structure development and have to reach to a strong economy, wherein the businesses are able to run without any distress and inconsistency.

An environment has to be developed that can be rousing for both the national and international investors. Furthermore, the golden chances wherein Afghanistan can apply maximum and can get the best outcomes from must be discovered and they should be reinforced so as to thrust the country towards self-reliance. Alternatively, the businessmen and investors must also keep the national interests in their deliberation while they establish their businesses and start getting the outcomes from them. They have to keep this in their minds that the society as a whole has certain rights that have to be fulfilled by them. In similar fashion the international investors must also deal with the circumstances in Afghanistan as special and must keep both their interests and the support for Afghanistan in their consideration.



Civilians Bear the Brunt of War and Violence

By Hujjatullah Zia

War and violence have inflicted heavy casualties upon nations and left indescribable destruction behind. People have been suffering from violence for many centuries and decades, but the violence is less likely to come to an end. A number of nations still withstand unbearable pain and unspeakable catastrophe around the world. The stories of violence and killings continue unabated. Democratic and human rights discourse could not bring an end to deadly wars.

Yemenis men, women, and children are suffering in the worst possible way as a result of Saudi-led coalition attacks against Houthis in support of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi. The conflict continued and more than 8,600 people have been killed and 49,000 wounded since March 2015, many of them in air strikes by a Saudi-led multinational coalition that backs the president. The conflict and a blockade imposed by the coalition have also left 20 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and created the world's largest food security emergency. The International Humanitarian Law (IHL) is violated flagrantly as civilians, particularly women and children, are reportedly killed in large number.

As the war between coalition and Houthis reaches its third year, more than 80 percent of Yemenis do not have access to basic necessities of life. After all, a report released by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), says that one million people are afflicted by cholera in Yemen, which is a new milestone for what was already one of the fastest growing outbreaks of the deadly disease in modern history. As of late September, cholera had killed more than 2,200 people in Yemen, according to UN figures. The disease is spread through water and food that has been contaminated with waste from a person who already has the disease, and occurs most frequently in places with poor sanitation and sewage facilities. The fallout of the continuing conflict on civilians has been massive with millions facing hunger, according to the UN, which says the country is on the brink of famine and described the crisis as the world's worst crisis. Hence, the ongoing crisis in Yemen imposes great sufferings on civilians.

To view the terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, civilians bear the brunt of terrorism. The Taliban and loyalists to the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) show no mercy to civilians through targeting them intentionally. They neither have knowledge about IHL nor observe humanity or ethical code. Afghan civilians persistently feel

fear and disappointment as a result of unmitigated militancy and their freedoms are curtailed to a great extent. Moreover, those soldiers who are killed in battles leave their children and spouses behind. Subsequently, their families encounter great financial constraints and the government does not take care of them. So, the consequences of soldiers' death are also felt by civilians.

The ISIL's loyalists practice upon more radical ideology and seek to spill the blood of combatants and non-combatants wherever and whenever possible. They target sacred places and kill people while worshipping. Due to their sinister nature, the more they kill, the better they mollify their conscience, which is contrary to a sound conscience.

In Afghanistan, almost every individual has experienced or seen a tragic scene. The post-Taliban Afghanistan which was followed by human rights and democratic discourse, did not allay the public anxiety or remedy their bleeding wounds. Terrorist fighters, mainly the Taliban, remain a formidable enemy of Afghan nation. They continue shedding the blood of women and children in public places. Their ideology is against the freedom of men and women and against democracy. They seek to weaken the public determination in showing tendency towards democracy and human rights discourse, which are considered a western style of life by the militants. Due to their radical mindset, the Taliban are not able to show tolerance towards the public way of life and seek to restrict their freedoms, especially women's freedom and their social and political activities. In the past, many female politicians were ambushed by the militants simply to intimidate them to abandon their positions. In fact, both men and women suffer in one way or another in light of terrorist attacks in Afghanistan and their rights and freedoms are widely violated.

To sum up, the scourge of war left heavy casualties and destruction behind and took its toll on civilians. It is the time that the world puts an end to violence and bloodshed so as to protect the rights of all individuals and nations. It is aptly said in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that "disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind". On the other hand, observing the IHL and respecting the rights and dignity of all individuals will lead to global peace and prosperity. Thus, the world needs to strengthen the spirit of brotherhood and promote peace through exercising tolerance and campaigning against all kinds of radicalism.

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Preventing the Next African Famine

By Stephanie Hanson and Whitney McFerron

After falling for more than a decade, the number of hungry people in the world is rising once again. This year was marked by the worst global food crisis since World War II, with South Sudan, Yemen, Somalia, and Nigeria either experiencing famine or teetering on the brink. More than 20 million people in those four countries alone remain severely food-insecure, and the United Nations estimates that \$1.8 billion in immediate humanitarian aid is needed.

Political instability and conflict have contributed heavily to this food insecurity, but insufficient food production has also likely heightened tensions and exacerbated hunger. In Sub-Saharan Africa, where three of the four countries on the verge of famine are located, crop yields have long lagged behind the rest of the world, owing to poor farm inputs, such as low-quality seeds and fertilizer.

Investing in agriculture is one of the most effective ways to end hunger and improve political stability. There are 50 million smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa alone, and they support many millions more. Countries on the continent that have invested heavily in agricultural development and smallholder farmers have been successful at avoiding famine.

Consider the example of Ethiopia, which experienced one of the worst famines in history in the mid-1980s. An estimated one million people died during that crisis, which was caused by a combination of conflict and drought, and it took many years for the country to recover.

Today, Ethiopia is peaceful, but drought conditions have returned. In 2016, the country suffered its driest growing season in 50 years. And yet Ethiopia did not experience famine last year. There were hungry people, to be sure, but disaster was avoided. Oxfam attributes this to the fact that the government was better prepared to deliver food and water to millions. The country has also vastly improved its farming infrastructure, and new irrigation and drinking water systems provide rural areas with easy access to clean, safe water sources.

For more than a decade, the Ethiopian government has made agricultural development a top priority. In 2010, it created the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency, a public entity dedicated to boosting the productivity of the agriculture sector. As the noted British author and Africa researcher Alex de Waal has noted, "Politics creates famine, and politics can stop it." Ethiopia proves his point. While domestic and international contributions still flow during relief efforts, it is Ethiopia's long-term investments that have increased the country's resilience.

An increase in strategic agricultural investments, from African donors or international sources, could help other countries in the region reap similar rewards. Climate change is

making such investments even more urgent, as extreme weather events - both flooding and droughts - are becoming more common throughout Sub-Saharan Africa.

Even without government support, however, farmers can take modest and cost-effective steps immediately to mitigate climate shocks. By using smart farming techniques such as drought-resistant seeds, intercropping, composting, and crop diversification, farmers can blunt the effects of extreme weather at very low costs.

Trees are one of the most effective tools we have for fighting climate change, and they also make economic sense for small farmers. A farmer who invests \$2 in seedlings can make a profit of more than \$80 in ten years, when some of the full-grown trees can be cut and sold. Trees also benefit the environment while they are growing - by absorbing carbon, improving soil health, and preventing erosion.

Farmers who have an asset base of trees, livestock, or cash generated by selling crop surpluses are better able to withstand weather shocks. And, as our organization is currently demonstrating in six African countries, farmers can build their asset bases with training and financial support. That is why we believe African governments and bilateral donors should deepen their investments in programs that provide farmers with the skills to produce long-term crops, especially trees, sustainably. Inexpensive practices - such as planting crops in rows, weeding correctly, and applying fertilizer in micro-doses - are also proven methods to increase crop production dramatically.

With the effects of climate change expected to intensify in coming years, Africa's smallholder farmers must prepare now for a more turbulent future. The United States has historically been the world's largest donor to global food security programs, but the future of this leadership role under President Donald Trump is uncertain. While global food security initiatives enjoy bipartisan support in the US Congress, the Trump administration's proposed foreign aid budget recommends deep funding cuts to these programs. As US support waivers, African and European governments, foundations, institutional donors, and practitioners must be ready to step in to help African farmers build long-term resiliency. Investing in agriculture is the most efficient way to improve food security in Africa, while ensuring that people on the front lines of the fight against climate change can maintain thriving economies and sustainable, healthy environments.

Only through careful planning, and by following the lead of countries like Ethiopia, can Sub-Saharan Africa address the underlying causes of hunger. Although food security is a complex problem to solve, preventing future famines doesn't have to be. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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