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Leaving No One Behind

Water is one of the most important resources that human beings require to live alive. Life without water is impossible; therefore, it is necessary that human beings should have clean drinking water for themselves and ensure that the future generations will be able to have access to this important resource as well. Keeping in consideration the growing population of the world and the shrinking water resources it will be great challenge for human beings to ensure that they will have clean drinking water for all the human beings, as nearly billion people in the world already suffer from lack of clean drinking water.

To highlight the importance of water and its proper and sensible use, March 22 was celebrated as World Water Day internationally. In fact, the day is celebrated every year on the same date since 1993, when the day was first declared by the United Nations General Assembly. The day was basically proposed in 1992 during United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and started being observed from March 1993. The nations that observe the day strive to highlight the issues related to water, both nationally and internationally. They also make sure to implement the recommendations that are put forward by UN and design and pursue practical measures that can prove helpful in providing this basic requirements to all the people.

The theme for this year's World Water Day was "Leaving No One Behind" to ensure water reaches to every individual. Sustainable Development Goal 6 is crystal clear: water for all by 2030. By definition, this means leaving no one behind. But today, billions of people are still living without safe water - their households, schools, workplaces, farms and factories struggling to survive and thrive.

Marginalized groups - women, children, refugees, indigenous peoples, disabled people and many others - are often overlooked, and sometimes face discrimination, as they try to access and manage the safe water they need.

It would be unmanageable for human beings to live without water; therefore, they require to use it wisely and at the same time find out new ways of providing it to all human beings so that everyone can benefit from it in the best possible manner. They have to make sure that the economic and political systems must ensure providence of natural resources to all the human beings alike - unfortunately that is not the case in contemporary world of ours. The short-comings in our administrative system have made the basic requirements seem lesser and inadequate though it is yet to face a serious threat of inadequacy.

It would be better for the world that it must cogitate seriously about every possibility of a new political economy so as to enable the world to compensate for the water and other shortages for the poor countries will have to suffer to a considerable extent as a result of the shortage of basic requirements and sources of energy. Unfortunately, Afghanistan is one of the same countries and it will have to face serious challenges in the times to come to provide clean drinking water to its people. Decades of war in Afghanistan has affected the country to a large extent. Different sectors have been influenced by this menace. The basic infra-structure has not been able to get proper attention and people are suffering because of basic needs, among which food and water are the most basic ones.

Even the capital Kabul has been suffering because of the lack of these basic requirements. A report last year showed that underground water level would deplete considerably in Kabul within a couple of years, and the residents of the city would face serious challenges in this regard.

According to the Ministry of Water and Energy, "The growing populations, seasonal droughts and over pumping are some of the factors that contribute to the rapidly plummeting underground water resources in Kabul."

The ministry has already warned that ground water could become undrinkable after a couple of years if unplanned constructions continued, and the projects that the Ministry initiated aimed at protecting the available ground water resources from contamination have not been successful in tackling the situation completely. The shortage of basic requirements itself is a sure problem, but there are many other problems that are directly linked with the hunger and deprivation that result from such shortages. Many diseases would erupt and many social evils will find their way in the society and will further deteriorate the country's socio-political scenario.

It is really important that a decade of struggle for betterment in Afghanistan must not only end in peace and tranquility but also better living standards for the common Afghan people; and if that is not convenient, they must at least be provided the rudimentary requirements like clean drinking water, and the authorities need to promise that there would be serious efforts to provide all the people of Afghanistan with clean drinking water.

Jacinda Ardern: A Role Model for Tolerance**The Red Line of Afghan Women for Peace talks**By: **Mohammad Zahir Akbari**

Pace talks with Taliban have raised deep concerns among many ordinary Afghans, particularly women, against whom many restricted rules were imposed by the Taliban when the group was in power in Afghanistan nearly two decades ago. When they took over the power in 1995, women were the first group who were put in cage depriving from social and educational activities. Schools got to be merely for boys and no woman could step out except she was fully covered until ankle-length Hijab. They were not allowed to work and they were only like dolls behind walls. On Sunday Women's rights activists reiterated the call on the Afghan politicians to highlight the protection of civil liberties and human rights as the red lines when talking peace with the Taliban. Suffered by decades of war and violence, the Afghan women are now hoping that the peace talks between the Taliban and other parties involved in the conflict should not compromise on the achievements the country has made in its strides towards democracy and rule of law.

Though women have lost too many of their relatives in the long continued war, they fear that a peace that empowers the Taliban may repeat a new challenge on women, and they want the negotiators not to forget them. They frequently stressed that the role of Afghan women should be visible in the peace talks and they are not interested to see the return of an Islamic emirate of the Taliban. Muzhgan Sadat, an Afghan woman who on the demand of her family dressed as a male and named as Suhrab to work for her family when the Taliban regime was in power in Afghanistan, as quoted she left school and her family changed their living place in order to keep her gender a secret. She said that during those days when the Taliban were forcing people to go to the mosques for praying, she stood among the worshippers besides her father, but when Taliban fighter became suspicious, she escaped from inside the mosque.

According to experts, there is a direct link between women's education and violence but during Taliban the women were not allowed to go to school or university. Liberty, equality and democracy did stop at that time and gave way to fundamentalist, sexist, prejudice and systematic violence. Dignity for women was defined: to stay hidden and protect themselves from strange gazes. The socio-political functions of women had been cut to zero. Sadat spent four years in the male getup. "It is painful to imagine returning to those days," she said. "I advise the families, if those days returned, they should stay at home. I advise the girls not to come out of their homes and do not dress in male outfits, because in that case, one forgets herself. For four years,

you desire to put nail color or you want to comb your hair, you want to wear the dress other girls wear, but when you cannot do all that, you take all your desires to grave," she explained. Other women are also concerned due to the reason that leaders demand changes to the Constitution of Afghanistan which also involves women's rights and other civil liberties and the establishment of a Taliban-style governance system which is not acceptable. In previous month, at least 700 women from around the country attended women's national conference on peace in Kabul and released a 15-article declaration which reflects their stance on the peace. A ceasefire between the warring parties making a sustainable peace, preserving the achievements of the past 18 years, enforcing the law against strongmen, fighting corruption and supporting the Afghan armed forces were part of the declaration. The declaration calls on the warring parties to immediately announce a ceasefire and continue peace talks. Sahra Karimi, a filmmaker, who completed her education while she was abroad as a refugee, said women in Afghanistan will never allow the return of the Taliban's emirate. "I totally disagree with bringing a change in the system, because we passed through a long journey towards democracy. Today, democracy at some extent has been institutionalized and we offered major sacrifices for it," said Karimi. "Suppose if women attend the (Qatar) meeting, one of the red lines will be on the nature of the system which should be established in Afghanistan," said Shah Fareed, a university lecturer. "The woman wants to protect the present system and the Constitution because they foresee their interests in it. The women will not have any problem with the return of the Taliban if they endorse the Constitution."

Given the persistent concerns, the government has repeatedly assured women that their rights will not be affected negatively in peace deal with Taliban. As the Afghan governments are not directly involved in the peace process its pledges could not mitigate their concerns. However, American officials hope to persuade the Taliban to sit down with Afghan officials, who they have so far refused to do, and issues like the Constitution, which guarantees women's rights, would be on the table then. Women comprise half of the society, and more vulnerable by Taliban. Hence, their rights and freedom must not be dealt at any cost. The government is responsible to safeguard all democratic values including the women rights and freedom of expressions have been attained within last 18 years by sacrifices of numerous national security forces.

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Can Economics Shake Its Shibboleths?By: **Jim O'Neill**

Though economics aspires to the rigor of the natural sciences, at the end of the day it is still a social science. At no point in the past 40 years has this been more evident than it is now.

For decades, conventional macroeconomic analysis has rested on the edifice of the Phillips curve, which asserts a clear trade-off between unemployment and inflation: when the unemployment rate falls below a certain point, inflation must rise. But this assumption has not been borne out in the decade since the 2008 financial crisis. In both the United Kingdom and the United States, for example, the unemployment rate is historically low, yet inflation remains weak.

Or consider monetary policy. Even after years of quantitative easing (QE) and ultra-low interest rates, central bankers in the advanced economies - particularly the eurozone - have continued to undershoot their inflation targets. Economists have also had to question long-held assumptions about downward nominal wage rigidity, an artifact of the 1960-70s, when organized labor was much stronger. Clearly, the idea that employees will always resist cutting wages (or workers' hours) no longer applies. In fact, the declining power of labor may explain why the Phillips curve no longer seems to hold true. But, even more important, it could be the reason why measured productivity remains persistently weak. After all, companies that can easily hire and fire employees or force them to adjust their price point have little reason to risk vast sums on new buildings and equipment that might not even be used until the next business cycle. If this is the case, one solution to the productivity problem is simply to make labor markets less flexible and labor less cheap. If business leaders and economists object to that, perhaps they should stop prattling on about productivity all the time.

Another big theoretical assumption, particularly at the micro level, is that strong profit growth will attract new entrants to the market, thereby spreading profits more broadly at the expense of the previous incumbent. And this, in turn, should encourage more investment, thereby boosting productivity and wages for workers. But again, there is little evidence of this assumption being borne out in recent years. To the contrary, corporate profits and market concentration are both on the rise.

What explains this conundrum? It is not that Karl Marx was right all along that capitalism is doomed to fail. Rather, it is the

result of particular developments in financial markets, regulatory policies, and incentive systems in the era since the 2008 financial crisis. Clearly, it has become far too easy for dominant market players to resist competition. But there are many ideas floating around that might address that problem. One issue that I have touched on before is stock buybacks, which may be allowing corporate executives to boost their own earnings without having to invest in productivity gains.

Fortunately, politicians of all stripes have begun to question why current tax and regulatory policies seem to be encouraging such behavior. As a general principle, companies that are not contributing to productivity growth or helping to solve broader social challenges shouldn't be enjoying a free lunch. The British construction company Persimmon, for example, has been posting higher earnings not because of investments it made, but because the UK government introduced a special loan scheme for first-time homebuyers. And most of the major pharmaceutical firms now seem to show an interest in research and development only when they are buying a new drug and need to conduct clinical trials to secure exclusive rights to it.

Finally, at the global level, the biggest challenge to economic orthodoxy is the continuing growth of China since it launched its policy of economic "opening up" in the Deng Xiaoping era. There is growing evidence to suggest that the US will do almost anything to stop China's rise, even if it means denying prosperity to the Chinese people.

Those who have closely followed China's development over the past 40 years know that a significant dose of capitalist ideology has seeped into the country's nominally communist political economy. But this fact seems to have eluded more ideologically predisposed Western economists.

Indeed, as Singaporean economist Kishore Mahbubani noted recently in The Straits Times, America's hardline approach to the Chinese tech company Huawei appears to be driven wholly by ideology. Rather than adopting a more measured strategy to ensure that the company (and others like it) abides by mutually agreed global rules, US President Donald Trump has made it a bargaining chip in his trade war. If that is what the alternative to old orthodoxies look like, we should all be worried.

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