

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



September 10, 2017

## International Literacy Day

8th September was celebrated as International Literacy Day in most of the countries of the world in order to underline the worth of literacy and accentuate the efforts that are made for the purpose of eradicating illiteracy and spreading the light of education. The day was first proclaimed by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on November 17, 1965 and this day was first celebrated in 1966. The basic motive of the day is to stress the importance of literacy to individuals, communities and societies. On this day, UNESCO reminds the international community of the status of literacy and adult learning globally.

It is now an incontrovertible fact that literacy plays a pivotal role in the development of a society. Thinking of development and progress without a high literacy rate is nothing more than a daydream. The developed nations of the world have reached to where they are by dint of education and focusing on improving their literacy rate. The underdeveloped and the developing nations need to do the same so as to enable themselves to follow a path to prosperity.

Our country Afghanistan, which is highly influenced by illiteracy and ignorance needs to hold the hand of education tightly if it really wants to change its destiny.

Poverty is widespread in the country; unemployment is rampant; crimes and corruption are the order of the day; and insecurity, terrorism and religious extremism threaten the lives of the people. In such a scenario it is only literacy that can play some role in bringing about positive changes. Otherwise, the country would have to keep on suffering from these hardships forever.

Though it is difficult to find direct links between literacy and the eradication of these problems, there are indirect and long-term connections. And for the proof it is better to examine the societies that have been able to solve many of their social, economic and political issues. Our examination would clearly depict that these are the societies that have valued literacy and made tangible progress in that regard. Their experiences taught them to abhor ignorance and hold the hands of literacy for a journey towards development. Definitely, they have strived consistently for what they have achieved. They have opened their eyes to the realities of life and many of them have in fact understood the fact that they have the right to be educated and their governments have the responsibility to provide them the same. We need to follow their footprints in this regard.

Unfortunately, due to the prevailing ignorance most of the people in the country do not have even an imaginative idea of a prosperous society, wherein all the citizens have their due rights. They even do not know that there are certain countries in the world that have most of the facilities of life and they have developed so much that now they have reached to skies to discover them. The situation here in our country is so that if a clergy announces that man can never reach to the skies and the claims of the developed countries of the world are nothing more than white lies, they will definitely believe him with respect and complete submission.

Our people are alien to the industrial and scientific developments and on most of the cases they treat them with hypocrisy. There are many among us who basically take advantage of the scientific inventions and discoveries almost on daily basis but never hesitate to declare them incorrect and false. If they had the potential they would definitely take our society back to the Dark Ages.

Unfortunately, there are many so-called intellectuals in our society as well who spend their time and energy in favoring the conservative and fundamentalist ideas and strive to prove them right.

Because of the issues and people mentioned above our society has become confused. One of the most dominating characters of our society is that it has made the people conservative and they have started praising their past more than their present. They have started hating each other instead of disseminating the golden feelings of love and brotherhood.

Nevertheless, the time has arrived when they should realize that they have to be vigilant and understand that they are being fooled. Their thoughts are being controlled and their emotions are being betrayed. They are being exploited in the name of religion and history.

Now, they have to realize that their responsibilities are to declare clearly that they are no more ready to be fooled and to be utilized by others. Their rights are to announce their hatred for ignorance, poverty, conservative ideas, slavish thinking and growing hypocrisy. And, the need to start with a movement against illiteracy and ignorance. They should say no to the darkness and try to follow the light as it is the only way that they can live their life with prosperity and dignity; and World Literacy Day is the day when they should further strengthen their commitments and accelerate their actions.



## National Congress of the Communist Party of China

By Hujjatullah Zia

Socialism with Chinese characteristics, with the Communist Party of China (CPC) at the helm, has played a highly instrumental role in social, cultural, economic and political arenas. CPC has formed a civil society in China where people are able to exercise their fundamental rights, i.e., the rights to life, liberty and property, without obstacles. The true democracy is felt in Chinese society since men and women are equal in rights and dignity and all ethnic groups are treated with respect regardless of their caste, color and creed.

It is believed that socialism with Chinese characteristics has borne the desired result in China where people live a peaceful life, show tolerance towards religious rehearsal and cultural and ethnic diversity, and treat one another in a "spirit of brotherhood". This unified multi-ethnic country or a "pattern of pluralistic unity of the Chinese nation" is the epitome of a civil, democratic and prosperous society. CPC has pledged to uphold the natural rights and inherent dignity of Chinese nation and took high step in this regard.

China has promoted harmonious culture, attained the lofty goals of "soft power" building, maintained ethnic solidarity, and protected its territorial integrity. In terms of conflict, People's Republic of China (PRC) sought to advocate "winning people over by virtue" and "subduing the enemy without fighting" or pursuing a non-violent strategy. This state has constantly upheld peace, good faith and good will, and pursued friendly exchanges among countries. To put it succinctly, peace, cooperation and harmony are the three principles to understanding the strategy of contemporary China. It is aptly said that China is pursuing "smile diplomacy" to enhance its soft power and this strategy is most likely to have a profound effect on China's peaceful development and national security.

Once former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said that "China today exports TV sets, rather than ideas." This was deemed weakness of China's soft power. However, PRC has filled this vacuum and produces fruitful ideas in terms of politics, culture, economy, etc.

Similarly, Chinese Former President Hu Jintao said in 2012 that the Western world is "threatening to divide us". He added, "The international culture of the West is strong while we are weak ... Ideological and cultural fields are our main targets". It reflects the fact that Chinese state got to the bottom of the issue and resisted against division and promoted cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Furthermore, political pundits believe that stagnant, rigid, and ossified state ideology were

the main reasons behind the dissolution of the Soviet Union's communist party. Nonetheless, the socialism with Chinese characteristics is dynamic, flexible, and moderate which have safeguarded the party's rule. In terms of reducing poverty, since the 18th National Party Congress, which was held on November 01, 2012, China reportedly lifted on average 10 million rural individuals out of poverty every year from 2013 to 2016 and the number of poor people dropped from 10.2 percent in 2012 to 4.5 percent in 2016, which will achieve the 2020 agenda for eradicating poverty. Incomes in poverty-stricken areas rose more than the national average increased. To sum up, the National Party Congress played a highly significant role within the past five years in all spheres of social and political life.

The concern of Chinese officials regarding global peace is beyond doubt. At national level, China nips challenges in the bud and at international level, she seeks reconciliation and diplomatic solution to the crisis and never considers military action a remedy to global conflicts. Many conferences are held in China for mitigating violence and Chinese authorities play the role of representatives to resolve issues through diplomatic way or bringing political opponents to negotiating table.

Now as the opening of the 19th Communist Party of China (CPC) National Congress is in the offing, struggles for a sustainable development needs to be continued. After all, any void left in social, cultural, political or economic spheres will have to be filled so as to change China into an impeccable democratic and prosperous society and a model for the world. Although democracy is practiced in China, its true spirit is a lot to be desired. Despite lack of sexual discrimination, the number of CPC's female members is not equal to men. Hence, their political role will reduce comparing to men. Moreover, a number of individuals are said to be on the political sidelines, the role of media - including social media - is curtailed, which will put freedom of expression under question, and civil society activists are disregarded. Fundamental bases of democracy still need to be strengthened despite the fact that there is no impeccable democracy in the world. Furthermore, women's political role ought to be increased.

To gain sustainable development and enhance its soft power, China will have to keep pace with the world and elect an energetic and a moderate leader similar to Xi Jinping - who fulfilled his commitment in the best possible way, left no stone unturned for the promotion of his nation, and, therefore, rule the hearts and minds of Chinese people.

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## Killing Killer Mosquitoes

By Melvin Sanicas

Mosquitoes may be tiny, but they have a powerful bite. They spread a number of diseases - such as chikungunya, dengue, malaria, yellow fever, West Nile fever, and Zika virus - which together kill millions of people each year. Malaria alone is one of the world's top infectious killers (behind only tuberculosis and AIDS), responsible for 429,000 deaths in 2015. Given the scale and scope of the problem, stronger action to eliminate mosquitoes - and the diseases they carry - is a development imperative. The World Health Organization ranks mosquitoes among the top threats to public health, especially in developing countries. As a graphic on Bill Gates' blog last year highlighted, mosquitoes are responsible for 830,000 human deaths annually - 250,000 more than are caused by our fellow humans.

Beyond the massive human costs, mosquito-borne diseases carry large economic costs. For an infected individual, those costs include treatment and hospital expenses, transportation to and from a health clinic or hospital, time spent out of work, and insect sprays or bed nets to protect against more disease-spreading mosquito bites.

For countries, mosquito-borne diseases cost millions - even billions - of dollars each year. Governments must fund mosquito-control and prevention programs, from the use of insecticides to the distribution of mosquito nets, as well as public-education campaigns and vaccination initiatives. (Although there is no widely available vaccine for malaria, three countries are set to take part in a pilot immunization program starting in 2018, and some mosquito-borne diseases - such as yellow fever, Japanese encephalitis, and dengue - are vaccine-preventable.)

Governments may also have to compensate communities affected by epidemics, fund research to treat illness or prevent future outbreaks, cover increased health-care costs, and sustain programs to help patients. Meanwhile, the economy suffers from reduced productivity. Eradicating mosquito-transmitted diseases must therefore be a top priority, eliciting not just effective government stewardship, but also the involvement of civil society, private-sector engagement, and the participation of affected communities. Beyond effective collaboration, success will demand improved surveillance and greater innovation, particularly in diagnostics, drugs and vaccines, insecticides, and vector control. The good news is that, on vector control - that is, mosquito eradication - promising innovations are already emerging. One such innovation uses a bacterium called Wolbachia, either to stop deadly viruses from growing or to reduce mosquito populations.

Wolbachia is present in about 60% of species of insects, including some mosquitoes. One species where Wolbachia is not present naturally is the Aedes aegypti mosquito, which is responsible for transmitting human viruses like dengue, chikungunya, yellow fever, and Zika. Studies show that when Wolbachia is introduced into the Aedes aegypti mosquito, it can prevent the growth of human viruses within the insect. Another approach would be to release a large number of male mosquitoes with the

Wolbachia bacteria; females with which they mate would be unable to reproduce.

Another innovation is a vaccine called AGS-v, developed by the London-based pharmaceutical company SEEK to provide broad protection against a range of mosquito-borne diseases. The vaccine is designed to trigger an immune response to mosquito saliva, thereby preventing infection from whatever virus the saliva contains.

As with Wolbachia, researchers believe that AGS-v could also curb mosquito populations. After a mosquito takes a blood meal from a vaccinated person, the antibodies may attack the mosquito's salivary proteins, affecting its ability to feed and to lay eggs - and thereby leading to its premature death. Phase I clinical trials of the vaccine, sponsored and funded by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, began in February. A third innovation is essentially a smart mosquito trap, capable of capturing only the mosquito species capable of spreading the Zika virus and other diseases. Part of Microsoft's Project Premonition research initiative, the prototype trap uses an infrared light beam to identify specific mosquito species with more than 80% accuracy. When the trap captures a mosquito of interest, it saves related data, such as the time, temperature, humidity, and light levels, in order to enhance researchers' understanding of mosquito behavior and, thus, their ability to address potential outbreaks.

Such innovations promise to accelerate substantially efforts to curb deadly mosquito-borne diseases. The question is the extent to which they will be applied. After all, far more basic measures that individuals can take to protect themselves and their families are not being implemented nearly enough.

For example, because mosquitoes need water to breed, people should be removing puddles or other collections of standing water around their homes, puncturing unused tires, regularly cleaning birdbaths, and draining swimming pools. Liquid larvicides can be applied directly to water using backpack sprayers, and introducing fish into ponds, particularly in residential areas, can also help to eliminate larvae. As for adult mosquitoes, keeping grass and shrubs short limits resting places, thereby helping to control populations.

Window and door screens should be installed and maintained, and the outdoors should be avoided in the morning and evening, when mosquitoes tend to be most active. Long-sleeve shirts, long pants, and insect repellents can help minimize bites when staying inside isn't an option. Such techniques aren't foolproof, but they can go a long way toward protecting individuals. But people need to use them. And, for that, information must be shared widely, and the relevant tools made available to the public. Last month marked the 120th anniversary of the discovery that female mosquitoes transmit malaria among humans. Since then, malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases have been controlled and even eliminated in the developed world. Yet, in developing countries, the fight is far from over. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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