



RESPONSE OF LOCAL COUNCIL ASSOCIATIONS AND LG TO COVID-19 IN PAKISTAN

Meeting Minutes

June 1, 2020

Zoom Video Streaming Application

MINUTES:

The meeting held on June 01, 2020, on Zoom App with the worthy LCA members across Pakistan who participated in the meeting to propose new ways to deal with COVID-19 at the ground level of communities.

The meeting started at 11:00 AM, the main objective of the meeting was to discuss and share the response of LCA and Local Governments throughout four provinces in response to COVID-19 in Pakistan.

The meeting started with the recitation of Holy Quran by one of the participants.

Mr Anwar Hussain and Mr Noor Akbar were the facilitator and co-facilitator of the meeting respectively. They welcomed the participants and briefly discussed the agenda and objectives of the meeting.

The meeting was attended by the panellists, executive Committee Members, Board of Governors, LCAs Coordinators, IT & communication officer and Women & Minority Inclusion officer.

Around 45 members across Pakistan has participated in this Webinar.

Opinions of the Worthy Participants:

Mr. Rajan Sultan Pirzada (President ADLG)

Mr Rajan Sultan Pirzada shared his views that local bodies' role is very crucial and very important and he cited the examples developed countries where their role is very effective but unfortunately in our country, the local representatives don't have enough authority to function properly to overcome different issues. He further updated that ADLG has submitted a petition in Supreme Court for the effective functioning of local bodies and he hoped that the Supreme Court of Pakistan would decide for the constitutional requirements of local government laws implementation. In combating COVID-19 it's cleared that through elected local government, this menace could be curbed more efficiently just as developed countries where a local government system is strengthened. He also said through mass awareness, we can minimize the rapid spread of COVID-19.

Mr Abid Hussain Lehri (President LCA-Balochistan)

Mr Abid Hussain Lehri shared his point of view that members of LCAB voluntarily responded to COVID-19, on self-help bases, distributed the food items, Masks, Hygiene kits and created mass awareness among the people. But unfortunately, no appreciation or coordination is seen from Local Government officials of Balochistan. It is now hoped that the cases of coronavirus be reduced by current government efforts through the implementation of effective lockdown and mass awareness campaigns by LCAB members of the executive committee and Board of Governors.

According to Mr Abid Hussain, the case is in the Supreme Court for hearing to ensure the timely election of local government and hope the Supreme Court will decide in our favour. So, Local Government would conduct the elections at earliest then we will be in a better position to work for the welfare of our Province.



RESPONSE OF LOCAL COUNCIL ASSOCIATIONS AND LG TO COVID-19 IN PAKISTAN

Ms. Sajida Hasrat (Board of Governor member LCA-KPK & former district member Haripur)

Ms Sajida shared her point of view on COVID-19 that it was a big challenge to identify most vulnerable people (daily wagers) for government food packages and the members of LCAKP played a vital role in the identification of most vulnerable people in their constituencies for timely registration. In Addition to this, they supported different NGOs for food distribution packages among the most vulnerable people in their constituencies and conducted awareness sessions.

Mr Amir Ali Shah (General Secretary LCA-Sindh)

Mr Amir Ali shared his point of view on COVID-19 that this meeting is a great opportunity for the provinces to share their ideas to overcome the issues, raised due to coronavirus. He said that the Sindh government is taking strict and serious actions to stop the spread of coronavirus cases.

Mr Mir Asharaf (Vice President LCA-Sindh)

Mr Mir Asharaf shared his point of view on COVID-19 that coronavirus has created a lot of challenges, particularly for the poor people. According to him, they distributed 500 bags of food items among the most vulnerable people including daily wagers. Besides this, they carried out disinfection spray in the constituency. According to him, due to smart lockdown, the corona cases increased in all over the country. According to him, the government should take serious action to make sure that people should follow the set SOPs.

Mr. Sardar Muhammad Taqi Dharejo (Member LCA Sindh)

Mr Sardar Muhammad Taqi Dharejo shared his view that Local bodies currently exist and function but need to be empowered. Despite the current situation, the local bodies have continued their efforts and delivered. The elected members have distributed food items in their constituencies but soon after the Government restricted the elected members for distribution of food items and to date, the Government has not issued NOC for food distribution.

He further emphasized that the local bodies should be given their constitutional powers so that they function accordingly and add to this, he pointed out that the local bodies will complete their tenure but if an election is not held on time due to COVID-19, the government of Sindh should give continue the existing local bodies to complete their ongoing project and to work smoothly to address COVID-19. He stressed, if local bodies were authoritative they would have worked effectively to combat Covid-19.

Mr Zaheer Hussain Shah (Member LCA Sindh)

Mr Zaheer Hussain Shah shared his views that COVID-19 should be controlled and life can get back to the normal routine. He shared the progress of their efforts in combating COVID-19 including food item distribution. He said that the interior Singh should focus on disinfection sprays in mosques and mass awareness among people. The government should emphasize on following the SOPs to combat COVID-19 in interior Sindh.



RESPONSE OF LOCAL COUNCIL ASSOCIATIONS AND LG TO COVID-19 IN PAKISTAN

Mr Qasim Ali Shah (Vice President- LCA-Khyber Paskthoonkhuwa)

Mr Qasim Ali Shah opined that the government of Khyber Pathoonkhuwa is doing its efforts but if the local bodies existed they would work more effectively to combat COVID-19. The former elected members were involved in their efforts to control COVID-19. Government alone cannot control COVID-19 unless people extend their support. He further said that if local bodies' tenure ends in Sindh, it is suggested that it needs to be at least extended in urban areas where COVID-19 is dramatically increasing. This initiative can play a significant role to control COVID-19 rapid spread.

Asghar Shah Gilani (Member LCA Punjab)

Mr Asghar Shah Gilani shared his views that COVID-19 is spreading rapidly because as an individual, we are not following SoPs. If everybody follows the SOPs properly so we can control the pandemic. He further said that unfortunately local bodies aren't existing in Punjab but it could play a very crucial role in overcoming of COVID-19.

Ms Maham Ahmad, (Women & Minority Inclusion Officer-LCAP)

Ms Maham Ahmed shared the following response in Panjab province against Covid-19:

Overview of COVID-19 and Lockdown in Punjab

This pandemic is affecting day to day life in Pakistan not only economic disruptions but also an additional stress on public services. For countries as populated as Pakistan local government can play a pivotal role in reducing disease transmission by leveraging local networks in healthcare and relief.

- Health emergency was declared in Punjab on 12th March.
- Lockdown started on 23rd March for 14 days which was further extended till 15th May due to an increase in cases.
- Current situation of cases in Punjab is 25000 approx. death ratio is 1.9 % and the recovery ratio is 27 per cent

Government Punjab, Local Government and LCA's response to COVID-19

1- Socio-economic welfare

- Quarantine centre – first quarantine centre was established in DG khan. The largest quarantine centre was made in Multan. Different hospitals have assigned corona quarantine floors and various buildings were converted into isolation centres.
- Suspension of public services that includes highways, public transport, restaurants, shops and various businesses.
- Disinfecting towns and cities
- Corona kits and sanitizers – Punjab University manufactured corona kits, sanitizers, disinfectants and wet tissues. Later on, its distribution was followed everywhere.
- Online initiatives started for online purchase for home deliveries.

2- Using technology to create awareness

- Collaboration with the telecommunication industry by replacing ringtones with awareness messages.



RESPONSE OF LOCAL COUNCIL ASSOCIATIONS AND LG TO COVID-19 IN PAKISTAN

- Encouragement messages through media and government sending messages to encourage people for social distancing and washing hands.
- Track and trace system is launched in collaboration with ISI to detect the suspects, to stay in touch with the COVID-19 positive patients. Thermal scanners are launched after easing in lockdown at big malls to check the temperature of shoppers.

3- Ensuring Food security

- Government Abolish taxes on food items.
- Reduction in oil prices
- Utility bills deferred for 3 months for households with bills falling below a certain threshold.
- Relief funds such as Ehsas and BISP became active.

4- LCA Members playing outsized role responding to COVID 19

LCA members played an efficient role in helping the societies and people on an individual level. Kasur, Muzaffargarh, Jhang, Lahore, Sahiwal, Rahim Yar Khan and many other districts were on the frontline.

- Distribution of Food items and medicines.
- Doing awareness campaigns to guide people for social distancing and precautions.
- Providing precautionary items such as sanitizers, kits, disinfectants etc.

5- Impacts of Coronavirus on Women

- Household burden
- Domestic violence
- Women's job mobility is finished
- Education for girls affected
- Informal sectors are closed

6- Programs by Ministry of Human Rights:

- Operational Helpline and women crisis shelters
- The response of health workers and social workers
- Tele-school initiatives
- Reproductive health services

Mr. Sanaullah Khan (Coordinator- LCAKP)

Mr Sanaullah shared that spread of Corona in Khyber Pakhtoonkhuwa was slowed down because the lockdown was initiated on 13th March. The KP Government also enforced health emergency and closure of educational institutes. He informed about Covid-19 cases that as we speak, 10,072 confirmed cases, 473 deaths and 2,500 patients have recovered in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In addition to this he emphasized that due to nonexistence of Local bodies in the province, the LG department is working hard to stop the spread of Covid-19 and is also conducting awareness campaigns. In this regard, they also contacted Masjid Imams to make people aware and ask them to stay at homes. The president of LCA KP, via video call, requested the members to step forward and support the people in need.



RESPONSE OF LOCAL COUNCIL ASSOCIATIONS AND LG TO COVID-19 IN PAKISTAN

Ms Sepal Bachani, (Coordinator-LCAS)

Ms Sepal Bachani informed that the first patient was a student at the University of Karachi, Karachi in Sindh province on 26th February. By 18 March, cases had been registered in all four provinces. The Sindh Government imposed a temporary ban on marriage halls, lawns, tea stalls functioning after 23:15 hours. She further said that complete lockdown was announced on 23 March 2020 till 17th April and it further extended to 31st May 2020. In addition, on 28th March to further enforce lockdown, the Sindh Govt. restricted movement between 8 AM and 5 PM, while all grocery stores were ordered to be closed by 5 PM.

Meanwhile, the Sindh Government in Coordination with LCA Sindh and local elected representatives took many steps to combat COVID-19 and to serve the most vulnerable sections of society. The crucial steps taken include disinfection sprays, implementation of social distancing in general and on Eid occasions through counselling and supportive policing. Moreover, through a petition in the honourable court, school fees were reduced, the ration was also distributed, and establishment of quarantine centres and provision of transport for suspected COVID-19 patients was guaranteed throughout the province.

Mr Abdul Mateen (Coordinator-LCAB)

Mr Abdul Mateen said Balochistan's first COVID-19 case was reported in Quetta on 10th March 2020 confirming a 12-year-old boy who had travelled to Iran with his family and returned via the Taftan border crossing who was admitted to the isolation ward of Fatima Jinnah hospital in Quetta. However, parents and family members of the child were tested negative. Most of the other pilgrims (Visitors) were initially quarantined in Taftan, Chagai district and subsequently sent to different hospitals of Quetta District. The Government of Balochistan in collaboration with the ministry of health and PDMA quarantined the emerging cases and put high efforts to minimize the number of cases. The latest data of COVID -19 on 1st June 2020 tells us that we have 4393 confirmed cases, 447 deaths and 1507 recovered in Balochistan.

Moreover, the Local Government of Balochistan has been working for the disinfection throughout Balochistan by initiating various campaigns in the targeted areas including quarantine centres, streets, Masajid, Public offices, hospitals and schools. They have further provided support to clean open drains, sewer system in towns and villages.

They have been putting efforts for mass awareness on COVID-19 safety measures with the support of the Chief Officers, Assistant Directors, Development officers and Union Council Secretaries. They have been in the front line on distributing masks and sanitizers among the public. To make it more effective, the Director, Director General and Secretary are monitoring these activities directly.

The LCAB Executive Committee members, the members of Board of Governors and Ex-elected representatives have taken several initiatives including distribution of food items to the most vulnerable families, conducting awareness sessions, distribution of masks, soaps and sanitizers in their constituencies. They further created links to facilitate the needy families for acquiring all possible supports from different NGOs and Welfare organizations.



RESPONSE OF LOCAL COUNCIL ASSOCIATIONS AND LG TO COVID-19 IN PAKISTAN

Shahriyar Wassan (Member LCA Sindh)

Mr Sheriyar Wassan shared his views that we carried out disinfection spray in each union council and distributed ration among most vulnerable one hundred families in each union council through elected members. He further said Sindh government also distributed ration in Union councils through municipal committees & town committees.

Ome Kalsoom Seyal (Member LCAP)

Ms Ome Kalsoom Seyal appreciated all local councils associations of Pakistan for arranging this virtual meeting where every province shared local government and LCAs efforts for combating COVID-19.

Ali Imran (Team Leader LEAD4SDG)

Mr Ali Imran shared that it's very encouraging that local government representatives and ex-elected members valuable inputs and progress through this meeting. He further said most of the progress was related to response now the recovery stage is coming. Therefore, they should prepare to address this as well. He recommended that food security and cash distribution is not enough they should focus on education and health as the recovery phase is coming in the upcoming months and other important elements for a smooth recovery. He further said Asia Specific is planning to have a meeting on Sustainable Development goals to assess local bodies' position.

Rafia Kamal (Member LCAP)

Ms Rafia Kamal appreciated the local government and LCAP efforts on combating Covid-19. She further said that the government should focus on adjacent areas of the urban population because Covid-19 cases are increasing rapidly in their areas.

Syed Kumail Hyder Shah (President LCA-Sindh)

Mr Kumail Hyder Shah appreciated the participation of all participants in the meeting. He further said the Sindh government has done remarkably to control COVID-19. He said the government of Sindh should be emphasized to involve locally elected representatives for achieving effective results of different initiatives. The Sindh government was the first to introduce mobile corona test to register suspected COVID-19 patients and confirm their time of the test on mobile within one day at their doorsteps. Moreover, LCA Sindh also advocated for fee concession of private schools students especially the ones whose parents lost employments due to lockdown. This advocacy campaign resulted in a 20% concession of school fee by honourable court orders. The LCA Sindh also advocated the Sindh government to form proper SoPs for smart lockdown and emphasize its proper implementation to slow down COVID-19 spread. The LCA Sindh has also played a vital role to bridge the gap between local representatives including chairmen and the Government including local authorities to Chief Minister. He further said the list of unemployed transporters particularly the local bus and Suzuki labour generated by Regional Transport Authority Sindh was fetched and financial help plus ration is distributed among them. Moreover, The Government of Sindh and Chamber of Commerce will take a special loan from a state bank to grant further small soft loans to retail shopkeepers and its employees whose businesses are directly affected from COVID-19 lockdown. The Chamber of Commerce has taken the responsibility to manage and return the loans once the COVID-19 lockdown is over. In closing remarks, Mr Kumail Hyder Shah appreciated the



RESPONSE OF LOCAL COUNCIL ASSOCIATIONS AND LG TO COVID-19 IN PAKISTAN

services of LCAs for combating COVID-19. He further said that the Government of Sindh and local bodies are doing a great job and hopefully will continue to effectively serve the masses.



RESPONSE OF LOCAL COUNCIL ASSOCIATIONS AND LG TO COVID-19 IN PAKISTAN

Annexe 1

Agenda

Response of Local Council Association and LG to Covid-19 in Pakistan June 01, 2020 –ZOOM APPLICATION ONLINE SESSION

Time	Topic	Responsibility
Session 1		
11:00 – 11:05	Welcome remarks and thoughts on workshop	President LCAP & CLGF Board member
11:05 – 11:15	Background and objective of the workshop	Strategic Advisor CLGF
11:15 – 11:20	Response of LCA/LG in KPK	President LCAKP
11:20 – 11:25	Response of LCA/LG in Baluchistan	President LCAB
11:25 – 11:30	Response of LCA/LG in Punjab	President LCAP
11:30 – 11:35	Response of LCA/LG in Sindh	President LCAS
11:35 – 11:45	Q & A	Participants
Session 2		
11:45 – 11:50	Overall objectives of the report	Programme Officer CLGF
11:50 – 11:55	Presentation, Response of LCAKP	Coordinator LCAKP
11:55 – 12:00	Presentation, Response of LCAS	Coordinator LCAS
12:05 – 12:10	Presentation, Response of LCAB	Coordinator LCAB
12:10 – 12:15	Presentation, Response of LCAP	Gender Coordinator
12:15 – 12:55	Q & A and discussions	Participants
12:55 – 01:00	Vote of thanks	Strategic Advisor