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# Pakistan performs worst in meeting Millennium Development Goals

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## Pakistan performs worst in meeting Millennium Development Goals

Experts warn South Asia has last chance to meet development goals

By Our Correspondent

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**ISLAMABAD:** Development and economic wizards have warned South Asian states of serious consequences if they miss the last chance to meet the goals of development.

They called for community mobilisation, sharing technology and bringing political will in order to combat poverty, impact of climate change and militancy.

These experts were speaking during discussions by different panels on the second day of the South Asia Economic Summit on Tuesday, which was organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).

“South Asian countries will be moving forward with an unfinished agenda of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),” former finance minister Dr Hafiz Pasha said during discussion on the ‘Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Post-2015 Development Agenda: Perspectives from South Asia’.

Pakistan performed worst and was ranked sixth in South Asia in achieving the MDGs while Nepal and Bhutan performed exceptionally well.

UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific's South and South-West Asia Office head Dr Nagesh Kumar said the SDGs might be the last chance for South Asia to tackle hunger and poverty.

Research and Information System Director General Dr Sachin Chaturvedi said as Asia moved towards the SDGs, the sharing of technology was extremely important for better data monitoring and accountability. He stressed the need for research institutes and the community to help move towards technology reforms before the 2016 conference of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc).

German Institute for International and Security Affairs senior fellow Dr Habil Christian Wagner said previous efforts for regional cooperation had failed to create prospects for security cooperation in the region.

He pointed out that cooperation depended on political will and underlined the need for tackling the common problem of militancy in the South Asian region.

Dr Rajan Bhattarai, Member of Nepal's Constituent Assembly and Legislative Parliament and Dr Dushni Weerakon from the Institute of Policy Studies, Sri Lanka called on the regional countries to prioritise the SDGs given their vast and varied nature.

SDPI Executive Director Dr Abid Suleri expressed concern over the way in which the SDGs, like the earlier MDGs, ignored intra and inter-state differences. "We must not block our visions and dreams under income levels and we must own Vision 2025 and the SDGs," he said.

At a panel discussion on the 'Role of Women Entrepreneurs in Sustainable Development of South Asia', Nepal-based South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment Executive Director Hiramani Ghimire said women could not be ignored as they represented 27% of the labour force in South Asia.

However, raising capital was difficult for women-owned firms due to the challenge of striking a work-life balance, he said. At a discussion on 'Competition Reforms and Sustainable Development', Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf MNA Asad Umar said there was widespread cartelisation of the industry.

"An industry will be competitive only if volumes are maintained which is only possible if prices are kept down. But prohibitive duties prevent this from happening, in turn, killing demand and preventing a true market economy structure which encourages competition."

He asserted that the right to make money came with responsibility and so companies could not have inhuman working conditions.

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