

MEMORANDUM OF ACTIONS

We, Elected Local Representatives and Officials, National and Provincial Associations of Local Governments, Development Partners and Civil Society Organizations are gathered at the Webinar on “Local Government Efforts to Respond COVID-19 Outbreak in Pakistan”

Recognising the work done by the local governments (elected and government officials both) in COVID 19 crises and considering that actions need to be undertaken to ensure strong democratic local governance through effective local governments and Local Council Associations for emergency recovery plans and SDGs implementation in Pakistan; we

NATIONAL LEVEL:

1. **URGE** federal government to realise and acknowledge the need to engage Local Governments are the forefront respond COVID-19 and are well-aware of the needs/ priorities the communities. Hence, the federal government institutions, especially National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) should immediately take local governments representative on-board in COVID response and relief activities.
2. **ENCOURAGE** Local Government and Local Government Associations in the provinces for public awareness campaigns with regards to prevention of COVID-19 spread.
3. **SEEK** support of Local Governments for the social and safety nets and programmes like Ehsaas Programme and especially engage women councilors to ensure access of women in need from the communities to the country safety net programs. Federal Government should engage local governments in public awareness campaigns with regards to prevention of spread of COVID-19
4. **CALL ON** Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms and other relevant federal ministries to recognize the vital due role of local government institutes and ensure their participation and required authority to achieve SDGs and the targets. As more than 65% Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) fall in the ambit of local and regional government.
5. **CALL ON** the Parliament of Pakistan for constitutional reform to introduced and include a chapter on local government, defining principles, characteristics, powers and election process as well their role for achievements of SDGs and targets at local level. Article 144 A of the constitution of Pakistan only covers.....
6. **CALL ON** Inter-Provincial Coordination Ministry and Council of Common Interest to play its due constitutional role to direct provinces to develop harmonized local government laws and to ensure continuity of the system by holding election within 90 days of expiration of the local government system.
7. **Call ON** Election Commission of Pakistan to direct its provincial offices to complete the delimitation and electoral roll processes and in consultation with provincial government, announce the local government election schedule for the Provinces.
8. **URGE** Federal Government through Attorney General office to concede the petition filed by Local Government representative to the Supreme Court of Pakistan, challenging the pre-mature termination of local government in Punjab Province.

Provincial Level- Sindh

1. **CALL ON** provincial government to incorporate explicit clauses for expanded role/ functions as well as the required financial and administrative powers of local governments to play their effective role in humanitarian, disasters and emergencies crises through amendments in local government Acts by keeping in view the experience and need to respond COVID-19 at local level
2. **URGE** Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and other provincial relevant departments to engage Mayors/Chairmen and Councilors actively in COVID-19 relief and response activities. Sindh Government, PDMA and local government should work closely with the private sector and CSOs for COVID-19 response and relief efforts.
3. **Call ON** the provincial government to eliminate overlaps between local and provincial governments in health sector. The essential health services should be under direct mandate of the local governments. Health specific
4. **URGE** Local Government and Law Departments to engage with current local government representatives and LCAS to collate their proposals based on their experience and challenges for legal reforms before next elections.
5. **URGE** The law provides for the establishment of Provincial Finance Commission (PFC) under Section 112(1) of the SLGA, 2013 to ensure fiscal transfers to the councils. Government of Sindh should immediately form and activate the PFC for just and fair distribution of resources.
6. **URGE** that the current tenure of Local Government is completing in next two months, the provincial government should announce election schedule immediately before completion of tenure, appoint caretakers instead of administrators set up and ensure the elections to be held. In case, the elections are not possible due to COVID situation, the terms of current local government system may be extended.
7. **CALL ON** the provincial and local governments to engage with local community organizations to articulate the community needs and make it a part of their local planning and development processes.
8. Local Government Department of Sindh should arrange regular capacity building plans for the newly elected members.
9. **Call ON** the Government of Sindh to recognize the role of LCAS in the new local government Act. Local Governments and their association should be allowed to receive direct donor funding for health, social protection, and food supply.

Provincial Level- Balochistan

1. **CALL ON** provincial governments to incorporate explicit clauses for expanded role and functions as well as the require financial and administrative powers of local governments to play their effective role in humanitarian, disasters and emergencies crises through amendments in local government Acts by keeping in view the experience and need to respond COVID-19 at local level
2. **URGE** for the essential health and other emergency relief services should be under the direct authority of the local governments to respond like COVID crises situation.
3. The solid waste management is the basic functions of local government as per Balochistan Local Government Act 2010; hence the local government should be provided necessary resources for improve service delivery to health hygiene and sanitation.

4. **CALL ON** Government of Balochistan, PDMA and Local Administrators to engage the ex-LG representatives (until new election of local government held), private sector and CSOs for coordinated efforts to respond to COVID-19
5. **URGE** Government of Balochistan to ensure the distribution of resources through Provincial Finance Commission (PFC) and ensure participation of LG members in Local Councils Grants Committee (LCGC). The new local government law should carry the provision of at least 30% ADP budget to be spent directly through the local governments.
6. **URGE** that there is no elected local government system in place since January 2019, Provincial Government and Election Commission should immediately announce the schedule for next election without any delay .
7. **CALL ON** The Local Government and Law Departments to engage LCAB members and the ex-local government representatives for their proposal/ recommendation based on their experience and challenges for legal reforms in Local Government Act of Balochistan before next elections.
8. **Call ON** Local Government Department of Balochistan to organise capacity building programme for the newly elected members.
9. **Call ON** Government of Balochistan to recognize the role of LCAB in the new local government Act. Local Governments and their association should be allowed to receive direct donor funding for health, social protection and food supply under a strong monitoring mechanism.