

Event summary

February 2015



Presentation of IGC's Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan Growth Strategy to the Political Leadership

Dr Ijaz Nabi presented the IGC report “Reclaiming Prosperity in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: A Medium Term Growth Strategy” at a meeting organised to share the strategy with Mr Imran Khan, the Chairman of Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf and Mr Pervaiz Khattak, the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on 14 February 2015. It was attended by senior political and administrative leadership of the province including the Minister for Health, the Chairman of the Board of Investment, the Additional Chief Secretary of Planning and members of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly.

Dr. Nabi gave an overview of the strategy by highlighting the strengths of the economy that can act as growth drivers. These include regional trade, remittances, urban agglomeration and substantially higher federal fiscal transfers to the province. He emphasised the need for improving the investment climate to attract private investments in priority sectors of mining, tourism, agriculture and construction. He ended his remarks by emphasizing the need to improve the skill set of the provincial labour force, which can help make economic growth more inclusive.

The formal presentation of the strategy was made by the Mr. Syed Zafar Ali Shah, Secretary of the Planning and Development Department. He gave a departmental background of the work by highlighting that the growth strategy has been incorporated in the Integrated Development Strategy of the province. He went on to outline specific recommendations of the report which were focused on improving the growth rate of job creating sectors of the economy. The Secretary re-emphasised the point made by Dr. Nabi on improving investment climate. He remarked that reducing the cost of business is within the reach of the government as it does not require any financial outlay but streamlining of the processes.

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Mr. Imran Khan welcomed the support extended by the IGC to Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He requested the Chief Minister to establish a cell in his office for facilitating the private investors. He also commented on the tourism and energy sections of the report requesting the Chairman of the Board of Investment to undertake a comprehensive study for identifying new locations to attract domestic tourists but with minimum damage to the environment. To put the province on the path to economic growth he outlined his vision to identify four areas of policy interventions for the government which are to be steered by four committees comprising politicians, bureaucrats and area experts.

Mr. Asad Umer, who leads PTI's economic team, formally wrapped up the discussion by thanking the IGC for preparing the growth strategy report. He remarked that the recommendations will be taken up while deciding on next year's Annual Development Budget and in that context another meeting is to be arranged in near future to discuss recommendations for tax policy reform. He also emphasised the importance of continuing the relationship with the IGC via rigorous research to support policy design.