



S A A P E

South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication

In view of the recent 15 June Council Conclusions of EU Foreign Ministers on Pakistan and Afghanistan, the forthcoming first ever EU-Pakistan Summit on 17 June and the following EU Heads of State Summit on 18-19 June 2009 which has both Pakistan and Afghanistan on the agenda; the South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) strongly urges all relevant stakeholders to give due consideration to its following demands:

- ✓ **END Militarism and Militarisation that has only destroyed the lives and interests of the common people of Pakistan and Afghanistan. The total defence budget for 2008-09 in Pakistan was increased by a whopping 6.8 per cent to (Pakistani Rupees) 296.1 billion while the combined budget for Education, Health, Housing and Social Security amounted to a meagre (Pakistani Rupees) 36.3 billion. In Afghanistan, only the US military is spending nearly USD100million a day while the average volume of international aid for development needs is just USD7million a day which is way short of aid commitments!**
- ✓ **The root causes of prevailing extremism and political fragility lies in social injustice, deprivation of basic human rights, weak democratic systems and lack of pro-people governance. Civil society in Pakistan, Afghanistan and in Southasia as a region strongly believes that a military solution to the present structural problems is NOT a viable and sustainable solution. Focus on "dialogue" and "peace-building" as an ONLY alternative paradigm will curb further unwarranted civilian body count as well as contribute to stability in the region!**
- ✓ **On 6 May, US-led drone attacks killed 100 civilians in one of the deadliest attacks in eight years, in the Farah province of Afghanistan. High civilian casualties are an everyday phenomenon also in Pakistan, both by US drone attacks and the State's increasing military offensive to combat terrorism and extremism. The ICRC and civil society in Afghanistan have warned that the deployment of extra military troops would most likely lead to increased fighting and more civilian casualties. This calls for a serious re-think on the increasing demand for NATO troops!**
- ✓ **The fundamental approach of a military solution to every problem has only exacerbated the situation on the ground. For instance, the Provincial Rehabilitation Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan comprising of military personnel engaging in development work, have further jeopardised the development work of the civilian aid workers.**
- ✓ **EU-Pakistan co-operation should be focussed towards Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development in Pakistan which is the overarching principle of EU Development Co-operation towards third countries. Pro-poor and pro-people socio-economic development in the country is the dire need of the hour!**
- ✓ **The ongoing tragic humanitarian crisis especially in Pakistan that has resulted out of pro-military counter-terrorism is uncalled-for! This**



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crisis has only compounded the lives of the common people, violating their basic human rights. Already the most vulnerable sections of the society; women and children are bearing the brunt of this rampant internal displacement. Furthermore, the reported aid crunch to counter this humanitarian crisis is only exacerbated by a clear shift in policy in the direction of military spending and away from humanitarian needs!!

- ✓ "Trade" is another priority on the agenda of the Summit. **ONLY** Fair Trade and **NOT** Free Trade is the viable solution towards effective economic development in Pakistan. The increasing push for a Free Trade Agreement will only destruct the lives of the most vulnerable and poor populations in the country pushing them further into abject poverty!
- ✓ The voice of Peoples of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Southasia as a region in providing an alternative feasible solution – as above - to address the current violence, extremism, instability and violation of human rights; is increasingly being sidelined and suppressed by the pre-dominance of existing model of counter-terrorism that is clearly **NOT** producing any positive results. Development and Peace is for the Peoples therefore Peoples' voice must be duly respected and recognised!

SAAPE reiterates its aforementioned demands; several of which have been also put forth earlier during the International Donor Conference on Pakistan that took place in Tokyo in April 2009. The SAAPE constituency comprising of and working together with mass-based organisations and grassroots communities in the Southasia region believes and demands that peoples' voice should be duly heard by all relevant stakeholders – including the international community - in the entire process towards poverty eradication, sustainable development and peace in the region.

SAAPE, therefore, believes that its demands will be duly taken into consideration at both forthcoming Summits and that the EU truly demonstrates itself as a socially responsible Europe!!!

16 June 2009