

March 06, 2021

PRESS RELEASE

Karachi Citizens Forum (KCF) in collaboration with Pakistan Medical Association organized a Seminar on “The Priorities & Solution to the Festering Civic Problems of Karachi” on March 05, 2021 at PMA House Karachi. Dr. S.M. Qaisar Sajjad, Deputy Convener KCF, conducted the program. He welcomed and thanked all the guests for their participation. In his opening remarks Dr. Qaisar Sajjad said that civic issues of Karachi are getting worse and worse. Federal and provincial government is running the affairs on ad hoc basis. Due to these gigantic civic issues the health problems are increasing geometrically and as a result burden of diseases is mounting.

Ms. Nargis Rahman, Convener Karachi Citizens Forum, spoke to the audience and said we are indeed very fortunate that we have a panel; a crème de la crème of the top most urban planners of the city who will present their learned views on what should be the priorities and the solutions to our beloved city’s festering civic problems. Their recommendation will InshaAllah be delivered to the authorities who are constitutionally empowered to govern Karachi.

Ms. Nargis further said that over the decades several promises were made and projects announced to make Karachi the envy of South East Asia, a smart city---and revenue earning, investment attracting tourist destination. Budget allocations were made and large sums were also borrowed from international donor agencies but little materialized,---- and instead Karachi in the last few consecutive years was degraded in international indices, to the unenviable status of the 5th least livable country, and the 2nd most polluted in air quality! More people die from air pollution diseases in Karachi then Covid 19!!!

Mr. Arif Hasan, Architect and Planner who was also key note speaker of the event said the main problems of common people of Karachi are scarcity of water, smudged nullahs, undeveloped coastal belt and lateness of Malir Express Way Project. Regarding shortage of water he said depth of underground water has gone beyond 2800 ft. He further said that K-4 water project is not the solution of Karachi’s water issues. Authorities should find out new ways to overcome the water scarcity with the consultation of stakeholders.

Poor people make their houses beside nullahs, which is a dangerous place to live but due to limited sources they are compelled to live in single room house in such slums. These slums are often destroyed by government for completion of its projects but unfortunately new slums are developed without any planning and facilities. Even children grow up without education due to non availability of schools. There is lot of empty land in Karachi which could be used and developed to shift these slums as planned settlements. Unfortunately we do not have any proper Housing Policy. He demanded from the government to prepare proper housing policy for poor people. He also stressed upon the elite class to prepare a memorandum in this regard sign it and submits it with government.

Karachi Citizens' Forum



Mr. Farhan Anwar, Urban Planner spoke to the audience and said there are micro level issues of Karachi. Development Projects are made and started without proper planning. For last 70 years we are not able to decide who is responsible for all the development work in the metropolitan, federal government, provincial government or local government. There is dispute between authorities over the responsibilities of Karachi and it has augmented after 18th amendment. Different countries send their experts to other countries to learn from their experiences to get more trained people but unfortunately we have never done so.

Dr. Abdul Ghafoor Shoro, General Secretary PMA Karachi talked about the burden of diseases in the city and said that due to the civic crisis diseases like diarrhea and typhoid were already widespread in Karachi and now its residents are badly affected by drug-resistant typhoid, which is not easily cured. The burden of diseases is worsening day by day. He informed that there is increase in number of cases of water born diseases, mosquito and flies born diseases, skin infection, conjunctivitis and other diseases just because of filthy situation and unhygienic conditions in Karachi.

Mr. Faheem Zaman Khan, Former Mayor Karachi said there is no water or sewerage problem the problem is only one and that is "Poor Governance". There is war of power between authorities. During Military Rule Local Governments are empowered but are again constrained during democratic governments. If we merge these institutions or bridge their differences we can overcome the civic issues of Karachi.

Dr. Kaiser Bengali, a renowned economist was of the views that we cannot achieve anything by opposing powerful institutions; we should negotiate with them and talk over the urban issues for their solution. He said when we talk about Karachi only government do not listen us. The situation of urban areas in Interior Sind is also the same and worsening day by day. Until and unless there is lack of coordination between our institutions we cannot achieve the goal of development. Different institutions will have to work with mutual cooperation. There is imbalance of power between local and provincial government. Constitutionally provincial governments are more empowered for local development works. Empowerment of local bodies can only be achieved through constitutional amendment.

Ms. Nargis Rahman

Convenor, Karachi Citizens' Forum

Dr.S.M. Qaisar Sajjad

Co- Convenor, Karachi Citizens' Forum &
Secretary General, PMA Centre