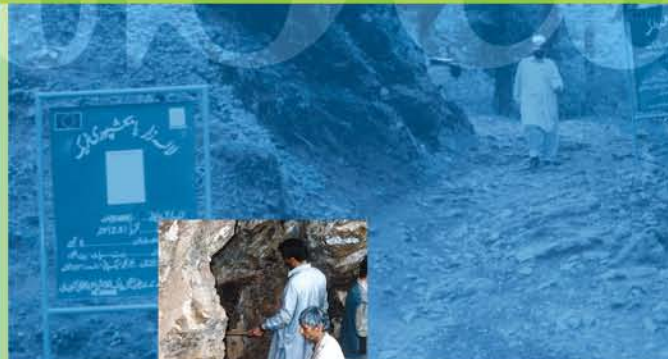




Abbottabad

An Integrated
Development
Vision





Abbottabad

Strategy for Sustainable
Development



IUCN
The World Conservation Union

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFSD	Abbottabad Fund for Sustainable Development
AMC	Ayub Medical College and Hospital Complex
ASSD	Abbottabad Strategy for Sustainable Development
BADP	Barani Area Development Project
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CNG	Compressed Natural Gas
DCO	District Coordination Office
EDO	Executive District Officer
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
GDA	Galliyat Development Authority
GoNWFP	Government of the North-West Frontier Province
GoP	Government of Pakistan
IT	Information Technology
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
L&DD	Livestock and Dairy Development Department
LGO	Local Government Ordinance 2001
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
MSU	Multi-Donor Support Unit
NCS	Pakistan National Conservation Strategy
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRCP	Natural Resource Conservation Project
NSSD	National Strategies for Sustainable Development
NWFP	North-West Frontier Province
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PFC	Provincial Finance Commission
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
PTDC	Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation
Rs	Rupees
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SHYDO	Sarhad Hydel Development Organization
SPCS	Sarhad Provincial Conservation Strategy
SRSP	Sarhad Rural Support Programme
STC	Sarhad Tourism Corporation
TMA	Town Municipal Administration
UN	United Nations
UN-MDG	United Nations Millennium Development Goals
WAPDA	Water and Power Development Authority
WB	World Bank
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

INTRODUCTION

The sustainable development agenda of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) is spelled out in the pioneering *Sarhad Provincial Conservation Strategy* (SPCS), where the provincial government makes an explicit commitment to formulate lower-tier development strategies, as part of a wider set of measures aimed at promoting good governance. The *Abbottabad Strategy for Sustainable Development* (ASSD) is one such district-level initiative. Drafted and fine-tuned by means of an elaborate consultative process, the ASSD aims to formulate a comprehensive and sustainable development framework for the district. Its goal is to mitigate poverty, improve access to basic services and enhance the quality of life of the people of Abbottabad by improving the capacities of individuals and institutions, and creating an enabling environment where the district's natural recourses can be used in a sustainable fashion.

The strategic visions proposed in the ASSD, developed to cover a 10-year period, are not set in stone. Rather, the ASSD calls for a three-year review exercise that will enable these proposals to be reformulated in light of experience gained during implementation. The hope is that this process will serve to keep the ASSD relevant, providing the district government with the flexibility to accommodate emerging socio-economic and political trends in the national and international arena, while at the same time adjusting to changing realities at the local level.

The challenge of preparing a lower-tier development strategy must by necessity focus on issues particular to the district. Yet every effort has been made to keep in mind the broader ethical and intellectual imperatives of the sustainable development paradigm currently being shaped globally. Closer to home, the ASSD is also enriched by the insights of a mid-term review (MTR) of the *Pakistan National Conservation Strategy* (NCS), commissioned by the Government of Pakistan in 2000. The report of the MTR endorses the necessity of moving away from the traditional emphasis on conservation, towards an integration of conservation objectives with socio-economic priorities.

The ASSD aims to make a fundamental departure from the narrow approach of sectoral analyses and prescriptions. This move was necessitated by the growing realisation that broader, macro issues underlie most of the problems that plague specific sectors. This insight is given credence by the near universal acceptance today in development circles of the interconnected nature of poverty alleviation, natural resource conservation and, ultimately, sustainable development.

For any sustainable development strategy to be successful, it needs to achieve three key objectives. First, it should mainstream environmental issues in a way that creates widespread acceptance of ecological concerns among stakeholders, thereby drawing conservation into the cycle of policy making for sectors traditionally thought to be unrelated, such as economic growth and industrial development. Second, it must pay close attention to quality of life and human development, by taking into account the linkages between sectors such as health and education. Finally, it has to demonstrate rather than merely discuss the impact of sustainable development on 'mainstream' areas of concern such as poverty alleviation by providing and safeguarding livelihood opportunities.

No strategy, no matter how thoughtfully prepared, can hope to bring about measurable progress without capacity building and institu-

tional strengthening of the actors involved in implementation. Similarly, a development vision cannot become reality in the absence of good governance and enlightened priorities. For effective implementation to occur, institutional support will be required in a variety of areas to realign institutions and budgets, increase knowledge, improve monitoring, and mobilise non-conventional sources of funding.

Besides support at the institutional level, a key component of successful implementation is ownership among stakeholders. The ASSD places ownership of its strategic interventions squarely in the hands of the people of Abbottabad. Their will, exercised through the zilla council, will be pivotal in turning the ASSD into a manifesto for development that is endorsed by local governments, elected representatives, the private sector and civil society as a whole.

READER'S GUIDE

The structural framework for the ASSD and its companion publication, the *State of the Environment and Development* (SoED), was developed simultaneously so that each document, while standing alone, would also reflect the content of the other. The ASSD lays the groundwork for an integrated development vision for Abbottabad and is designed to optimise decision making and implementation. As such, this volume is action oriented and unencumbered by excessive data. It aims to present the relevant information succinctly, while providing enough detail to enable efficient action. For sector specialists and those seeking a deeper understanding of the on-ground realities underpinning the strategic initiatives proposed here, we recommend that the ASSD is read in conjunction with the SoED.

The ASSD begins by tracing the conceptual lineage of the lower-tier strategy formulation process, discussing key shifts in development paradigms at the international level as well as landmark national initiatives. The nexus between governance and sustainable development is also examined, setting the stage for strategic proposals related to specific sectors.

The sustainable development vision of the ASSD is grouped thematically under three broad categories—green, brown and socio-economic sectors—to emphasise the fact that many of the underlying issues affect not just a single sector but rather a range of inter-related areas. Each sector is examined more closely in individual chapters, with proposed initiatives divided according to the time frame required for implementation. The sector proposals—the heart of the strategy—provide readers with a brief survey of the current status in key sectors before laying out remedial measures. The initiatives outlined in these chapters have been drafted with a view to establishing linkages with the new structures of devolved local government being set up in the district. At every step, an effort is made to highlight synergies and cross-sectoral impacts.

The concluding section of this document looks ahead, focusing on implementation. The analysis here is pragmatic, examining institutional arrangements and resource mobilisation issues as well as progress assessment mechanisms. These chapters assess the current resource position and explore funding options, calling for the institutionalisation of structures, processes and mechanisms to support implementation and monitor progress.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Impetus for the formulation of the ASSD may be traced back to a number of ground-breaking summits and commitments at the international level, as well as key policy documents prepared at home, including the conservation strategies endorsed by the federal and provincial governments. In addition, the conceptual framework of the ASSD takes into account the emerging shape of lower-tier governance, a system launched throughout the country by means of provincial ordinances promulgated in 2001.

The strategy formulation process began with elaborate public consultations held in all union councils and selected villages, as well as the urban and town levels. The combined input of these consultations led to the synthesis of 18 core areas which form the heart of this document. In order to assess the situation on the ground, take stock of developmental initiatives completed or in the pipelines and critically examine lessons provided by these efforts, individual sector papers on these core areas were commissioned and finalised after broad interaction with stakeholders. The ASSD draws on their findings to formulate a strategic vision for sustainable development in Abbottabad.

Even before a strategy can be laid out, it is necessary to recognise the critical link between governance and sustainable development. Indeed, development thinking today favours decentralisation and participatory planning at the grassroots level. Lower-tier administrative

entities become all the more important because it is at this level that genuine sustainable development initiatives can be initiated. In this paradigm, processes, coordination, mechanisms, capacity, indicators and continuous realignment are indispensable. If it is to have any realistic chance of achieving measurable results on the ground, the ASSD proposals need to accommodate these conceptual requirements.

Certain constraints on a systemic level also need to be addressed. These include the 'departmental' orientation, where collective interests and integrative mechanisms are sidelined. Similarly, control over critical sectors has not been devolved, leaving the district to confront serious coordination problems. Further constraints on the district government's administrative authority come in the form of uncertainty regarding fiscal devolution, and poor capacity at the district, town and union levels.

One underlying theme of the ASSD strategic vision is the need to diversify economic activity in the district. Economic diversification in turn requires the provision of basic services and infrastructure. But many of the entities responsible for these sectors are not answerable to the district government although their operations cover key areas related to sustainable development at the district level. This too poses a challenge for the district government.

THE VISION

The ASSD does not pretend to introduce wholly new strategies or devise a blueprint for strategic interventions. Rather, this document serves as an umbrella strategy, incorporating the goals and concerns of many plans currently in implementation.

Agriculture is the backbone of Abbottabad's economy. Across the district, subsistence-level farming is carried out on smallholdings that are overwhelmingly dependent on rain. Repeated interventions have failed to improve yields, and the district is forced to rely on imports of staple cereals such as maize and wheat. The ASSD proposals for this sector include enhancing the

impact of agriculture extension services by increasing coverage, improving cultivation techniques, introducing better quality seeds, encouraging crop rotation, and enabling farmers to grow a greater variety of fruits and vegetables. The introduction of techniques such as water harvesting needs to be scaled up, and the rational use of fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides is to be promoted. Innovative practices such as kitchen gardening and off-season vegetable production must be introduced on a wider scale, with a view to optimising current agricultural practice and diversifying production.

Forests play a critically important role in the economic life of the district but forest management remains under the jurisdiction of the provincial government. There is little the district authorities can do to conserve or protect forest resources except lobby higher-tier decision makers. The absence of sufficient powers at the local level also affects the district's ability to capitalise on the economic potential of forest resources. As things stand, the district government has no say in the formulation of working plans or in monitoring their effectiveness. Nor can the district do much to change the current orientation of forest management that is characterised by policing rather than community participation. District authorities are powerless to curb the activities of the notorious timber mafia, or to share profits from timber sales with rightsholders and local communities. The forest department's writ over rangelands and watersheds poses additional problems for the district, where fodder issues are of critical importance. The district must find ways to contend with the forest authorities' overwhelming stress on timber and afforestation, at the expense of fodder and rangeland issues that are central to the diversification of the local economy. The principal interventions suggested here revolve around acquiring control over forests and rangelands through gradual devolution, reducing pressure on forests by pursuing alternative sources of fuel, and moving towards a participatory managerial orientation.

Development of the livestock sector is inextricably linked with the management of rangelands, fodder reserves and animal feed production.

Administrative responsibility for livestock has been devolved to the district level, but the department has only nominal writ over rangelands. The livestock department favours veterinary interventions rather than measures to improve production techniques. But even this bias has failed to increase outputs or improve the health of animals reared. Coverage of extension services is poor, and further restricted by the fact that the department employs no female extension workers, thereby marginalising women who bear many of the responsibilities related to livestock and poultry rearing at the household level. Poor road conditions in rural areas, coupled with inadequate equipment and facilities, further curtail the effectiveness of extension efforts. The remedial interventions proposed here are aimed at improving coordination between the three departments responsible for various aspects of the sector so that greater attention may be given to fodder and feed issues. At the same time, attention is required to improve health coverage, strengthen breed improvement, and encourage the adoption of scientific transport and storage methods. Capacity building across the board and community involvement are also necessary.

With regard to poultry production, the district has failed to capitalise on the latent potential of the sector. Extension services are woefully inadequate, disease control is difficult and massive feed shortages persist. The market for poultry is characterised by fluctuations in demand and supply, depriving producers of a fair price. The interventions required here are similar to those that will be needed to develop livestock and dairy production, along with scientific methods to forecast market demand.

Biodiversity in the district is subjected to the same pressures as other natural resource-related sectors. Overgrazing, excessive harvesting and encroachment threaten species and habitats, while little has been done in the way of in situ conservation except for the creation of the Ayubia National Park and Qalandarabad game reserve. Although this is a step in the right direction, whatever positive impact might accrue from this move is diminished by the fact that activities

in other sectors are allowed to continue which defeat the very purpose of designating protected areas. By its very nature, biodiversity conservation is a cross-sectoral challenge. As such, the interventions proposed here suggest targeting actors in a range of sectors that directly or indirectly affect natural resources. Greater involvement will be required not just from administrative personnel but also communities that live in the vicinity of protected areas. An additional option available to the district government is to pursue resources for conservation through the commitments made under various multilateral environmental agreements.

The fisheries sector has long been the victim of neglect. The district's fisheries resources are threatened by pollution as well as the absence of administrative oversight to check overfishing, and the use of cruel and destructive methods. To remedy this situation, a coordinated effort will be required so that the fisheries sector can be developed as a source of income generation while at the same time benefiting from interventions aimed at conservation and sustainable use.

Mining is by its very nature an unsustainable activity, since mineral resources are ultimately exhaustible. The industry is also notorious for its devastating impact on the environment. Nevertheless, there are ways in which mineral development may be carried out while mitigating its more harmful impacts. This is what is proposed for Abbottabad, where significant mineral reserves exist but have not been properly explored. As a subject that has not been devolved, however, mineral development is not within the jurisdiction of the district government. The interventions proposed for the sector address this issue, along with measures to ensure that mining activities are strictly regulated.

Sustainability and self-sufficiency are key issues in the energy sector, where the district's power generation capacities are practically non-existent. Not only does this mean that Abbottabad relies on the national grid for its electricity, it also puts excessive pressure on the district's forests. Natural gas and electricity supply does not fully cover rural areas, and alternative sources of

energy are not sufficiently developed, with the result that the district's rural population depends heavily on wood for cooking and heating. This situation is simply unsustainable in the long term, and will lead to the wholesale destruction of Abbottabad's forests. Initiatives for the energy sector target a wide range of issues, from efficient use and theft prevention to indigenous production and the provision of alternative fuel sources.

Another area that is not strictly within the administrative domain of the district is waste water and solid waste management, responsibility for which has been devolved to town administrations. Problems arising as a result of inadequate waste management impact such a wide range of human development indicators that they cannot be examined merely at the town level.

Across the district, the standard of waste management is abysmal. With no major industrial activity taking place, the waste generated in Abbottabad comes mainly from homes, commercial establishments and medical facilities. Much of this waste water and refuse is dumped out in the open or discharged directly into water sources used for drinking and irrigation. The danger this poses to public health goes without saying, but public attitudes regarding the issue are characterised by apathy. With the people themselves showing little or no concern, it is difficult to imagine how measurable gains can be achieved in improving waste management. As such, awareness raising is a key component of the remedial initiatives proposed for this sector. Interventions required here focus on streamlining waste collection and disposal, framing land use and zoning regulations, and introducing punitive measures for polluters.

Land use and zoning legislation is required to ease the pressure on a public service delivery system that is stretched to the limit. Widespread poverty in the district has led in recent years to increasing urbanisation, with the mushrooming of encroachment and illegal settlements where in many cases no provisions have been made for water supply or sanitation. Population growth increases pressure on land both for housing and agriculture, creating a domino effect where

scarce agricultural land is co-opted for housing and commercial plazas, while standing forests are cleared for agriculture. Zoning and planning laws are the only way to ensure that the land use needs of today do not leave the area degraded for future generations. Although regulation here has been devolved to the town level, with certain policy matters to be determined by the provincial government, the district has some room to manoeuvre in the form of by-laws on the subject.

Natural resource conservation and wise use go a long way in mitigating poverty, particularly in areas with a large rural population and in economies that are dominated by agriculture. Poverty is also linked to education, with more educated populations better placed to pursue employment as well as other income-generating activities.

The district's education indicators are mixed, with small gains achieved in literacy and enrolment at the primary level, but high drop-out rates as the level of education rises. Despite the resources that have been pumped into showcase projects, overall participation remains low, with a serious imbalance in favour of boys' education and schooling in urban areas. Access to schooling for girls, and in rural areas, needs to be the focus of remedial measures. Steps will be required to ensure the relevance of education on offer, with revisions to the curriculum at all levels. Initiatives for the education sector also need to address the training needs of teachers. The interventions proposed aim not just for the construction of new schools but also for existing resources in the sector to be used optimally. This includes upgrading facilities as well as the capacities of personnel. The use of indicators is another measure that will help improve performance.

In the health care sector, indicators present a picture that is deceptive. The presence of a single mega-project in Abbottabad city has skewed statistics for the district as a whole, where health coverage is patchy and of poor quality, and large segments of the rural population do not have access even to the most basic medical facilities. The interventions proposed for this sector focus on expanding rural coverage to address the current imbalance, improving the performance

of existing facilities by providing adequate supplies and equipment, and promoting preventive medicine.

Equally distressing is the district's demographic profile, which is predominantly youthful. Although the district shows lower growth than the province, population density in Abbottabad is rising at an alarming rate. These two factors alone spell disaster for the future, when increasing numbers will enter the workforce and in all likelihood migrate to urban areas to improve their economic prospects. The impact of unchecked population growth is felt in every other aspect of the district's social and economic life, from issues such as food security and employment to the provision of basic services such as education, sanitation and health care. Population welfare activities have so far failed to achieve the desired effect, and are the focus of the remedial interventions proposed. More accurate and meaningful indicators also need to be developed so that progress—or failure—in this critically important sector can be closely monitored.

In terms of infrastructure, the district is relatively well served both by major roads and telecommunications networks. This is of course a double-edged sword since infrastructure development often comes at the cost of the natural environment. Trade-offs will be required, along with strict enforcement of legislation aimed at curbing the adverse impacts of infrastructure development projects. Farm-to-market roads are needed to provide growers with improved access to wider markets. Abbottabad city is a major hub for transit traffic and so witnesses severe congestion as well as pollution. These issues are addressed in the interventions proposed for the sector.

Drinking water supply is an area where coverage is relatively high. Here, however, quantities supplied are insufficient to meet the needs of the population and quality is suspect. Remedial measures proposed include improving quality, reducing waste and introducing more rational user charges.

With its stunning mountain landscape and rich biodiversity, as well as a number of picturesque

hill stations, Abbottabad ought to be a favoured holiday destination. This, unfortunately, is not the case. Little has been done to enhance the district's profile as a tourist haven, with the result that visitor numbers have declined steadily over the past few years while Abbottabad city has become a transit point en route to more popular spots elsewhere in the region. The district suffers the negative impact of this traffic while receiving none of the benefits. The strategic initiatives proposed for this sector involve developing tourism to create much-needed jobs in the district. By promoting ecotourism and nature-based activities, the district can also indirectly support conservation. The trade-offs required here can be managed by ensuring that activities in the sector retain a pro-poor focus.

Poverty alleviation is a key component of the sustainable development paradigm. In a district where unemployment is high and many other avenues for income generation are either saturated or intractable, at least in the short term, an effective way to boost economic activity is by establishing small businesses. Microenterprise development is currently addressed haphazardly, largely by means of microcredit extension programmes. Without the necessary support in skills, credit utilisation or project selection, much of this money is invested in run-off-the-mill enterprises or used for non-productive purposes. Lending of this sort only serves to deepen poverty by increasing indebtedness. The strategic interventions proposed here call for the formulation of a coherent, integrated poverty alleviation plan in which microenterprise is a key component but not the sole component. The focus of initiatives should not be simply to provide credit, but to enable communities to utilise these funds optimally. This in turn requires that support is available in areas such as skills training and marketing.

While pursuing development, it is important to keep in mind the specific cultural norms and traditions of Abbottabad's residents. Urban areas are undergoing a process of modernisation, with the attendant erosion of traditional values. This transformation has yet to hit the vast majority of the district's rural residents, who are not only

key stakeholders in the ASSD vision but also responsible for implementation. The success or failure of the strategic interventions proposed here will depend on the active ownership and involvement of these communities.

Traditional cultural norms are nowhere more clearly visible than in the social and economic role of the district's women. The interventions proposed here require that the gender imbalance is redressed in every sector from education and health care to employment and credit extension. This includes enhancing women's role in natural resource management activities, where they are already key players. It is also imperative that the federal and provincial governments honour their commitments to establish employment quotas for women.

IMPLEMENTATION

Many of the inputs necessary for sustainable development to take root are complex and time-consuming, requiring major changes both in the macro-structural environment of the district and the attitudes of its people. A crucial first step towards implementation is to understand the broader themes and deeper issues at stake. Abbottabad's future prospects for sustainable development depend on diversifying the economy and improving institutional efficacy. In addition to poverty alleviation, issues related to the standard of living must also be taken into consideration.

The major concern regarding implementation is of course related to devolution and the administrative uncertainty that has been created by the decentralisation of mandates from the province to the local level. Lower-tier governments, themselves undergoing a radical structural metamorphosis, have been handed new responsibilities while the necessary civil service transformations are still awaited. Across the board, the expanded mandate of various tiers has not automatically resulted in an accompanying enhancement of capacity. In addition, the status of fiscal devolution and local-level revenue generation remains unclear.

As the devolution plan unfolds, new and unexpected problems are likely to arise. At the same time, age-old constraints both on the structural and administrative level will also need to be tackled. Departmental thinking has long prevailed in administrative circles, where a holistic, integrative, cross-sectoral approach is now urgently required. Another formidable hurdle for development planners is the absence of reliable data for key sectors. Lessons learned from past experience will also need to be incorporated into a vision for the future. Key issues that have emerged as recurring themes include poor governance; the exclusion of local communities from decision making, project identification and implementation; and the lack of adequate funding for operation and maintenance.

The ASSD will be implemented through the new institutional framework that is emerging under devolution. The district administration works under the leadership of the nazim, who is assisted and advised by grouped functional offices, while the district government will provide an umbrella for the integration of sectoral policies at the local level.

A number of additional implementation mechanisms are also available, both at the district level as well as higher tiers of government. At the district level, the Mushavirat Committee will serve as a platform for coordinating the policies and programmes of various tiers of local government; the District Development Committee is vested with the authority to give the technical green light to projects; and Citizen Community Boards will allow the people to access public-sector funds to implement development projects for their own communities. At higher tiers, the Local Government Commission will prescribe standards and norms for various sectoral functions; the Provincial Finance Commission (PFC) will determine the amount of funds allocated to the district by the provincial government; and the SPCS has the potential to act as a coordinative entity for the implementation of ASSD proposals. The implementation process will also be influenced by the federal government, particularly where the country's national, regional and international commitments intersect with mat-

ters that are operationally under the jurisdiction of the district. An additional implementation mechanism comes in the shape of the District Roundtable, which brings together a variety of stakeholders. It will act as a think tank for environmental policy, serve as an advocate for sustainable development and provide a forum for the articulation of civil society's interests.

In the ultimate analysis, responsibility for achieving sustainable development rests with a composite of stakeholders, including the district government, elected representatives, devolved offices under the administrative control of the district government, non-devolved entities that continue to operate under the provincial or federal hierarchy, and civil society. The success of the endeavour will depend on their level of commitment. The ASSD vision cannot be attained through a routine and cavalier approach or by means of compartmentalised thinking. Nor will the strategic interventions proposed here benefit from the pursuit of a narrow political agenda characterised by quick-fix, pseudo-developmental interventions.

There is a long-standing tradition in developing countries to look to the government for the delivery of services in a wide range of areas. Perhaps as a result, the general trend in development interventions has been to seek external funding, either through donors, the federal and provincial governments, or non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This system is not sustainable. It is, rather, a form of 'fund addiction'—a subsidy-dependent mindset that will prove to be a serious handicap in the long term. Pursuing external funding is, therefore, not the central thrust of implementing ASSD initiatives. The ASSD aims to chart a course towards sustainable development which by definition means that interventions must be self-sustaining.

The ASSD examines options for revenue generation at the local, provincial and federal level. The ability to generate funds locally will provide fiscal space for the implementation of programmes aimed specifically at sustainable development. At the same time, current public-

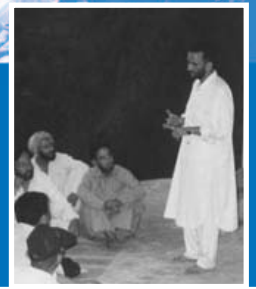
sector expenditure will be streamlined. Additional revenue options that will be pursued include provincial and federal government funding windows, and resources earmarked by international donor agencies. The Abbottabad Fund for Sustainable Development (AFSD) will be established to coordinate and channel resource allocation towards sustainable initiatives.

The success or failure of the ASSD vision cannot be gauged without systematic monitoring. To this end, the district government will develop indicators to assess progress towards sustainability. These indicators will take into account key facets of each sector and will be designed to cover all major components of the sustainable development paradigm, moving beyond the analysis of purely economic variables which tend to ignore a range of critical social and environmental realities. The assessment process will require action at more than one level and participation from more than one stakeholder. Assessments will be carried out at frequent intervals, preferably to coincide with annual decision making, particularly the budget cycle. Embedded in the idea of monitoring is the assumption that at some point political change and programme alterations will be required.

The pursuit of sustainable development is a formidable challenge where progress is at best painfully slow and only incremental changes can be expected. For those who might be tempted to see the ASSD as a quick fix for all of the district's problems, it is important to introduce an element of pragmatism. As such, it is worth repeating that the pace of change is gradual, that the consolidation of processes and systems is incremental, and that capacity gaps, particularly in the transitory stage of devolution, can sometimes be disheartening.

For the ASSD vision to become a reality, support for the strategy will be needed across the board, regardless of ideological and political divides. Strong political will is also required to reconcile the conflicting agendas of various interest groups and stakeholders, whose commitment and involvement is critical for the success of ASSD implementation.







PART I

Background



G

Genesis and History

Impetus for the formulation of the ASSD may be traced back to a number of groundbreaking summits and commitments at the international level. On the domestic front, this development vision draws vital insights from key policy documents and studies, including the conservation strategies endorsed by the federal and provincial governments, as well as related reviews conducted by experts (Figure 1).

INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

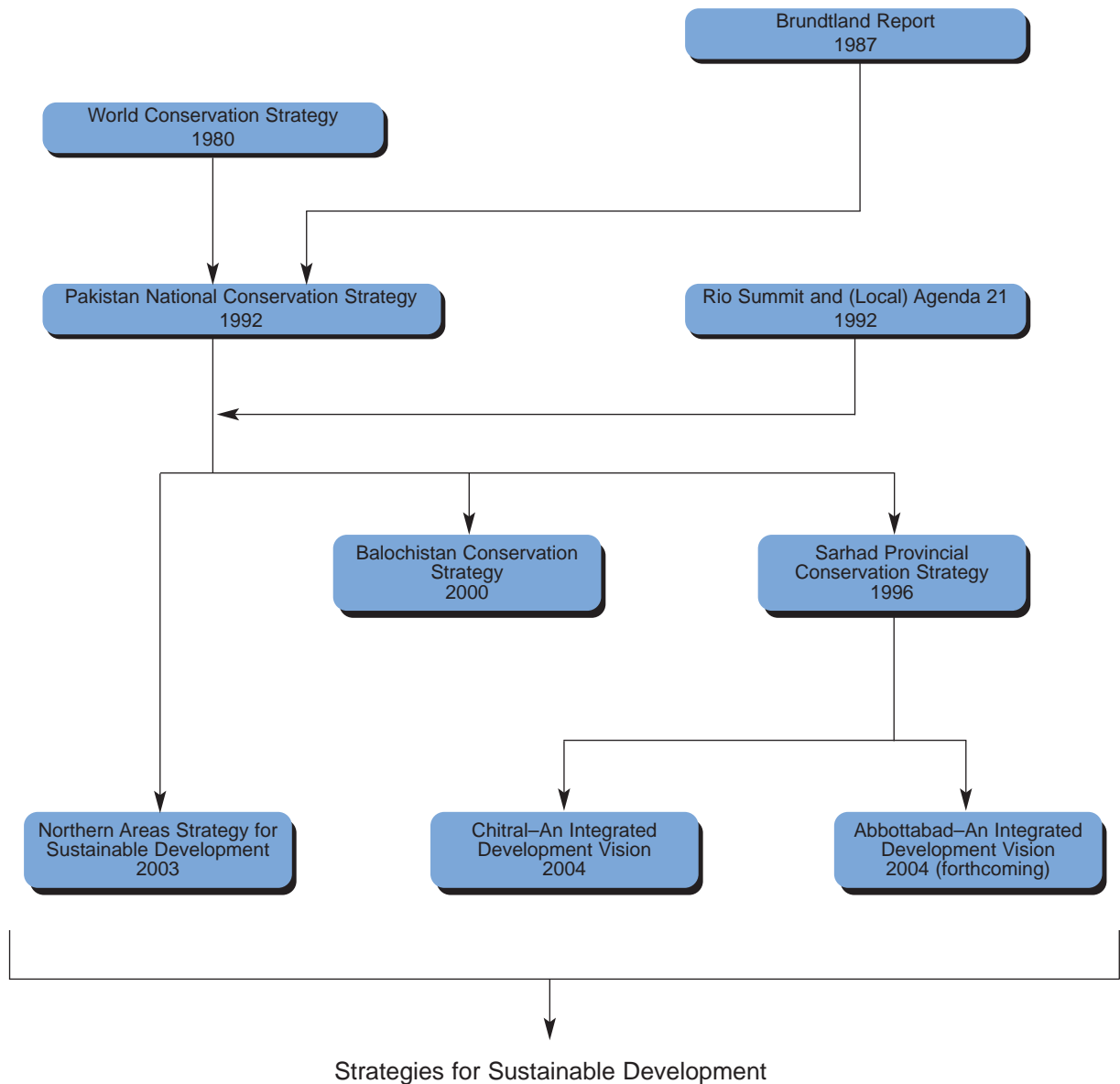
The first formal response to global concerns regarding development, poverty alleviation and the environment materialised in the form of the *World Conservation Strategy: Living Resource Conservation for Sustainable Development* (1980), prepared by IUCN-The World Conservation Union with the assistance of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Wide Fund for Nature and other agencies.

In 1987, *Our Common Future: the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development* popularised

the term sustainable development, defined as: development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (cited in OECD 2001).

Also known as the Brundtland Report, after Gro Harlem Brundtland who chaired the Commission, *Our Common Future* alerted the world to the necessity of ensuring that economic development takes place without

FIGURE 1 GENESIS OF THE ASSD: THE GLOBAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT



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depleting natural resources or harming the environment (Figure 2). At the heart of this concept is the idea that over the long term, social, economic and environmental objectives are complementary and interdependent. Sustainable development and conservation must therefore be viewed as processes that are symbiotic rather than mutually exclusive, where the adjustments needed to optimise this symbiosis can be undertaken through area-specific trade-offs.

In June 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the Earth Summit, was held in Rio de Janeiro. Here, over 150 nations endorsed *Agenda 21*, a document which sets out the manner in which both developed and developing countries can work towards sustainable development. Among broader concerns, *Agenda 21* singles out local government as a key player in the development process. Two thirds of the actions outlined in *Agenda 21* require the involvement of local authorities. This aspect of *Agenda 21*, called 'Local Agenda 21', has inspired the formulation of lower-tier conservation strategies across the world. The key elements of Local Agenda 21, spelled out in six generic groups, focus on the need for local authorities to address environmental and developmental concerns in a participatory manner by initiating advocacy measures, pursuing capacity development, and putting in place implementation and assessment mechanisms.

At the Rio Summit, governments also made a commitment to adopt national strategies for sustainable development (NSSDs), based on the principles outlined in *Agenda 21*:

This strategy should build upon and harmonize the various sectoral economic, social and environmental policies and plans that are operating in the country.

[. . .] Its goals should be to ensure socially responsible economic development while protecting the resource base and the environment for the benefit of future generations. It should be developed through the widest possible participation. It should be based on a thorough

assessment of the current situation and initiatives [UN 1992a: paragraph 8.7].

This idea is echoed in documents such as *Shaping the 21st Century*, which calls for the formulation and implementation by 2005 of a sustainable development strategy in every country (OECD 1996). The formulation of NSSDs is also one of the seven development goals agreed upon by the international community.

Parallel to these institutional initiatives, there emerged a formal definition of the NSSD concept as a coordinated set of participatory processes involving analysis, debate, capacity strengthening, planning and investment, aimed at seeking to integrate the short- and long-term economic, social and environmental objectives of society and managing trade-offs where necessary (OECD 2001). This definition reflects indicators for sustainable development strategies outlined in *A Better World for All: Progress Towards the International Development Goals* (UN et al. 2000).

The NSSD paradigm was endorsed at the August 2000 United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, where the nexus between economy, society and the environment was acknowledged. The Rio summit was seen as a conference primarily on the environment, where the social dimension was missing both from the debates and the conclusions. The WSSD demonstrated that, since Rio, the integration agenda essential to sustainable development has advanced considerably. Following the WSSD, poverty has come to be accepted as the underlying theme that links sustainable development with economic, environmental and social issues.

Today, rising poverty, accelerated natural resource deterioration and the challenges posed by the World Trade Organization regime have forced the global community to rethink development. The ASSD attempts to reflect these changing realities and the conceptual shifts that they have necessitated, adapting this knowledge to local sustainable development goals.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

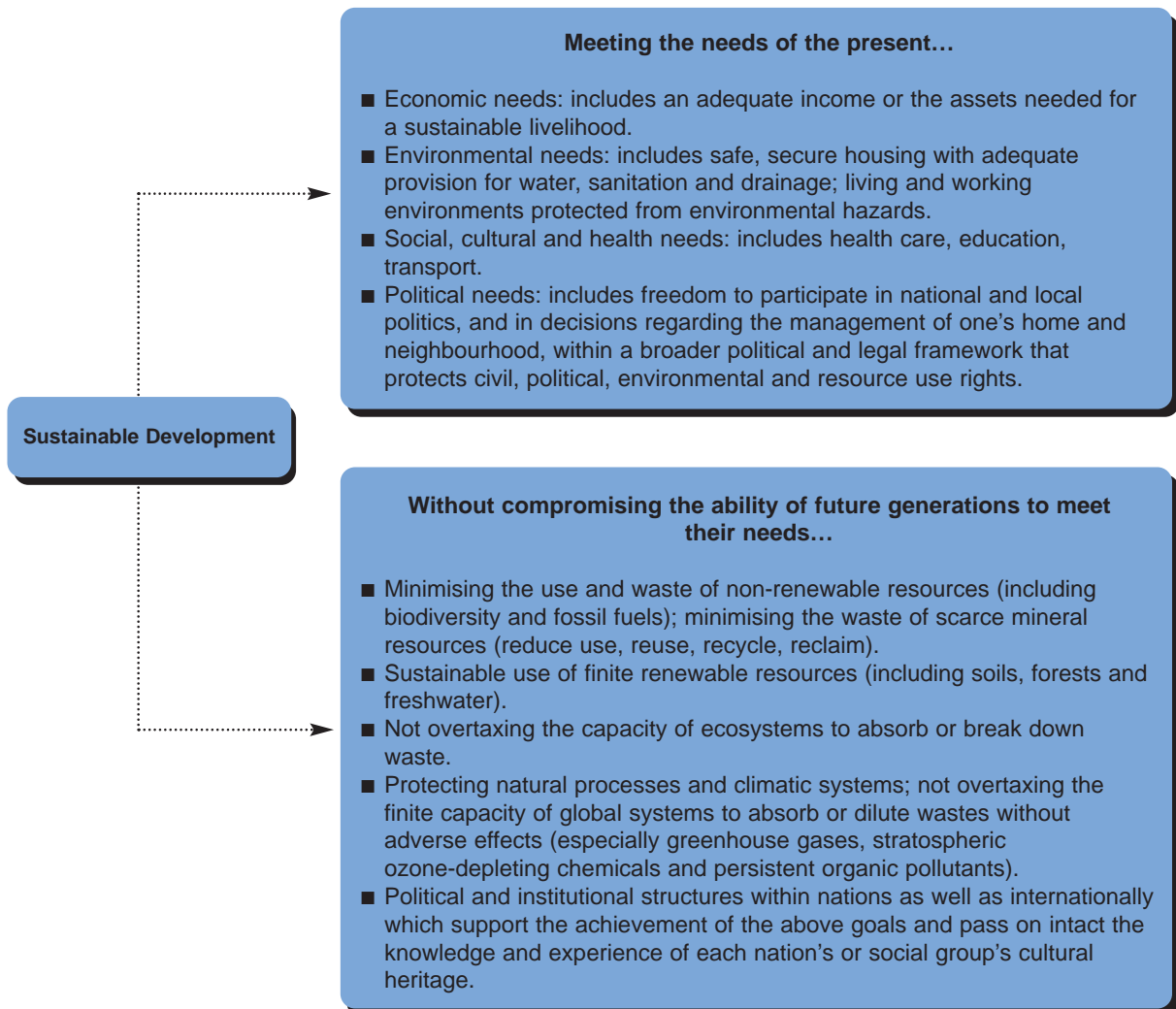
Influenced by the global shift towards greater integration between sustainable development and environmental conservation, in 1987 the Government of Pakistan began work on the formulation of the NCS. Formally approved in 1992, this document identified 14 core areas of concern and called for increasing expenditure on NCS-related areas from 4% of GNP in 1991–92 to 8% of GNP by 2001. The total esti-

mated investment in the period 1992–2001 was expected to be Rs 150.7 billion, with contributions from the government as well as the private sector and donor agencies (IUCN 1992).

After the NCS was completed, IUCN assisted the Government of Pakistan in exploring implementation options. One explicit lesson that emerged was that NCS implementation at the provincial level

would be possible only if the provincial government at the highest level perceived

FIGURE 2 THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT



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the need for pursuing such a strategy and accepted responsibility for doing so (GoNWFP and IUCN 1996: ix).

The Government of the NWFP took the lead in this regard, preparing the SPCS in the period 1992–96 as

a statement of commitment by the government and the people of the NWFP to move forward with an effective programme of sustainable development (ibid.).

Implementation of the SPCS was expected to cost Rs 14.787 billion in the short term (1995–98) with contributions from donors, the federal government and the private sector to the tune of 51%, and a long-term investment of Rs 65.578 billion.

One of the central concerns of the SPCS is expressed under the core area, 'Decentralisation and Governance', where a commitment is made to test the concept of district-level strategic planning with an emphasis on decentralising the development process. The stage for district strategies was set: two pilot strategies for Chitral and Abbottabad were initiated in 1997.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Besides international thinking on development, the conceptual framework of the ASSD derives important insights from recent studies and policy reviews carried out at home. The NCS-MTR, completed in 2000, explicitly criticises the NCS planning and implementation orientation as a by-product of the post-Rio focus:

Mainstreaming of environmental and social concerns into development initiatives and government procedures is essential for improving the sustainability of ongoing investment, production and consumption patterns; and "projectisation" of NCS-2 activities additional to mainstream activities should be a lower priority (Hanson et al. 2000: 10).

Of particular relevance are the issues raised in an MTR-related paper which notes that the

conservation of natural resources and sustainable development still need to become firmly embedded in the agendas of politicians, political parties, the bureaucracy and local government to be truly taken seriously (Khan 2000).

The ASSD also recognises the nexus between poverty and sustainable development, underscored in the *Interim-Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (GoP 2001).

In addition to these studies, the ASSD framework takes into consideration the emerging shape of lower-tier government, envisaged by the National Reconstruction Bureau and launched throughout the country by means of provincial ordinances promulgated in 2001.

FORMULATION PROCESS

Energised by the spirit of the NSSD paradigm and galvanised by the debate at home, the ASSD formulation process was launched in 1997. Led by then district administration on behalf of the Government of the NWFP, the process was funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and provided technical assistance by IUCN.

Elaborate public consultations were held in all union councils and select villages, as well as the urban and town levels, to seek civil society input on issues perceived to be important for the pursuit of sustainable development. Simultaneously, a Steering Committee led by the then deputy commissioner, with members drawn from key line departments and civil society organisations, was constituted to oversee the strategy formulation process. A multi-stakeholder Roundtable was notified, guided by the principle of ensuring representation to all members of society who would otherwise be marginalised or excluded by the requirements of formal forums.

The combined input of these two institutional mechanisms and the public consultation process prioritised the following core areas:

- agriculture and horticulture;
- forests and watersheds;
- livestock and poultry;
- grazing land and fodder reserves;
- biodiversity, parks and protected areas;
- fisheries;
- mining;
- energy;
- waste water and solid waste management;
- land use planning and zoning;
- education;
- health and population welfare;
- infrastructure: roads and communications;
- drinking water;
- ecotourism;
- enterprise development;
- culture; and
- gender.

In order to assess the situation on the ground, take stock of developmental initiatives completed or in the pipelines, and critically examine lessons provided by these efforts, individual sector papers on these core areas were commissioned and finalised after broad interaction with stakeholders.

As the ASSD formulation process was gaining momentum, the promulgation of the NWFP Local Government Ordinance (LGO) 2001 brought about significant changes in the structure of local-level government. The LGO saw the creation of a new District Government Abbottabad and re-assigned responsibility for many sectors from the provincial to the district and town levels. This necessitated adjustments in the ASSD itself, and additional input was sought from elected officials and government functionaries at various tiers.

ACCOMMODATING CHANGE

Publication of the ASSD comes at a time when great changes are taking place both locally and at the global level. The geopolitical events of the opening years of the 21st century have led to dramatic realignments in the international arena. Concepts of sustainable development will need to accommodate the impact of these shifts, without losing momentum in the implementation of international commitments geared



Prior to the formulation of the ASSD, public consultation meetings were held in all union councils as well as selected villages.

towards poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

On the domestic front, the devolution of local government is far from complete. The framework established by the LGO awaits implementation in the form of subordinate rules and regulations governing many areas. The establishment of three towns (Abbottabad, Havelian and Nawanshehr) leaves many jurisdictional matters open to question.

In the process of formulation, emerging development trends at the international level were continuously examined to ensure that the ASSD remained attuned to the latest concepts. Similarly, changes in the governance structure at the district level were incorporated into the document on a running basis. In the future, too, the ASSD will need to accommodate change both in the national and global arena. A proac-

tive approach will be required, initiated by the district government, but one that includes the active participation of all stakeholders.

As the ASSD is readied for publication, it is evident that the LGO provisions mandating the formation of district-level sustainable development visions need to be matched on the ground with requisite capacity. At the same time, the incremental operationalisation of the devolution plan leaves many administrative and jurisdictional areas unclear. The ASSD aims to acknowledge this state of flux and to provide for the changes that are likely to occur after the document has appeared in print. Included in the implementation mechanisms discussed here is a cycle of assessment and, where necessary, strategic reorientation. Our hope is that this will allow the ASSD to remain relevant to the real concerns of the people of Abbottabad for many years to come.



Governance and Sustainable Development

In the spirit of the Rio Summit, particularly Local Agenda 21, administrative thinking today favours devolution. Decentralised planning and participatory decision making at the grassroots level are key components of this new paradigm. In the move towards formulating NSSDs, lower-tier administrative entities become all the more important because it is at this level that genuinely sustainable development can be initiated.

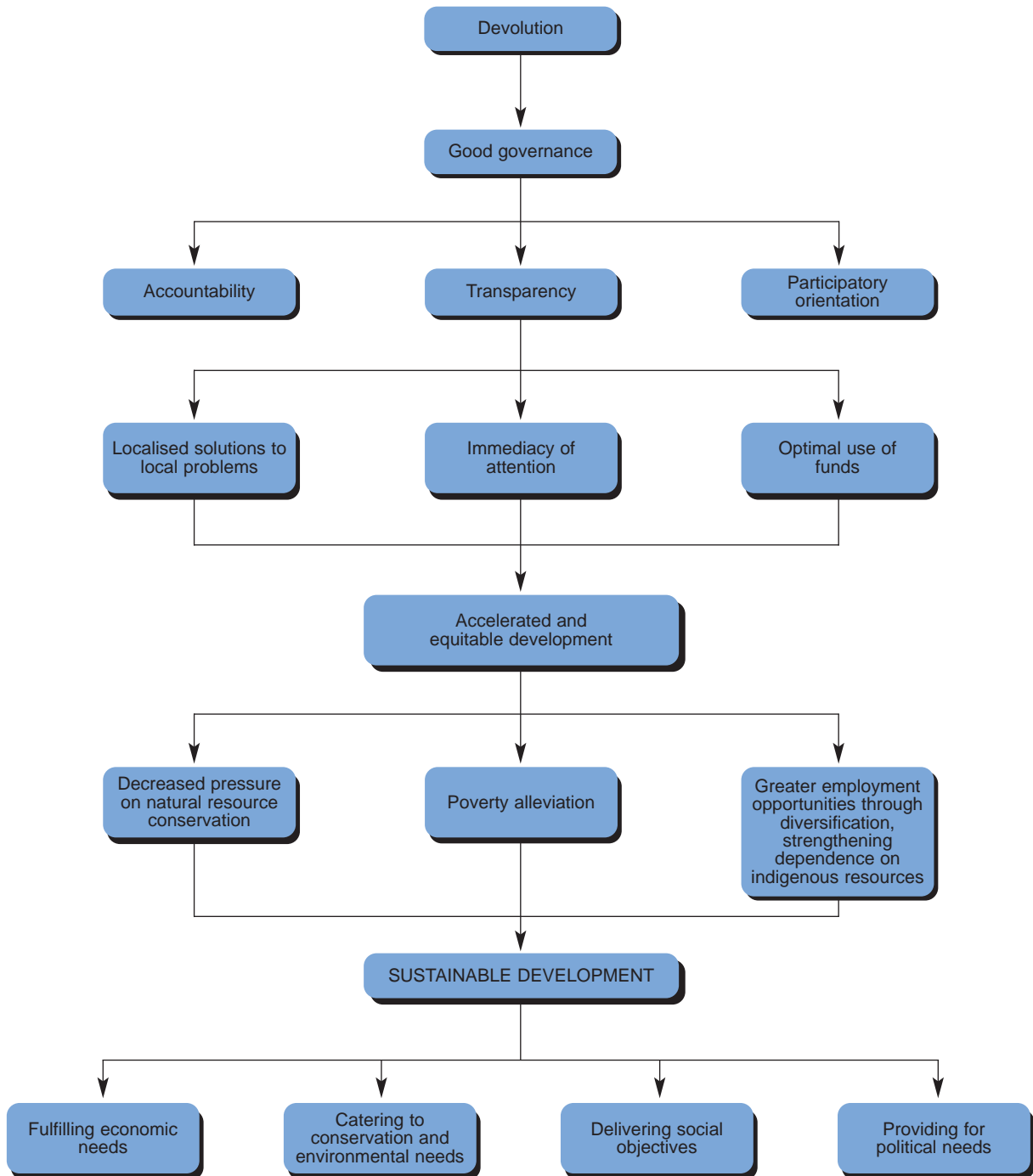
NEXUS WITH DEVOLUTION

In the context of Pakistan, the provincial Local Government Ordinances promulgated in 2001 serve as an endorsement of the NSSD orientation, formalising what was agreed upon in Local Agenda 21. Indeed, the NWFP LGO contains an explicit recognition of the NSSD concept, requiring the formulation of “integrated sustainable development visions” to create an enabling environment for economic progress, human welfare and sustainable development.

The intricate interrelationships between good governance, efficacious management, economic development, poverty alleviation and conser-

FIGURE 3

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE DEVOLUTION OF GOVERNANCE



Compiled by Khalid Saranjam Khan

vation—and their ultimate confluence as sustainable development—is shown in [Figure 3](#). This chart is neither normative nor all-inclusive but rather attempts to provide a picture of the core components of the NSSD paradigm under which the ASSD has been framed.

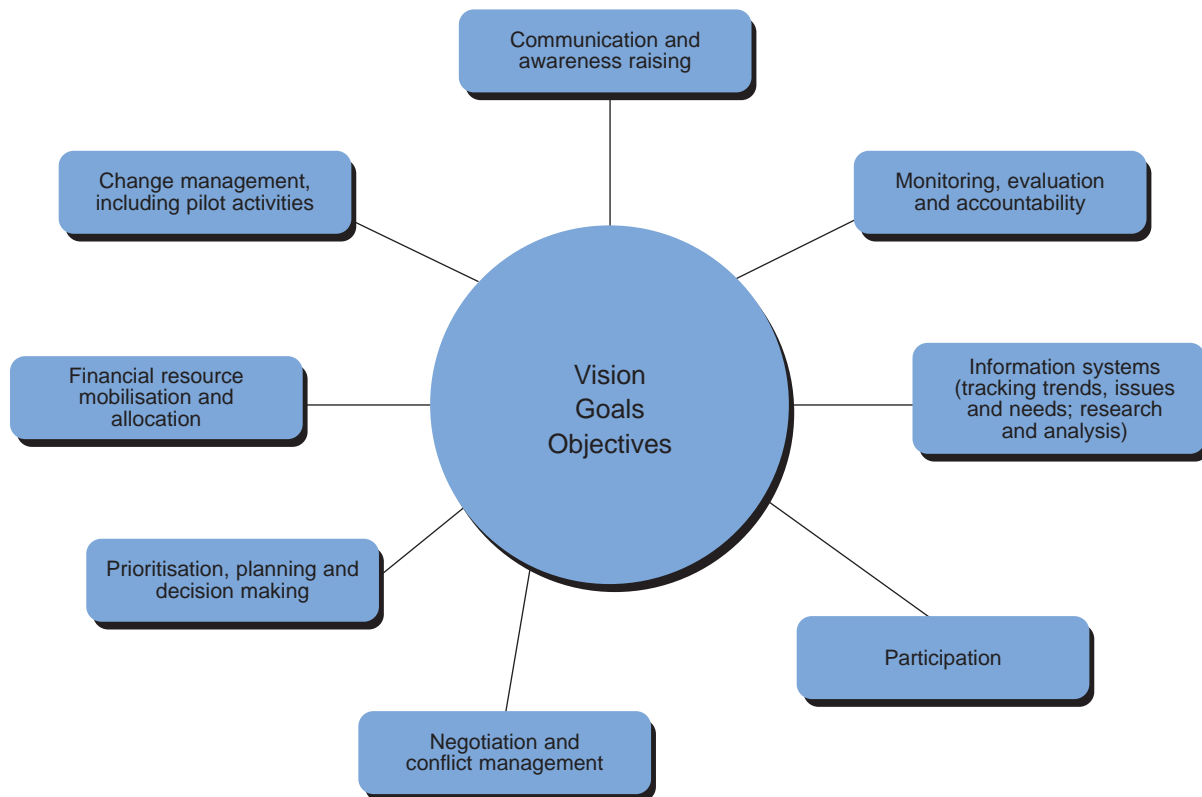
Sustainable development serves as both the overarching objective and the *raison d'être* of the ASSD. The strategy itself adopts a cyclical approach characterised by periodic review, fine tuning and revision, drawing on insights derived from the implementation experience. This orientation extends to the strategic interventions proposed, requiring the continuous monitoring and evaluation of key processes and mechanisms

as well as impacts and outcomes of development initiatives. This process should enable debate on key issues and needs, allowing direction and priorities to be reformulated where necessary.

The complex and overarching nature of sustainable development issues is illustrated in [Figure 4](#), which shows how processes, coordination, mechanisms, capacity, indicators and continuous realignment are all indispensable. If it is to have any realistic chance of achieving sustainable development on the ground, the ASSD will need to be viewed within the context of these conceptual requirements.

FIGURE 4

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES: CONSTELLATION OF MECHANISMS



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DEPARTMENTAL ORIENTATION

In the realm of administration, compromises are frequently made for the sake of ‘continuity’—a euphemism for maintaining the status quo through departments with exclusive jurisdiction such as agriculture, forests, finance and health. The tunnel vision that this breeds, accentuated by departmental rather than collective interests, is a major barrier to achieving optimal returns on development interventions. While facile lip service is paid to the concept of a cross-sectoral and cross-functional approach, in practical terms such integration remains elusive. The departmental orientation constitutes one of the most formidable challenges facing the pursuit of sustainable development.

Although the basic philosophy of devolution grew in response to this challenge, the failure to devolve such critical departments as forests means that the district will confront serious coordination problems for some time to come. Additional constraints that the district government’s agenda, embodied in the ASSD, will have to learn to accommodate include the unclear status of fiscal devolution and fund generation; the creation of resource-deficient town councils; and poor capacity at the district, town and union levels. Elections to higher-tier legislative bodies will further disrupt this unstable administrative milieu.

The ASSD aims to highlight the nature of these cross-sectoral linkages and to assess their relationship to—and impact on—sustainable development through the mechanism of indicators. The hypothesis developed in this document drives home the point that the departmental outlook can no longer serve the interests of civil society. Even basic issues such as service delivery cannot be effectively tackled without taking into account cross-sectoral linkages. The analysis also suggests, albeit implicitly, that the public sector can no longer be the principal actor in the new development paradigm and that genuine stakeholder participation, as opposed to ‘consultation’, is no longer a chimerical construct but a conditional necessity.

LINKAGES TO PARALLEL EFFORTS

The ASSD does not pretend to introduce wholly new strategies or devise a blueprint for all future interventions. Initiatives linked to the NCS, SPCS, *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (PRSP) and *Agenda 21* are already under way, along with routine planning at various tiers and through a number of departments. Programmes such as the Barani Area Development Project (BADP) and Natural Resource Conservation Project (NRCP) are operational at the district level, in addition to a number of civil society interventions spearheaded for the most part by NGOs. The objectives of these initiatives are collated and formalised in the ASSD. Rather than focusing exclusively on new interventions, the ASSD serves as an umbrella strategy, incorporating the goals and concerns of many plans currently in implementation.

NON-DEVOLVED DEPARTMENTS AND GREY AREAS

While many ASSD proposals concern devolved entities functioning at the district level, there remain crucial overlaps with departments currently administered at higher tiers. In the case of Abbottabad, this situation is of particular concern with regard to critical sectors such as forests and watershed management which remain only partially devolved.

The urgency is compounded by the fact that these sectors are central to ASSD proposals. Economic diversification, for instance, requires that activities such as livestock rearing and dairy production are developed. This in turn necessitates improved fodder production and rangeland management. But these matters fall under the jurisdiction of the provincial forest department, essentially placing the district at the mercy of the provincial administrative hierarchy. Similarly, the mining and mineral development sector remains a provincial subject.

Diversification will also require the provision of basic services and infrastructure. Entities such as the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA), Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited and the National Highway Authority are not answerable to the district government although their operations cover key areas related to development at the district level. The presence of the environment department through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also remains ambiguous. As far as the Galliyat belt is concerned, the merger of

the Galliyat Development Authority (GDA) with the Abbottabad Development Authority, and the resulting uncertainties regarding administrative authority, limit the role that such entities can be expected to play in the near future.

Finally, a number of critical issues pertaining to the armed forces are difficult to address through traditional linkages. Sooner or later, these matters will need to be tackled in order to optimise coordinated inputs that foster sustainable development.





PART II

Green Sectors





Agriculture and Horticulture

Most landholdings in the district are small and fragmented, capable of supporting only subsistence-level farming. At the same time, alternate avenues for employment and income generation have not been explored fully. This has led to rising poverty and increased pressure on a sector where significant expansion is not cost effective. Output indicators for the district are poor and have shown consistent recalcitrance despite a number of development interventions.

Abbottabad's farmers are exploited in a market that operates with little or no regulatory oversight. Robbed of a fair price for their produce, farmers' cash needs are further intensified by cumbersome credit extension procedures and high interest rates. Meanwhile, the poor condition of farm-to-market roads forces growers of perishable products to sell cheaply or risk even heavier losses. In most respects, the current system works against the interests of farmers who, according to some estimates, receive just 86% of the real value of their produce.

Only 35% of the district's total reported area is under cultivation, while a substantial 89% of this farmland is rain dependent. With a mere 11%

of agricultural land under irrigation and no prospect of dramatic improvement in the short term, water shortages are likely to remain a chronic problem. This in turn means that little can be done to increase the amount of land under agriculture in the foreseeable future. Acute water shortages also preclude the cultivation of water-dependent cash crops such as sugarcane and tobacco. As a result, the variety of grain, fruit, vegetable and fodder that may be cultivated in the area is limited.

Progress in the agriculture and horticulture sector is further constrained by poor extension support. With a mandate restricted to educating and motivating farmers, the agricultural extension department's contribution on the whole has been unremarkable. The department has failed to regulate the quality of inputs such as fertiliser and pesticide, which are subject to unchecked adulteration by private-sector dealers. Nor has any success been achieved in regulating the price of inputs or encouraging rational use.

The department lacks both the resources and technical expertise to cover the district's vast

and inaccessible rural areas. The reach of extension services is further curtailed by the fact that the department employs no female agriculture extension workers.

As major players in natural resource management activities at the household level, women are key clients for extension services. Traditional cultural norms prevalent in the district, particularly in rural areas, preclude women from interacting freely with men. The absence of female extension workers means that women are excluded from extension activities. Besides the obvious question of inequity, this is also a matter of concern on a different level: with women denied access to extension services, a valuable human resource and knowledge base is being wasted.

Insights derived from research initiatives in agriculture and horticulture are also squandered since no mechanisms are in place to incorporate such findings into everyday farming practices. Another missed opportunity, partly a result of the department's reluctance to adopt a participatory orientation, is its failure to establish meaningful



Abbottabad's farmers are exploited in a market that operates with little or no regulatory oversight.

linkages with stakeholders and coordinate its own work with key players in other sectors. The weakness of the extension component is compounded by the frequent creation and dissolution of parallel, sub-sector institutions such as the now-defunct Fruit and Vegetable Development Board and the Abbottabad Development Authority.

Sector-specific initiatives such as the Project for Horticultural Promotion and NRCP have not made a significant impact, while the Potato Research Centre failed to promote crop rotation. It introduced the improved Batakhundi seed variety which is exorbitantly priced, putting it out of the reach of ordinary farmers.

The net result of these factors is that although agricultural activity serves as the largest component of the district's economy, the sector in its present form has severely limited income-generating potential.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Evaluate new approaches such as off-season vegetable production; improved fruit and vegetable cultivars; the cultivation of new fruit, vegetable and cash crop varieties; farm forestry; floriculture; agroforestry; silvi-pastoral forestry; and fodder production.
 - Assess the status of key yield indicators by establishing an objective, validated database of statistics; examine current trends and determine the potential for future expansion in the sector.
 - Evaluate mechanisms to coordinate the work of natural resource-related departments, projects, NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) to improve the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of interventions.
 - Seek the involvement of the private sector, financial institutions and NGOs to arrive at a consensus on measures and interventions needed to promote sustainable development.
- Initiate public debate, most appropriately at the union council level, to discuss means to improve efficiency and address problems confronting the sector.
 - Launch farm forestry interventions, and promote nursery raising and kitchen gardening, in order to alleviate poverty by developing alternative avenues of income generation.

MEDIUM TERM

- Establish key indicators based on validated statistics and ensure that they are disseminated down to the lowest tiers of local government as well as agriculture department officials and farmers' groups. For each indicator, establish a baseline and set annual targets, assigning individual, collective and inter-/intra-departmental responsibility. This process is analogous to the 'management by objectives' approach employed in the corporate sector, principally as a determinant of career paths. The largely autonomous bureaucracy must be subjected to rigorous performance accountability, which is indispensable not only to achieve temporal targets but also to inculcate deeper attitudinal changes.
- Initiate capacity-building inputs for the agricultural extension department with regard to operational resources, mobility and coverage; awareness and understanding of the latest farming practices; capacity to transfer this knowledge to farmers; and employment prospects (the nexus with motivation). The department's supervisory role in monitoring the production and use of seeds/cultivars, pesticides, herbicides and fertiliser should be provided administrative and legislative cover.
- Involve projects and NGOs working in the sector, including the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), SUNGI Development Foundation, Project for Horticultural Promotion and Cabi Bioscience, to develop replicable models of the farmers field school approach as a tool for technology transfer.
- Seek innovative solutions to address chronic water shortages. Evaluate irrigation improvements by examining various water

harvesting techniques on a small scale, emulating and seeking technical assistance from organisations that have worked in this area such as the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (Nepal).

- Provide legislative cover for market regulation to protect the interests of farmers. Civil society vigilance can act as a catalyst, while participation from middlemen to rationalise the system will also prove useful.
- Actively pursue and formalise gender participation in natural resource management activities, which is already a de facto reality but has not been addressed systematically from the perspective of capacity enhancement.
- Initiate efforts at higher tiers to introduce changes in current credit extension policies, particularly with regard to removing procedural difficulties; providing male guarantors

for female borrowers; extending borrowing rights to NGOs; and supplying guidance to rural farmers in investment, record keeping and repayment schedules. Microfinance should be developed as a way to address poverty by opening up alternative avenues of income generation.

- Introduce new vegetable varieties and high-value fruits such as cherries, learning from initiatives in other regions, such as the Kalam Integrated Development Project in Swat. Seek the active involvement of NGOs and local communities in this effort.
- Introduce and promote crop rotation and farm planning, particularly given the success of similar initiatives elsewhere, such as in Nagri Bala (Galliyat), where wheat has been introduced as a second crop in single-crop areas.
- Begin indigenous production of quality



As a result of acute water shortages, little can be done in the immediate future to increase the amount of land under agriculture.

seeds and improved fodder varieties. Suitable pockets of farmland exist in many areas, including Bagh, Gorinee and Nathiagali, where cereal and vegetable seed production can be developed.

- Promote floriculture, an activity that is well suited to the district's temperate climate and carries substantial potential for future growth. The perfume industry and the demand for cut flowers in nearby Islamabad provide two immediate potential markets.
- Develop herb cultivation, particularly to fill the demand for natural medicines, as a possible alternative source of employment and income generation. The district's climate is ideally suited for this purpose and the area is already home to 43 varieties of herbs.

LONG TERM

- Continue evaluating progress and introduce punitive measures where shortfalls persist.
- Reinforce the use of indicators as a tool for accountability and transparency to improve governance. The hope is that this will help to develop both motivation and commitment, even if it is only as a means to retain employment.
- Shift the focus of agricultural activity from subsistence farming to a market-oriented approach. This will require capacity building, improved road access, market regulation, innovative land use, the establishment of cooperatives and support from the private sector.
- Seek ways to tap the sector's potential by introducing innovative practices such as step cultivation. Work towards achieving optimum gains by facilitating the appropriate use of agricultural chemicals and maintaining soil in croplands.
- Enhance food security by increasing disposable income, instead of single-mindedly pursuing self-sufficiency, which sometimes proves financially unjustifiable. Increasing disposable income will require that the district's economy is diversified. Eliminate inefficiency and waste by providing for adequate grain storage. Facilitate trade and communications to support these efforts.
- Liaise with the forest department to conserve rangelands and improve fodder availability. This step is particularly important if the agriculture sector's orientation towards cereal cultivation is to be changed and a balance is to be created in relation to fodder production. Lobby and network with the relevant quarters to reorient watershed interventions, shifting the focus from forestry to agriculture and fodder issues.
- Build on modern concepts such as integrated crop management and create capacity at various levels to implement new techniques based on these principles.
- Emphasise innovation and experimentation. Prioritise the dissemination of detailed knowledge on all inputs ranging from primary tillage to post-harvest techniques.



F Forests and Watersheds

The symbiotic relationship between people and forests can serve to address both conservation needs as well as economic concerns. But either through ignorance or because of the influence of vested interests, local communities, rightsholders and stakeholders have long suffered at the hands of arbitrary forest administrative policy that denies their rights, often in the name of conservation. Ironically, local communities have been alienated by the ‘policing’ mentality of the forest department while the timber mafia continues to operate with impunity.

Watershed management policy too has failed to recognise the importance of community participation. The element of trust has been eroded over the years and the people have come to feel alienated.

Under the NSSD framework, the conservation bias can no longer serve as an excuse to deny stakeholders their right to use natural resources. In its explicit recognition that trade-offs will be necessary, the NSSD paradigm opens up a space for rational resource use. In the case of Abbottabad, the challenge is to make sure that such trade-offs allow genuine stakeholders to benefit, while keeping other vested interests at bay.

FORESTS

Forests in Abbottabad cover some 20% of the total reported area of the district (KfW 2000) and account for 5.4% of the province's forest resources even though the district itself covers only 1.8% of the total land area of the province. Abbottabad's forests are demarcated in a number of ways, according to ownership, entitlement, management and jurisdiction, as well as functional status such as forest type and density.

The district's forests have been subjected to onslaughts from a variety of directions, including illicit felling, regeneration failure, progressive depletion, lack of continuity at the institutional level and the absence of participatory management. On the departmental level, pervasive corruption and lapses in oversight have meant that today as much as 45% of forest cover is severely depleted, standing at just 10–25% density, while a mere 28% of forest area supports a

density of 50%. The net result is that today the sector's potential to serve as a catalyst for sustainable development is doubtful.

Subjected to irrational and haphazard administrative interventions, the very existence of Abbottabad's forests is threatened. It is suspected that the true picture of the current state of forests is not fully known, largely owing to inaccurate data and unreliable interpretation.

Across the district, dependence on wood as a source of fuel is high. In the absence of affordable alternative fuels, 80% of the district's urban households and more than 90% of rural homes use wood-burning stoves. What is more, annual demand is growing at an alarming rate, spelling disaster for local forests.

The heavy reliance on wood necessitates imports while poorer households resort to illegal felling and collection, which further accelerates the pace of forest degradation. In Abbottabad's



Subjected to irrational and haphazard administrative interventions, today the very existence of Abbottabad's forests is threatened.

mountainous terrain, denudation has far-reaching implications, leading to natural disasters such as flooding and landslides.

In addition to 1,500 m³ of timber provided on permits annually, nearly the same volume of timber is taken illegally each year. Conservative estimates attribute the loss of 1,200 m³ annually to theft, largely at the hands of the timber mafia. Deforestation is accelerated by insecure tenure, poverty, population growth, inflated timber prices and politically expedient management priorities. Frequent bans on harvesting, the seigniorage fee controversy and only nominal participation in management activities by owners have led to widespread community disinterest in conservation. What is worse, such issues have in fact increased incentives to encash the resource, intensifying pressure on forests and encouraging local communities to resort to illegal harvesting.

Forests are a vital element of the conservation component in the sustainable development triad. At the same time, careful forest resource management can serve as a means to alleviate poverty. Indeed, the health of forests is closely tied to the social and economic welfare of communities. This crucial link has been repeatedly ignored by the concerned authorities and forest resources have instead been allowed to become severely depleted. At the very least, this administrative myopia illustrates ignorance on the part of forest officials who have failed to recognise that local communities have a key role to play in effective forest management.

The current forest management system is based on constantly changing working plans that focus on harvesting and marketing. Instead of implementing a viable, long-term forest regeneration regime, free and continuous grazing is permitted even in areas set aside for regeneration. This short-sightedness has damaged soil quality, decreased the availability of fodder palatable to livestock, harmed the ecosystem, threatened biodiversity and led to the onset of erosion. Cultivation on mountain slopes is threatened by excessive exploitation that leads to increased erosion and, consequently, to landslides and slips in the fragile

shale formations. The roads network has been expanded without conducting environmental impact assessments (EIAs), with the result that the impact of infrastructure development on forests remains unchecked. Without land use laws, encroachment cannot be controlled. Particularly in the case of *guzaras*, forests are increasingly being converted into grass *rakhs* (arable land) or even cleared to make room for construction.

Timber has always been the focus of forest management, with little or no attention paid to the development of non-timber forest products. This has meant that a potentially rich and renewable resource has remained untapped.

Progress in the sector is further hampered by incorrect and indiscriminate resin taping, fire hazards, a preservation rather than conservation orientation, the ineffectiveness of the Forest Development Corporation and the inability of government agencies to take on board communities, NGOs, rural women, CBOs and donors. Since forest management has not been devolved to the local level, coordination with other natural resource management sectors will prove difficult.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Determine the true status of forest cover and audit existing practices, particularly related to policing and non-participatory management. In this context, a consensual NSSD-supportive database will be critical to draw an accurate picture and devise remedial measures.
- Consider options for the development of social forestry to boost income generation, increase fuel wood supply, improve soils, support local industry, and protect the landscape and environment. Particularly since social forestry is a devolved subject, the district enjoys greater freedom to act in this sector. As such, social forestry should feature prominently on the agenda of sectors

that require development in order to mitigate resource depletion.

- Explore other natural resource management options such as agroforestry.
- Motivate and actively assist the forest department in cracking down on the illegal removal of timber including illicit felling that occurs under the garb of free timber grants. In this context, evaluate the Swat model, where trees are harvested once a year and transported to depots under forest department supervision.
- Target the current dependence on fuel wood by taking measures to promote efficient use and energy conservation. Introduce the use of energy-efficient stoves and promote the construction of energy-friendly buildings. Awareness raising and capacity building will be an integral part of this effort.
- Examine the option of expanding gas supply—both through cylinders and pipelines, and perhaps at subsidised rates—to reduce pressure on forests. While energy is not a devolved subject, and thus remains under the jurisdiction of the federal government, efficacious and innovative advocacy can lead to informed decision making by the concerned authorities.
- Add specific energy conservation clauses to land use planning and zoning laws currently under consideration.
- Seek compensation options for those affected by the creation of the Ayubia National Park and Qalandarabad game reserve.
- Approach the forest department to devise a consensual framework that facilitates the active involvement of local communities in park and reserve management, particularly with respect to monitoring.
- Support improvement felling in forests to finance the basic cost of forest management. This will enable forest communities to reinvest in natural resource management and will increase their sense of ownership of the resource.

MEDIUM TERM

- Streamline the formulation and implementation of working plans, taking the lead to change departmental practice.

- Influence lawmakers to enact area-specific legislation and amend existing statutes, to allow for a broad participatory managerial orientation.
- Lobby for natural gas supply to be extended to rural areas so that the current dependence on fuel wood may be reduced by the availability of an affordable alternative. Given the district's rugged terrain and the attendant logistical limitations, other options, such as the provision of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), and the use of solar power and wind energy, will also need to be examined.
- Use advocacy to target agroforestry, farm forestry and nursery raising interventions, so that increasing fuel wood supply is included in their efforts. Plant trees on marginal lands, particularly in areas categorised as cultivable waste, to mitigate the pressure on forest resources.
- Liberalise timber imports and support this move with oversight capacity, to increase the supply of wood at competitive prices.
- Take measures to close regeneration areas to grazing, with the cooperation of the forest department and the involvement of adjoining communities. Grazing rights should be determined according to the capacity of each area so that damage to soil and young seedlings is minimised.
- Lobby for the rights of local communities, focusing on protected forests which are yet to be demarcated, in order to pre-empt litigation and prevent encroachment or clearing for cultivation.

LONG TERM

- Create an enabling environment for the diversification of sources of wood supply. This will take the form of incentives to pursue farm forestry, agroforestry, nursery raising and community forestry, and include measures to cushion the mounting pressure on forest resources.
- Continue efforts to formalise entitlements and ensure continuity, with the aim of protecting community interests. Pursue statutory cover for such efforts so that the

reprehensible treatment accorded to local communities and the severe neglect of forests—and that too in the name of development and conservation—can never again be repeated.

- Ensure that various components of the sector are addressed in an integrated manner. For this to occur, the forest department must shed its policing mindset and all stakeholders must be included in a mainstreamed participatory managerial orientation. The interventions here will include measures to consolidate the participatory umbrella, not least by providing transparent administrative mechanisms, building capacity, advocacy and education, indicator tracking, rewards and/or punitive measures related to achieving targets and, last but not least, bridging the gulf that exists between the forest department and local communities over issues such as participatory management, rights and obligations.
- Explicate entitlement rights and ensure that they are backed by statutory cover, derived through consensus, to ensure continuity and leave no room for ambiguity.
- Devise a master plan integrating communities and the forest department, with special emphasis on women. The central thrust will be to consolidate and build on efforts to ensure the continued sustainability of the resource, but in a manner that addresses the financial needs of local communities and the principles of equity and grassroots management. The crux of this approach should be to deal with forest management through the symbiotic and mutually supportive perspective of (i) meeting the needs of communities for firewood and timber before harvesting for commercial or other purposes is carried out and (ii) managing forests to address biodiversity, ecological and tourism concerns.
- Build on the nexus between the forest department, local communities, NGOs and other stakeholders to improve the working of the department, so that a participatory orientation eventually becomes embedded in the managerial orientation of all natural resource management sectors.

- Actively promote forest restoration and regeneration practices to ensure the long-term survival of the resource. At the same time, initiate protective measures on a case-specific basis. Bring the 10,737 ha of non-designated forest cover under working plan management through a broad-based participatory process.

WATERSHEDS

Watershed programmes can serve as a means to mitigate environmental damage, particularly soil loss, which in Abbottabad amounts to 2.8 million t annually. Of the seven sub-watersheds occurring in Abbottabad district, only three are governed by regular watershed programmes. For the most part, initiatives in this sector have been arbitrarily determined.

Projects implemented in the district over the past three decades have been poorly planned, focusing on afforestation at the expense of rangeland issues. This tunnel vision is all the more dangerous today, given the wider plan to diversify the district's economy by means of dairy and livestock development, when fodder needs have in some ways become more important than afforestation.

Besides the emphasis on afforestation, the effectiveness of watershed programmes has been marred by the use of poor planting techniques, the choice of inappropriate species, and the onset of climatic extremes in the form of droughts and torrential rain. With insufficient attention to range rehabilitation and management issues, and cavalier inputs in areas such as soil conservation, fruit cultivation and pasture improvement, it is perhaps not surprising that watershed programmes have failed dismally.

Another reason for their failure is the fact that little attention has been paid to the needs of local communities. Biased land use concepts, attributable to the discretionary managerial control of the forest department, have been used to determine the focus of watershed management. This has resulted in the relentless pursuit of



Of the seven sub-watersheds occurring in Abbottabad district, only three are governed by management programmes.

converting grazing lands to forest plantations without proper needs assessments of local farmers or livestock, and has reinforced the common perception that such interventions are futile.

Watershed management efforts have also failed to recognise the benefits of participatory interaction with local communities. This has alienated area residents who, feeling exploited and mistreated, remain wary of the entire process. The element of trust, a key precondition for participatory management to succeed, has been damaged over the years with the result that watershed projects have failed to motivate communities or generate grassroots mobilisation. For any management plan to succeed in the future, this major stumbling block will need to be overcome.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Undertake an integrated, cross-sectoral and participatory audit of the orientation and direction of watershed initiatives, ostensibly through the forest department but with de facto leadership provided by the district government. Seek the participation of the agriculture department, the livestock and dairy development (L&DD) department, and local communities as well as civil society organisations. The aim will be to address environmental issues in tandem with economic and social concerns.

- Quantify and prioritise key issues to optimise the role of watersheds in the diversification of the economy. This will involve dialogue, networking and informal channels of influence, and will be formalised in partnership with the forest department. As a preliminary step, the Daur watershed will be targeted to ensure that a balance is achieved between agriculture, afforestation, soil erosion and fodder promotion.
- Target the problem of longstanding distrust between local communities and the forest department. Provide credibility and legitimacy to the process with the aid of the district government, union nazims and notables. Raise awareness by explaining to stakeholders the role of these initiatives in alleviating poverty, protecting the environment and ultimately achieving sustainable development.
- Pursue and motivate the forest department to develop working plans for the four sub-watersheds that are not yet covered.
- Through knowledge sharing and community insights, develop contingency plans to deal with unforeseen events such as droughts or torrential rains.

MEDIUM TERM

- Examine issues arising out of the sector audits conducted in the short term and raise these issues with the forest department.
- Use advocacy as well as informal channels to reorient departmental priorities in line with diversification plans.
- Move forward with rangeland rehabilitation and management, soil conservation interventions, pasture improvement, and fruit tree plantation.

LONG TERM

- Work to instil a culture of consultative, cross-sectoral management in handling watershed issues so that ownership and commitment are created, and continuity and efficacy are ensured. Since a certain degree of economic diversification is expected to have taken place by this stage, a participatory orientation will serve to incorporate the needs local communities into the development priorities of the district. It will also allow administrative authorities to benefit from indigenous knowledge.



Livestock and Poultry

In a region where subsistence-level agriculture is prevalent, livestock rearing and poultry farming become a crucial part of economic life, serving as a means to supplement household income. Both small-scale domestic and large commercial producers operate in Abbottabad, but few administrative, technical, marketing or financial incentives have been provided for this sector.

Neglect has resulted in chronic feed shortages, poor breed improvement and little or no knowledge of modern techniques. Road conditions in rural areas, the high cost of transport and volatile demand hinder expansion in the sector and lead to artificially depressed prices in the market. In the absence of participatory planning, support services for livestock and dairy production are far from satisfactory, with ad hoc or non-existent marketing facilities, capacity shortfalls in extension services and only nominally improved credit facilities.

LIVESTOCK

While the district's livestock population has grown, little effort has been made to address the rising demand for animal feed and other

husbandry inputs. Estimates regarding the scale of feed shortages vary, especially since sector-specific data is not available. Haphazard fodder crop output and the impact of nomadic herds on food supply make such calculations all the more difficult. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that severe feed shortages plague the sector and that the district's present output falls far short of current needs.

The quality of livestock extension services is poor overall and barely functional in remote areas, with an estimated coverage of merely 14% of all ruminant animals in the district. Run by the L&DD department and staffed largely by veterinarians, extension activities focus on breed improvement and health at the expense of improved production techniques. This veterinary orientation fails to address wider livestock-related issues, focusing narrowly on head counts.

Even in fields where the L&DD department does provide services, coverage and quality is poor. Breed improvement through artificial insemination is limited to three centres, with the result that coverage for cattle and buffalo is barely 2%, while locally produced semen has a conception rate of just 50%. Livestock drugs are

expensive and not easily available. Supply from veterinary research institutes is intermittent and inefficient, owing to the department's cumbersome procedural requirements. In Abbottabad as well as the province as a whole livestock husbandry suffers because established breeds of cattle and buffalo are not available locally, and must be imported from the Punjab.

Although women spend an estimated 20% of their working day on livestock-related activities, their access to new knowledge and the latest techniques in husbandry is severely limited. As in the case of agriculture, livestock extension services too are provided by males and social norms

in the district restrict women's interaction with them. The coverage of extension services is thin on the ground as a result of the inhospitable terrain, population dispersal and resource shortfalls.

Community involvement in husbandry is minimal, while public-sector services are sporadic and perfunctory, characterised by a top-down approach. As a result, knowledge of improved techniques and new technologies rarely filters down to the field level.

Boosted by recent government support for poverty alleviation through microfinance, credit availability is improving. But capacity limitations continue to exist and little has been done to simplify the process of credit acquisition. Administrative complexities are particularly hard on those most in need—small-scale rural milk producers.

While the district's livestock population has grown, little effort has been made to address the rising demand for animal feed and other husbandry inputs. Today, severe feed shortages plague the sector and livestock production falls far short of the district's needs.

As is the case with many areas, livestock issues cut across sectors. Watershed projects and rangeland management initiatives directly impact the functioning of the livestock sector, but programmes in those fields have consistently ignored this linkage.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Quantify the nature and extent of feed shortages, based on optimal rather than subsis-

tence needs. This analysis will serve as a prelude to developing cross-sectoral remedial measures. Establish indicators to address bottlenecks in the sector.

- Determine the balance that needs to be established between rearing a larger number of underfed animals and keeping comparatively fewer, better-nourished animals. This exercise will serve as an input for future planning, where a more scientific orientation will be promoted with greater stress on improving quality rather than quantity alone.
- Seek solutions to key husbandry issues, particularly the absence of indigenous established breeds, the inadequacy of insemination services and difficulties in acquiring medication.
- Examine alternatives to public-sector service delivery, seeking supplementary input through communities, NGOs and projects, as well as support from the private sector.
- Develop remedial interventions to improve the quality and scale of women's contribution to the livestock sector.
- Comprehensively audit capacity shortfalls across the board, covering government departments, local communities, producers, financial institutions and NGOs, with a view to devising remedial interventions.

MEDIUM TERM

- Examine the possibility of privatising breed improvement, animal health and other aspects of livestock extension. At the very least, seek greater non-governmental involvement and private-sector investment by providing financial and administrative incentives.
- Enhance the coverage of extension services, both in terms of area and the number of animals, and make use of modern technology, particularly for storage, transport and nutrition.
- Improve the efficacy of extension services by employing female extension workers.
- Provide cross-sectoral, multi-functional technical inputs to formulate a comprehensive marketing and production strategy so that market volatility, overproduction and

dumping no longer threaten the interests of producers.

- Through a participatory process, finalise a strategy to improve the working of the sector and lay the groundwork for implementation. Develop processes, systems and key indicators for monitoring progress. Incorporate lessons learned from similar initiatives undertaken elsewhere, such as that Jabba sheep farm in Mansehra, the SRSP's marketing of milk and dairy products in Haripur, and the Pattoki project in the Punjab.

LONG TERM

- Continue efforts to position the dairy industry as a central component of a diversified economy.
- Monitor progress on indicators, address fodder issues and redouble efforts to improve breed quality, output and animal health.
- Move towards a free-market orientation, limiting public-sector involvement to regulation and enforcement, and extend support to stakeholders.
- Consolidate and promote the dairy industry and its auxiliary components, particularly rangelands and fodder supply, as a means to address employment and income generation.
- Pursue community involvement to transfer greater control and responsibility to stakeholders.
- Employ and/or train women to disseminate information.
- Introduce new technologies adapted to local conditions to bring about an eventual change in administrative orientation.
- Promote the export of milk and dairy products to fuel expansion of the industry. Simultaneously address the need for quality control, packaging facilities, marketing, storage and transport, as part of a long-term move towards promoting exports. In this connection, World Trade Organization and International Organization for Standardization requirements will need to be incorporated into local practice.

POULTRY

Backyard poultry operations are part and parcel of the socio-economic fabric of the district, while commercial poultry operations are organised and run on a quasi-corporate basis. Along with Mansehra, Abbottabad is recognised as a national poultry centre and the two districts jointly house more than 60 breeder farms, 200 broiler farms and a large number of hatcheries.

With its favourable climate and proximity to major markets, Abbottabad is poised to become a major poultry exporter. The work already carried out by projects and NGOs needs to be supplemented with capacity development and public-private integration to provide support and inputs such as breed improvement, feed supply, disease control, scientific demand forecasting, marketing support and the use of advanced technology. With proper management and dissemination of technical expertise, this sector can revolutionise the district's economy and serve to alleviate the poverty of backyard producers. Before this can become a reality, however, a number of sector-specific issues will need to be addressed.

The market for poultry is characterised by volatility and substantial shifts in demand. Without modern tools for market analysis, producers are unable to devise appropriate responses to market changes, resulting in surpluses and shortages. With increasing consumer demand for fresh poultry, developing an accurate forecast and demand estimation mechanism is critical. While comparatively larger poultry concerns have devised their own marketing systems, marginal rural producers remain at the mercy of middlemen.

Although most poultry diseases have been brought under control, the Newcastle disease appears to be intractable. Meanwhile, the introduction of new breeds has brought leucosis to the indigenous poultry population. Disease control costs account for 10% of total output value, making this area a key target for remedial measures.

The supply of poultry feed is also an issue. Feed mills in the district currently operate at 80% capacity but manage to fulfil just 10% of local poultry feed requirements. The remainder is imported from the Punjab, substantially increasing operating costs.

The wider environmental impact of poultry operations also needs to be considered. The location of poultry farms in the middle of populated areas poses a serious threat to public health. No regulatory mechanism has been introduced to address this problem.

Broad improvements are required in the industry as a whole, as well as in specific areas such as quality control and disease prevention. While the efforts of NGOs and projects such as the SRSP and NRCP are commendable, private-sector involvement in the industry is now needed. Community involvement is equally important but this aspect has not yet been addressed.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Examine options to stabilise demand and curb supply fluctuations so that a modicum of predictability may be introduced into this volatile sector.
- Assess the scale of poultry feed shortages as a preliminary step towards initiating remedial interventions.
- Examine key issues such as disease control and breed improvement. Evaluate options for these services to be provided in tandem with the private sector, development projects, NGOs, local communities and commercial producers.
- Perform a comprehensive audit to develop statutory guidelines on poultry farm location. This evaluation can be tied in to proposed initiatives for land use planning and zoning.
- Improve the sector's functioning by addressing the issue of community involvement.

- Provide support to backyard poultry producers, particularly women, focusing on marketing assistance and disease control.
- Analyse the current system, characterised by the absence of coordination between line departments, NGOs, commercial private producers, projects and local communities, so that a coordinative mechanism can be developed.

MEDIUM TERM

- Provide extensive technical input for the formulation of a modern production and marketing plan, in order to mitigate volatile swings in demand and supply. Besides specialist input, all stakeholders need to be involved in the process. Build on the work of NGOs and projects, and provide capacity assistance.
- Improve credit availability and provide financial incentives for feed mills to fully utilise their production capacity.
- Introduce legislative cover to prevent inappropriate siting and relocate poultry operations that have been set up in unsuitable locations.

- Build the capacity of small-scale rural producers, particularly women, to improve efficiency in the sector.

LONG TERM

- Fine-tune, monitor and evaluate the outcomes of integrated marketing and production plans, particularly through the use of indicators.
- Enhance transparency, implement aggressive accountability and streamline implementation mechanisms.
- Continue to encourage and promote cross-sectoral coordination between the public and private sectors.
- Seek to maximise private-sector participation and limit public-sector administrative input to regulatory, enforcement and support functions, particularly in the area of technical expertise.
- Support cooperative marketing and capacity building at the village level so that small-scale rural producers are not overlooked in the effort to boost large-scale commercial operations.



Grazing Land and Fodder Reserves

Grazing land management is in large part a multi-disciplinary challenge. Issues affecting this sector are complex and carry far-reaching implications for a number of other areas. Despite its importance, the sector has been handled in a cavalier manner. No scientific studies have been carried out to assess the current status of the sector, while management has been handed back and forth between various government departments. Particularly in areas such as Abbottabad, where fertile land is scarce and under heavy pressure, this indifference serves as a scathing indictment of the public sector's technical capacity and managerial orientation.

The provincial forest department exercises control over most matters related to rangelands. At the same time, certain responsibilities lie with the agriculture department as well as the L&DD department. This lack of clear jurisdiction is a serious hurdle, particularly when coordinated efforts are required between departments. The fact that partial responsibility rests with a number of departments also means that rangelands do not receive priority attention from any single depart-

ment or entity. Not surprisingly, the district's rangeland cover, potential, stocking and carrying capacity, as well as the extent of degradation, remain unknown. Nor is any information available regarding natural meadows (grasslands), pasture lands (intensively managed grazing lands) and rangelands because these land use categories are not reported. Statistics for grazing capacity, forage production and crop residues are also inadequate.

Within the concerned departments, fodder production has always received low priority. The forest department focuses on afforestation while the agriculture department is primarily concerned with increasing the area under cultivation. This tendency is vividly illustrated by the experience of completed phases of watershed programmes, where fodder took a back seat to afforestation and land clearing. As a result, fodder production stands at a nominal 9,616 t, leading to chronic feed shortages, with a massive 75% shortfall for livestock alone.

The simplest technical and community issues related to rangelands have not been properly addressed, and options such as privatisation, leasing or community oversight were never explored. Most disturbing of all is the complete lack of information on potential, capacity, current state and area. The sector has been so badly neglected that the concerned departments have not even been able to arrive at a consensual definition for areas to be classified as rangelands. With capacity shortfalls in range-specific expertise, it is not surprising that department personnel lack credibility. At best, sporadic attention has been given to rangeland rehabilitation as part of ongoing watershed programmes, illustrating the deep-seated indifference to this sector.

This neglect is all the more shameful, considering that the importance of rangelands was officially recognised more than a decade ago in the NCS, which states that rangelands "need to be managed if optimum productivity is to be both achieved and sustained" (GoP and IUCN 1992: 179). The current state of rangelands in the district demonstrates the utter failure of concerned departments to live up to this commitment.

If government agencies have failed to make an impact, local communities have also been apathetic. This lack of concern, aggravated by widespread poverty, has served to quicken the pace of rangeland depletion. The involvement of women in rangeland management is only incidental, while private-sector input has never been treated as a serious option.

A few NGOs and projects initiated work to improve fodder production by planting high-yield, nutritious fodder varieties. These efforts were not sustained, with the result that farmers continue to rely on traditional fodder crops.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Evolve explicit coordination mechanisms to streamline management of rangelands and delineate jurisdiction.
- Vigorously pursue local jurisdiction over rangelands by initiating a dialogue with the concerned departments. Rangeland management should be delegated to the district, particularly since the proposed diversification of the economy gravitates around the livestock and dairy industry, which in turn depends on rangeland fodder resources.
- Reorient current approaches to develop a comprehensive planning framework backed by indicators, to address acute feed and fodder shortages.
- Increase fodder production through explicit interventions. All planning should emphasise community participation and seek inputs from projects and NGOs already working in the sector.
- Undertake innovative planning to mitigate the pressure on natural resources. The underlying philosophy of all short-term planning inputs should be to pursue every possible alternative and option.
- Use research findings to improve practices on the ground, introducing new crop varieties with high fodder value, increasing land

utilisation for fodder crops, practising rotational grazing and cultivating fodder trees.

- Improve vegetation cover by introducing controlled grazing, borrowing from techniques developed under the Malakand Social Forestry Project. Include the Tanawal area, one of three natural climatic divisions in the district, in immediate plans to develop livestock and fodder.
- Ensure that all work on plans, indicators and targets is undertaken with the aid of integrated inputs, and carried out in a participatory fashion. Involve the entire spectrum of stakeholders so that consensus can be achieved on proposed interventions. The fundamental criteria underlying all decisions should be to improve the welfare of the rural population while ensuring the sustainability of rangeland and fodder resources.

- Assign exclusive use of common grazing lands to local communities and make the communities themselves responsible for ensuring the ecological stability of such areas.
- Protect rightsholders and build on traditional resource-sharing arrangements between rightsholders and landowners.
- Seek the input of CBOs, women's organisations and other stakeholders on all planned interventions and remedial measures.

MEDIUM TERM

- Lobby for the devolution of rangeland management.
- Continue the twin effort of consolidating district-level administrative control over rangelands and approaching dairy, livestock,



At best, only sporadic attention has been paid to the rehabilitation of rangelands in the district.

poultry, rangeland and fodder development from an integrated perspective.

- In addition to tenurial, technical and management matters, address auxiliary issues such as livestock support pricing, marketing imperfections and compensation for producers who are required to make stock sacrifices in the interest of rehabilitating degraded rangelands. The potential for income generation here can help build motivation to protect rangelands.
- Establish linkages with SPCS initiatives in this sector, especially with regard to “preparing and implementing a project for the promotion of fodder and forages in NWFP agriculture” (GoNWFP and IUCN 1996: 146).
- Build the capacity of both public- and private-sector stakeholders. Concerned line departments must acquire competence in participatory techniques, ecology, livestock husbandry, agricultural economics, marketing, and feed and fodder development. The core thrust should be to view dairy production and livestock as an industry with the potential to serve as a catalyst in the diversification of the economy, rather than succumbing to the turf orientation that results from departmental thinking and administrative myopia.
- Continue to emphasise and monitor the contribution of the Tarbela-Mangla Watershed Management Project, particularly Phase II (2001–06). Evaluate its stated commitment to range and pasture activities, since 50% of its budget is earmarked for grasses and grazing lands.
- Address land use biases that have prevailed in the past and create synergies by establishing linkages with rangeland rehabilitation activities undertaken by the NRCP in the Galliyat area.
- Critically examine the successes and fail-

ures of previous efforts, particularly the BADP, and establish processes and mechanisms, supported by indicators, to promote accountability and mitigate the tendency to make perfunctory and cavalier interventions at substantial cost.

LONG TERM

- Pursue capacity inputs through community and private-sector initiatives to improve feed supply, maintain a grazing balance and facilitate the move to increased stall-feeding, as part of the effort to emphasise quality rather than quantity alone.
- Consolidate participatory management practices, and address the contingent capacity needs of both public- and private-sector players to support this new approach.

If government agencies have failed to make an impact on rangeland rehabilitation, local communities have also been apathetic. This lack of concern, aggravated by widespread poverty, has served to quicken the pace of grazing land depletion.

- Evaluate the impact of past initiatives to determine what was achieved, where failures occurred and what bottlenecks persist. Incorporate this learning into an annual evaluation exercise once the initial groundwork has been laid.
- Launch pilot projects in areas where significant change is required urgently, and apply lessons from these initiatives to future work in the sector.
- Undertake advocacy to highlight the importance of grazing lands in poverty alleviation. Mobilise local communities to understand this relationship and find ways to incorporate that understanding into their daily practice.

- Enforce existing land reform laws in areas where absentee landlords hold large tracts of rangeland, impeding effective management.
- Develop and undertake community-based revenue settlement for rangelands that lie in tribal-dominated areas, examining such issues as user rights and concessions.
- Consider the possibility of issuing rangeland management licenses to local communities. Cement this effort by forming livestock associations under existing laws or by enacting new legislation.



Biodiversity, Parks and Protected Areas

BIODIVERSITY

Unlike any other natural resource, biodiversity is the very essence of life. It is defined under the 1992 United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity as the “variability among living organisms from all sources”, and includes ecosystems as well as the ecological complexes of which they are a part (Article 2). Issues confronting this sector must be viewed in the larger context of our own survival.

In the wider effort to preserve this valuable resource, one step that may be taken is to designate protected areas. The Convention advocates the creation of a network of such areas in order to enable in situ conservation (Article 8). At the same time, it recognises the importance of achieving a balance between conservation priorities and the needs of communities living around protected areas.

In Abbottabad, biodiversity is threatened by the cumulative impact of over exploitation, habitat destruction from deforestation, land use conversion, soil erosion and excessive grazing. This threat, largely a product of mismanagement, is aggravated by a poor understanding of

the importance of biological diversity and its profound impact on all aspects of life.

Demographic trends and socio-economic conditions in the district have far-reaching consequences for the ecosystem. Population growth and poverty exert heavy pressure on natural resources. In the absence of land use planning, unregulated construction has been allowed to encroach on forests and habitats, even when they are located within the boundaries of protected areas. Traditional practices such as setting hillside catchments ablaze to facilitate grass growth also pose a serious threat to biodiversity, while recent droughts have made the land more susceptible to accidental fires.

Interventions in the past have failed to take into account their own impact on biodiversity. Exotic species such as the eucalyptus have been introduced to the area in order to accelerate short-term gains, without any serious analysis of the impact on native species in the long run.

Development activities in a number of sectors also pose a threat to biodiversity. The district's extensive roads network, constructed without recourse to EIAs, and the blasting and breaking up of wastelands on steep slopes, have led to soil erosion and the associated loss of biodiversity. Mining activities, spread over 4.8% of the total land area of the district, are conducted in a non-scientific manner and without oversight regarding their environmental impact. This has contributed to habitat loss and species displacement.

The poor performance of municipal authorities, whether through resource shortfalls or sheer negligence, also have a part to play in biodiversity depletion. In Abbottabad, inadequate sewage and solid waste disposal, and the practice of burning waste out in the open, have significant pollution impacts on the ecosystem.

Biodiversity conservation is hampered by the general lack of coordination between the concerned departments and agencies, and the absence of integrated interventions. The EIA regime has rarely, if ever, been enforced and this trend is likely to persist in the absence of a

custodial agency for biodiversity protection. Use base limits for key wild species have not been determined and no applied research has been carried out. The threat to biodiversity is exacerbated by the fact that inter-provincial trans-boundary reserves have not been set up.

With only nominal advocacy support, the key role of biodiversity has not been properly communicated. As a result, biodiversity is often viewed as an exotic and arcane issue with little or no practical implication. Despite its central role in conservation and ecological stability, and its vulnerability to negative impacts from activities in a diverse range of sectors, biodiversity has been addressed primarily as an adjunct to natural resource management and conservation. No formal plan for biodiversity protection has been developed.

This neglect has also meant that the district's biodiversity has never been systematically audited or analysed. Consequently, little information is available on fauna, flora, habitats and species diversity in the region. Abbottabad is home to three of the 12 habitats identified in the NWFP (Roberts 1977), none of which has been systemically investigated. Similarly, scant information is available regarding endangered species and few research inputs have been forthcoming. Given the lack of information, it is not surprising that knowledge about the sector is poor. The absence of data and lack of knowledge seriously impede realistic planning.

Biodiversity issues need to be viewed in the long term. Isolated interventions can only address surface symptoms rather than root causes. This understanding needs to be incorporated into all planned interventions. In this connection, awareness raising on a massive scale will be required to enlighten stakeholders, the concerned agencies and local communities. On the administrative level, it will be necessary to ensure continuity in policy and long-term institutional support at all levels. At the same time, cross-sectoral partnerships and community involvement will need to be developed. These efforts will have to be backed by biodiversity-specific legislation and widespread reform.

The complexity of the task is daunting. As the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation has learnt through its own experience, what is needed besides macro framework reform to create a functional policy and implementation milieu is to synchronise changes in order to bring management options and current political and decision-making processes into

PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS

The NWFP Wildlife (Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Management) Act 1975 provides for the creation of various categories of protected areas. In Abbottabad, two such areas



Demographic trends and socio-economic conditions have far-reaching consequences for the ecosystem.

compatibility (SDC 2000). Communication, training and information dissemination on an ongoing basis; institutional building; and integrated and participatory interventions are also important.

The management of biodiversity in the district is far from satisfactory. Measures taken so far have either violated or failed to address the key causes of biodiversity loss, as explicated in the Convention on Biological Diversity: (i) inequity in ownership, management, and flow of benefits from use and conservation of biological resources; (ii) deficiencies in knowledge and its application; and (iii) legal and institutional systems that promote unsustainable exploitation of biological resources.

have been declared: the Ayubia National Park and the Qalandarabad game reserve. As a result, some 6% of the district's total land area is protected, at least on paper. In addition to notified protected areas, forest covering 127,449 acres is also provided protection and management. The problem is that management plans focus on ecosystem diversity, with only a small component devoted to species diversity protection and completely ignoring genetic diversity within species. Moreover, all ecosystems, habitats, species and landscapes are not covered under the existing system.

The SPCS notes that protected areas in the NWFP do not actually protect wildlife or habitats, nor do they serve any other significant pur-

pose. This is equally true for Abbottabad, where no management or enforcement mechanisms exist and the impact of scientific research and education programmes is negligible. The poor capacities of the concerned custodial departments exacerbates the situation.

In general, parks and reserves have been handled in perfunctory manner, using a 'conservation-in-isolation' approach. Protected areas have been declared arbitrarily through administrative fiat rather than in consultation with local communities who depend on such areas for their survival. Nor have matters such as benefit sharing and decentralised control over management ever been seriously considered. This has served to alienate local communities, whose input and participation is vital to promote conservation. No attempt has been made to compensate communities affected by the declaration of protected areas or to provide them with alternative sources of fuel. Without compensation, it is difficult to see how local communities will support changes in the land use regime.

Instead of working together with local communities, protected areas management has been characterised by a policing approach. Poor administrative oversight, and the absence of land use planning, are problems that affect all sectors including protected areas. Unchecked construction of houses and hotels is under way in the vicinity of the Ayubia National Park, negating the very purpose for which the area was designated.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Carry out a comprehensive audit and compile an inventory of genetic, species and ecosystem diversity, building on work already undertaken by various agencies.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of the manner in which threats to biodiversity can be addressed, principally from the point of view of the large number of departments directly or indirectly involved with this subject.
- Formulate an explicit coordinative mechanism, ensuring the participation of NGOs and local communities, to establish 'SMART' (specific, measurable, attainable, reliable, time-bound) indicators to help set goals and achieve targets for the sector.
- Use capacity building, advocacy and communications to raise awareness about biodiversity and improve understanding among stakeholders.
- Ensure continuity in policy and institutional support at all levels, and work to increase cross-sectoral partnerships as well as community involvement.
- Evaluate statutory support, biodiversity-specific legislation and measures to reform the macro framework.
- Create a conducive milieu for dependent rural communities to participate in biodiversity conservation. Ensure the sustained political will and commitment of implementing authorities.
- Enforce the EIA regime, making it mandatory for all development projects to undergo an assessment prior to implementation. Mass awareness campaigns and communication exercises are suggested as immediate steps in this context.
- Address aquatic diversity, particularly in view of the economic potential of developing fisheries.
- Undertake a comprehensive survey of parks and reserves already created to assess shortcomings with regard to community management and compensation.
- Ensure that land use planning and zoning legislation is enacted. Examine the trade-offs that will be required to check encroachment in areas like the Ayubia National Park and the Qalandarabad game reserve as well as the ecologically rich Galliyat area.
- Establish linkages with the federal government's proposed Biodiversity Action Plan and the SPCS's NWFP Biodiversity and Protected Areas Action Plan, as well as relevant academic and technical research agencies.
- Fully utilise local resources while seeking top-up funds from donors, including the Global Environment Facility and the United

Nations Development Programme. Abbottabad's unique biodiversity wealth is well known and resource availability should not be a major hurdle.

MEDIUM TERM

- Finalise an inventory of the district's flora and fauna, developing definitions, concepts and methodology through consensus.
- Complete an inventory of species types, diversity and habitats, including the conservation status of all species.
- Comprehensively document indigenous and traditional ecological practices related to biodiversity and natural resource management.
- Develop a master plan for biodiversity, ensuring input from the widest possible range of sources including local communities, line departments, academia, research organisations, NGOs, women, donors, external specialists, elected representatives, higher tiers of government and similar interventions in other districts.
- Establish baseline indicators and set targets for biodiversity protection. Assign clear implementation roles to key players, backed by monitoring and accountability mechanisms.
- Address in an integrated, cross-functional, multi-sectoral manner the indirect threats to biodiversity which are common to all natural resource management activities. These include overfishing, excessive hunting, habitat destruction, deforestation, land conversion, soil erosion, overgrazing, unregulated mining, indiscriminate siting of poultry operations, large-scale infrastructure projects and indiscriminate construction.
- Identify specific capacity-building needs and technical input requirements. Set targets and examine possibilities for interventions. This exercise should cover all stakeholders and implementing components.
- Examine the long-term efficacy of in situ protection based on the experience of managing the Ayubia National Park and Qalandarabad game reserve. This assess-

ment should include a critical examination of protected areas legislation to assess its adequacy and effectiveness, particularly with regard to formal management plans, enforcement, and the protection of wildlife and habitats.

- Promote an understanding that biodiversity and protected areas are vital economic entities that can directly and indirectly enable poverty alleviation. Large-scale advocacy, public consultations and debate can be employed as catalysts in this context.
- In conjunction with an in situ approach, evaluate possibilities of ex situ conservation through measures such as establishing seed and gene banks, maintaining pure-bred livestock varieties and the captive breeding of wild species.
- Provide training inputs through international and local resources to increase knowledge and expertise in the sector. The gains achieved here should ultimately filter down to the community level to ensure optimal benefits.

LONG TERM

- Evaluate technical and capacity-building needs, and pursue the necessary interventions on an ongoing basis.
- Critically examine the success or failure of cross-sectoral coordination and integrated management. If the existing mechanisms and processes are found lacking, consider the option of establishing a custodial agency for biodiversity conservation and protected areas.
- Pursue the active involvement of NGOs, projects and line departments, and continue lobbying to enhance the management of biodiversity and protected areas.
- Extend the boundaries of existing protected areas and demarcate new areas so that the widest possible range of ecosystems, habitats, species and landscapes is provided statutory cover. In line with SPCS commitments, extend the protected areas network to 10% of the district's total area.



Fisheries

An estimated 117 km of rivers and streams run through Abbottabad district. In terms of management, the focus has been on drinking water concerns rather than aquatic resource development. As a result, the potential of these water bodies to sustain fisheries has yet to be systematically explored. Current output in the sector is minimal.

Habitat protection has not been addressed, enrichment is not a priority and indifference to the fisheries sector is pervasive. Little has been done to check the discharge of dangerous effluents and untreated waste into water sources, which not only undermines water quality but also threatens the very existence of fish species. Similarly, the absence of land use planning, coupled with accelerated urbanisation and population growth, have transformed some streams into virtual municipal sewers.

It is not just on the administrative level that fisheries have been neglected. In the absence of advocacy and promotion, community involvement in management is poor, accompanied by a widespread lack of awareness regarding the value and sustainable use of this resource.

Developments in other sectors have also impacted fisheries in the district. Water shortages aggravated by droughts and the excessive focus

on expanding drinking water coverage throw into doubt the capacity of the district's freshwater resources to sustain pisciculture. Meanwhile, legislative protection for the sector exists only on paper.

It is ironic that while fish is a popular food item locally, the industry is so poorly developed that local demand must be met with imports. The district's fisheries and aquatic potential needs to be systematically studied, with a view to developing these resources as components of a diversified economy.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Carry out a comprehensive audit of the district's fisheries resources with a view to assessing the potential for future development. Perform limnological analyses of all water bodies to determine the current status of aquatic resources and facilitate medium-term habitat rehabilitation interventions. Extend to the provincial wildlife, forest and fisheries department the requisite capacity to undertake this exercise.
- Address the overwhelming pressure of pollution and its impact on aquatic resource deterioration and biodiversity loss.
- Abolish cruel and destructive fishing methods such as the use of poison and explosives.
- Review fish and aquatic resources from the twin viewpoint of economics and conservation. Create a management plan that will cater to both aspects simultaneously.
- Protect aquatic resources from encroachment and pollution, and ensure that harvesting is carried out sustainably.
- Ensure that community awareness and participation permeates all inputs in the sector.

- Pursue private-sector involvement in the sector and examine the feasibility of establishing commercial fish farms.

MEDIUM TERM

- Use limnological analyses as baseline inputs to develop a management plan for fisheries. This data will serve as the basic structure on which indicators as well as specific interventions can be based.
- Enrich aquatic resources on a site-specific basis through species introduction, habitat rehabilitation and protection. Such measures should be taken in a participatory manner and local communities should be allowed to share in the economic benefits.
- Provide institutional strengthening inputs to the fisheries department to cover technical knowledge, policy support, procedures and mechanisms conducive to sustainable development.
- Seek technical and resource inputs from NGOs, development projects and donors to conserve fisheries resources and aquatic biodiversity.
- Promote the income-generation potential of the sector.
- Ensure that area-specific interventions are guided by the natural capacity and potential of individual water bodies. For instance, conditions in high-elevation water bodies favour trout culture while semi-cold

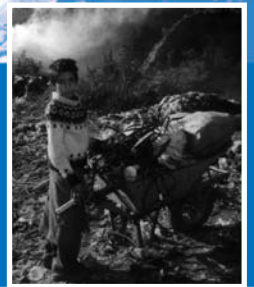
It is ironic that while fish is a popular food item in Abbottabad, the industry is so poorly developed that local demand must be met with imports.

waters are better suited to carp, particularly species like the *masheer*. Trout development should be concentrated in fish farms, given the fact that this species is unusually amenable to thriving in controlled conditions. The existence of numerous small streams originating from springs provides an opportunity to adopt a

microenterprise approach to developing the sector.

LONG TERM

- Review progress in the implementation of various interventions. This exercise should include measuring progress against established indicators, and examining the efficacy of legislative support as well as existing processes and mechanisms.
- Encourage community involvement in a variety of areas ranging from oversight to management and ownership, providing institutional support, marketing assistance and financial incentives.
- Re-negotiate the terms of the 1894 agreement under which the district is bound to supply 280,000 g of water daily to Murree. This arrangement must be revised to mitigate widespread local resentment and provide additional water resources that can be used for fisheries development. This is a policy matter that will require prolonged lobbying and negotiations with higher tiers, involving two provinces as well as the federal government.
- Intensify efforts to tap the potential for pisciculture in an integrated manner, supplemented by capacity-building inputs and modern technology.
- Motivate donors and projects already active in various natural resource management activities to enter the fisheries sector.
- Provide support for habitat rehabilitation and enhancement using the latest technology and research findings.
- Address the contribution of the fisheries sector to activities in areas such as tourism and explore cross-sectoral synergies.





PART III

Brown Sectors



Mining

Mineral development is awarded low priority throughout the NWFP. As such, it is not surprising that Abbottabad's achievements in the sector are unimpressive. Despite the district's abundant mineral reserves, total output in 1999–2000 stood at 106,701 t of which soapstone and limestone accounted for 84%.

Initiating district-level mining interventions is complicated by the fact that responsibility for the sector remains under the jurisdiction of the provincial government. The SPCS committed to evolving and implementing a detailed strategy for mineral development across the province (GoNWFP and IUCN 1996: 149–51, 154) but little progress has been made in this direction.

The fact that minerals are a non-renewable resource means that mining is ultimately an unsustainable activity (GoP and IUCN 1992: 205). This aspect alone makes it incumbent on those responsible for managing the sector to ensure careful use, which in turn depends to some extent on the quality of information and planning. To date, the non-renewable aspect of this resource has not been acknowledged, with the result that issues such as minimising wastage and optimising recovery have not been addressed.

Although some legislation exists to regulate activity in the sector, implementation and enforcement mechanisms are lacking. Mining is in many respects one of the most hazardous industrial occupations, posing a threat to both human health and the environment. Yet the sector operates largely without regulation. Open pit and underground mining practices in the district have a devastating effect on the ecosystem as well as on the lives of communities that are displaced. Extraction methods currently in use, such as blasting and drilling, are crude and no attention is paid to selecting appropriate sites or rehabilitating these areas once mining has been completed. Perhaps most important of all, the EIA regime is not enforced, resulting in long-term irreversible damage to the environment.

Workers' health and safety is another major concern. Technically the responsibility of the Inspectorate of Mines, Directorate General of Minerals and Mines, oversight mechanisms exist merely on paper. Scant attention has been paid to serious issues concerning the sector such as training and orientation; safe working conditions and protective gear for workers; proper handling of hazardous materials; exposure to toxic gasses, dust and debris; and emergency measures. Also excluded from the ambit of regulation is the cumulative effect of various harmful chemicals, and human exposure to hazardous materials in excess of acceptable limits. Meanwhile, legislation applying to mining licenses is rarely enforced and the economic interests of leaseholders dictate most decisions.

The devolved system of local government does not provide for an environmental administrative component. Without the regulatory presence of an EPA office in the district, the pollution and environmental impacts of mining cannot be monitored or evaluated. Indeed, it seems that little can be done to regulate mining at the district level.

Given the district's mineral wealth, mining has the potential to serve as a key component in a diversified economy. But the trade-off between economic benefits and environmental damage will need to be carefully examined. In the current climate, this is likely to be difficult: developing the

legal and institutional frameworks required to promote more responsible mining practices lies beyond the district's resources and jurisdiction; expensive but comparatively safe exploratory techniques are not a district-level input; technical training, on-site inspection and enforcement of existing legislation are resource-intensive challenges; and coordination with provincial and external experts has proven difficult.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Audit the district's mineral resources. The array of tools available for this purpose include exploratory drilling, seismic logging, structural mapping and satellite imagery.
- Negotiate some degree of power in favour of the district government, particularly with regard to oversight, compliance and revenue sharing.
- Use data gathered from the audit to begin preparation of a district master plan for mining.
- Address critical issues including health hazards, workers' welfare, training and enforcement of the EIA regime, as well as adherence to responsible mining practices.
- Establish a district-level EPA office to monitor and evaluate pollution impacts such as water contamination, dangerous emissions, noise and dust, as well as habitat destruction.
- Consider immediate steps to use the licensing mechanism as a stopgap measure to mitigate the more severe adverse impacts of mining activities. The conversion of prospecting licenses to developmental and mining licenses must be undertaken strictly in line with established procedure.
- Upgrade the oversight powers of the inspectorate of mines with respect to the monitoring and implementation of safety regulations under the Mines Act 1923.

MEDIUM TERM

- Develop a policy for efficient resource extraction to curb wastage, stem the whole-

sale destruction of mined areas, maximise recovery and minimise harmful impacts.

- Pursue alternative scheduling to address eventual resource exhaustion.
- Establish annual indicators to check wild fluctuations in output and enable production sequencing. For this purpose, seek the participation of all stakeholders including the Sarhad Development Authority for the closed Kakul phosphate mine and the Lagarband–Tarnwai phosphate deposits, the Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation for magnesite at Kumhar, private concessionaries for soapstone and limestone, and other parties in smaller mineral types.
- Make the EIA a mandatory requirement for all new licenses as well as license renewal. For large-scale projects, strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Provide legislative cover for these measures and address enforcement issues.
- Formulate indicators to establish baseline and target standards for activities such as efficient extraction, safe transport, prescribed closure and safe disposal of waste products so that the adverse impacts of mining activities may be minimised.
- Develop safety indicators and baseline standards in areas such as handling hazardous materials, protective gear and worker safety. This should be supplemented by requisite training, facilitated by institutions such as the International Labour Organization, to provide some degree of protection to mine workers.
- Encourage private-sector involvement to bring abandoned mining projects back online.

- Pursue options to develop local manufacturing based on indigenously produced raw materials. The greater the value addition, the more significant the economic benefits that will accrue to the district.

LONG TERM

- Pursue the devolution of authority and control over mining. Joint control in areas such as oversight, master plan implementation, accountability via indicators, EIAs, and adherence to environmental, safety and health regulations should remain a workable option.
- Lobby and negotiate with principal stakeholders to optimise output, particularly in the case of minerals with known deposits such as phosphate and magnesite.
- Evaluate the establishment of downstream activities, such as industrial units based on indigenous mineral resources, to alleviate poverty and generate employment.
- Continue geological and exploratory studies to identify the district's mineral potential. Planning to maximise extraction should be part of an updated master plan for the district.
- Pursue linkages with the SPCS commitment to formulate and implement detailed strategies for mining to create synergies and enable informed decision making. Also pursue linkages with the NCS, particularly its recent MTR, to benefit from the expertise and insights afforded by this broader vision.
- Aim for a gradual shift towards sustainable principles so that better mining systems and processes can be developed. In the long run, community participation and public-private partnerships should become dominant features of activities in this sector.



E nergy

Wood is the primary source of cooking fuel in the district, used largely in rural areas where natural gas is not supplied in sufficient quantities. This intensifies pressure on forest resources, stepping up the pace of denudation and damaging regenerative capacity. Although Abbottabad imports fuel wood to meet current demands, this arrangement is poorly managed. Meanwhile, theft and illegal felling are widespread, partly owing to poverty.

Electricity from the national grid is said to cover 75% of the district, but estimating rural supply is difficult in the absence of uniform reporting systems. Compounding the problem here is the fact that power losses attributed to theft are as high as 22.2%. With respect to hydroelectricity, exploratory work by the Sarhad Hydel Development Organization (SHYDO) has been patchy, while development efforts are marred by the absence of coordination between SHYDO, WAPDA, and the Pakistan Council for Renewable Energy and Technology.

Alternative fuel sources are scarce and expensive. LPG and kerosene are available but costly, putting them out of the reach of the rural poor. Solar power, wind energy and biogas technologies, meanwhile, have not been properly explored.

Nor have advocacy efforts been made to promote efficient use, with the result that there is little or no public awareness about fuel conservation measures, such as building energy-efficient structures or using fuel-efficient cooking devices. Success in achieving fuel efficiency, introducing new technologies and changing fuel use habits depends in large part on convincing women of the long-term ramifications of adopting these innovations.

Situated at the crossroads of major highways, the district witnesses substantial transit traffic. Meanwhile, diesel use is on the rise, aggravating pollution. Attempts to mitigate some of this negative fallout by encouraging transporters to convert to compressed natural gas (CNG) are gaining momentum, although availability in remote areas remains a limiting factor.

The country's energy dilemma is best summed up in the NCS which states that "Pakistan has the worst of both worlds: it is energy-poor and energy profligate" (GoP and IUCN 1992: 207). In the case of Abbottabad district, the problem is exacerbated by the area's dependence on the national grid, the absence of indigenous generation capacity, poor coverage of gas pipelines and the high price of cleaner fuels.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Initiate a comprehensive, multi-sectoral, participatory effort to devise a district-level plan for the energy sector. The focus should be on pursuing alternative fuel sources, increasing indigenous capacity to cater to local fuel demand and undertaking advocacy efforts to increase civil society awareness about efficient fuel use.
- Encourage fuel conservation, promote the use of fuel-efficient heating and cooking devices, and ensure that fuel-efficient buildings are constructed.
- Liaise with the Pakistan Council for Appropriate Technologies, research institutions, academia, donors, NGOs, line depart-

ments and the private sector to pursue hydroelectricity development. One such initiative undertaken by SHYDO in collaboration with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for Technical Assistance), on a 150 kW microhydel power plant at Haro Nullah was abruptly terminated.

- Pursue the use of alternative technologies such as solar energy and wind power. Biogas production can be developed by planting fast-growing tree species in wastelands, although this move will need to be balanced with the district's fodder requirements.
- Promote the use of LPG and address the twin factors of cost and availability.
- Initiate systematic, long-term lobbying to increase the supply of natural gas to rural areas which currently rely heavily on fuel wood.
- Initiate a mass awareness and oversight effort, in partnership with the Peshawar Electricity Supply Corporation, NGOs, civil society and elected officials at all levels, to curb power theft and illegal electricity connections.
- Explicitly address the use of processed fuel, especially in light of the increasing use of diesel. Improve CNG availability and initiate a mass awareness and advocacy campaign to promote conversion to CNG.
- Address the issue of transit traffic pollution by evaluating various remedial measures including the imposition of an environmental levy on the 'polluter pays' principle. In this context, initiate ambient air monitoring, starting with urban centres of the district, to develop an inventory for noise, carbon dioxide, sulphur oxide and nitrous oxide emissions. Promote the use of punitive measures to check violations of the National Environmental Quality Standards in consultation with the EPA.
- Examine the use of coal, particularly bracket coal by the army, in a participatory effort aimed at finding more acceptable trade-offs.

MEDIUM TERM

- Reduce rural dependence on wood by making economical alternatives available and



Dependence on fuel wood intensifies pressure on forest resources, stepping up the pace of denudation and damaging regenerative capacity.

improving coverage of pipeline gas supply in these areas.

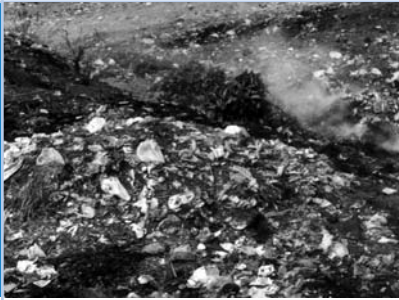
- Increase the off-forest supply of fuel wood by promoting farm forestry, social forestry and nursery raising; planting multiple purpose trees and fast-growing species in wastelands; and providing afforestation inputs. In this context, strengthen partnerships with rural communities, NGOs already in the field, CBOs, research institutions, projects, donors and the private sector.
- Eliminate wastage by 'greening' construction and promoting fuel-efficient cooking devices.
- Incorporate a energy code for buildings in land use planning and zoning interventions.
- Explore the use of solar cookers and solar geysers.
- Seek the involvement of rural women who are the principal collectors and users of fuel wood.

LONG TERM

- Assess progress on key initiatives taken in the short and medium term, including

expanding the supply of non-forest fuel wood; developing alternative fuel wood sources; and promoting fuel conservation, particularly in relation to fuel-efficient cooking and heating devices.

- Extend piped gas coverage, particularly in rural areas.
- Tap local energy sources by setting up microhydel power plants, developing solar energy, establishing biogas plants, employing wind power and building water mills.
- Promote the construction of fuel-efficient structures and introduce building codes to enforce compliance.
- Build the capacity of stakeholders, particularly in relation to expertise in alternative fuel technologies.
- Determine the extent to which LPG and gas cylinder use has increased, to identify bottlenecks.
- Assess the impact of transit traffic on pollution, particularly in urban areas. Gauge the efficacy of punitive measures introduced in order to identify gaps and launch additional interventions.



Waste Water and Solid Waste Management

It goes without saying that waste management is imperative for public health and is also a key indicator of quality of life. Proper waste management impacts other sectors as well, most notably tourism. Although district- and town-specific statistics are not available, sanitation coverage is poor on a national basis, extending to barely 30% of the total population (WB 2000: 287). Across the board, municipal authorities are cash-strapped, and chronically short on manpower and equipment. In Abbottabad, nearly 90% of the funds of the Abbottabad and Havelian town authorities is used to pay salaries, leaving close to nothing for other operational expenses. Financial constraints, coupled with inadequate capacity, lack of oversight and the apathy of local communities, allow for little hope regarding tangible improvements in the near future.

Ironically, the impact of tourism on waste management is also becoming a problem. While on the one hand the area is less attractive to tourists because of poor sanitation, tourists themselves add to the problem by increasing pressure on the already fragile municipal services.

In terms of administration, difficulties are bound to arise with the devolution of local government currently under implementation. Arriving at a consensus about planned initiatives will be complicated by the presence of three embryonic town authorities with more or less exclusive jurisdiction in their respective areas.

Ultimately, solutions to waste management issues are only possible over the long term, involving considerable investment, technical expertise, manpower and information management, as well as behavioural change in domestic and institutional practices.

WASTE WATER

The SPCS notes that in the NWFP, “proper sewerage networks, drainage systems, and waste water treatment facilities are completely lacking in the cities” (GoNWFP and IUCN 1996: 116). Rural areas are even more poorly equipped to deal with waste water disposal, although the negative impact here is mitigated to some extent by a dispersed population residing in scattered habitations. In Abbottabad’s urban areas, however, the problem is critical. Households discharge waste directly (as sullage) or indirectly (as settled sewage) into *nullahs* (open drains) that run through residential areas, posing serious health risks to inhabitants. Similar practices are adopted by hospitals, hotels, restaurants and small business in Abbottabad, Havelian and even Nathiagali. Illegal townships that have sprung up as a result of increasing urbanisation put additional pressure on already fragile municipal services.

The waste disposal infrastructure is no longer able to cope with this pressure. In many areas sewage is allowed to collect in open ponds, posing a grave danger both to human health and the environment. Leakage is a common problem with sewage lines, unlined drains and septic tanks, allowing waste water to percolate into the soil and contaminate shallow aquifers which serve as the principal source of drinking water for the local population. Beyond the immediate health impacts, the current system of handling waste

water disturbs aquatic ecosystems, depletes aquatic resources, affects the agricultural use of surface water and pollutes the natural drainage system (GoNWFP and IUCN 1996: 116).

Even where dedicated facilities exist for waste water treatment, these are either insufficient in terms of capacity or lying disused. Bypassing its own treatment plant, the Ayub Medical College and Hospital Complex (AMC) discharges 18,000 g/hr of untreated water into the Daur river, which is used by communities further downstream for irrigation and drinking. The Jougni treatment plant in Nawanshehr is not in operation.

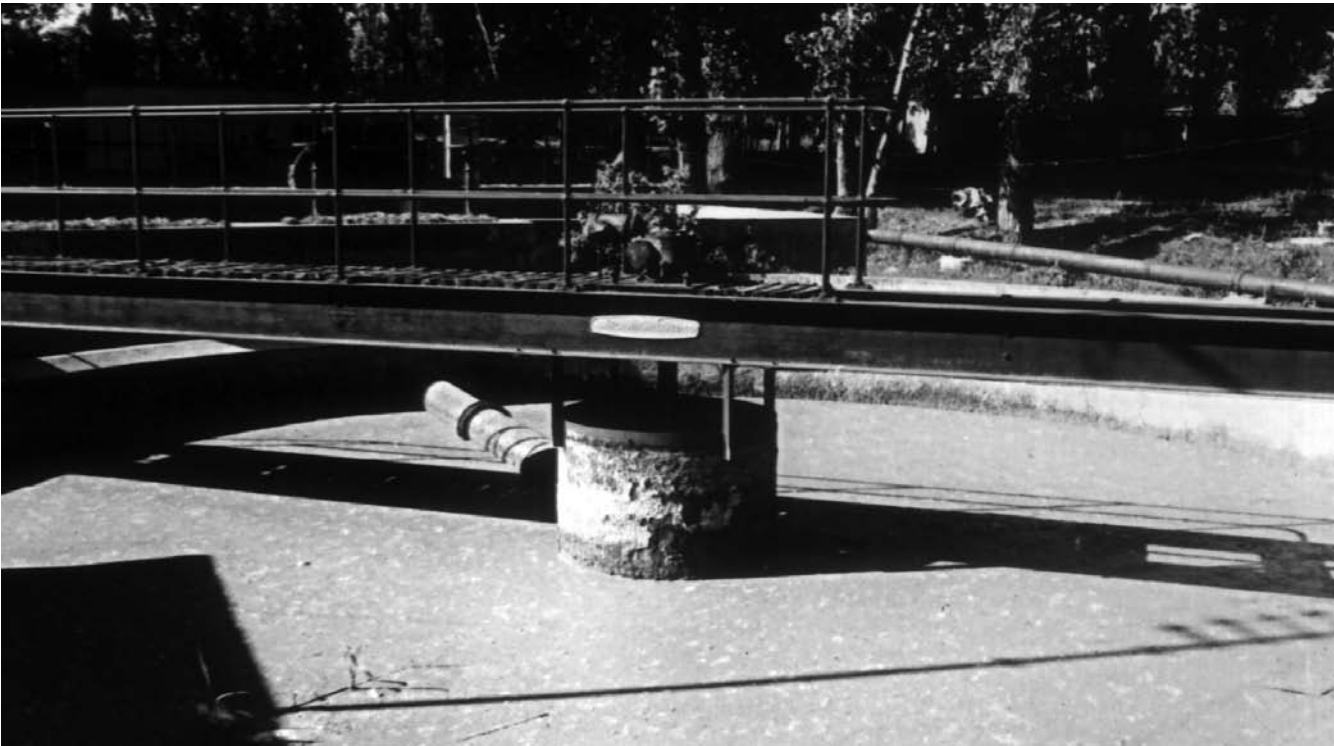
What is perhaps most disturbing of all is the fact that in urban areas this heavy pollution arises mainly from domestic users, and establishments such as hospitals, hotels and businesses. With no significant industrial activity to speak of, Abbottabad’s waste water disposal system is already close to collapse. If industry were to be developed in the district, it is difficult to see how the existing system would be able to cope with the additional pressure.

According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 25–30% of all gastrointestinal diseases and 60% of infant deaths are attributable to water borne infections and parasites (cited in GoP and IUCN 1992: 179). The cross-sectoral impact of poor public health is spelled out in this study, which shows that illness causes massive losses to the economies of developing countries. In Pakistan, the situation is expected to be similar, if not worse. For a district such as Abbottabad, where economic development is the priority, losses caused by preventable disease are likely to be a major stumbling block to future progress.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Examine key issues related to the discharge of effluent, and assess their impact on water bodies and drinking water supply systems as well as public health. This is a crucial first



Even where dedicated facilities exist for water treatment, these are either disused or insufficient in terms of capacity.

step towards devising a wide-ranging district-level waste management plan in coordination with the three townships that carry statutory responsibility for dealing with this issue.

- Provide leadership, coordination and integration to devise remedial plans by arriving at a consensus with the three town authorities. Elected representatives from both tiers, under the leadership of the district government, should examine alternative mechanisms to enable remedial interventions in the medium and long term.
- Identify core issues that need attention and pursue these matters with the concerned town authorities, focusing on areas that fall within the district's jurisdiction. This integrative effort should address (i) the extent of pollution, particularly in the case of water used for drinking and irrigation; (ii) contamination through seepage during conveyance; and (iii) sources of pollution. The identification of pollution sources will be a principal input for developing more focused interventions.

- Examine key health impacts such as the incidence of water-borne disease and parasitic infection as a result of water contamination.
- Assess existing capacity to handle waste water, including sanitation and sewerage facilities, staff, budget, oversight mechanisms, user costs and treatment, particularly in the case of hospital wastewater.

MEDIUM TERM

- Coordinate interaction between the district government and town administrations to devise a comprehensive strategy to tackle the issue of waste water, based on an assessment of the sources and types of waste water, existing capacity and resources, and costs of direct and indirect impacts. Most inputs, particularly indicators, targets, implementation and oversight processes, and monitoring systems and mechanisms, will have to be devised at the town level, with the district providing an overarching umbrella presence as well as

capacity, expertise and assistance in resource procurement.

- Help town authorities to assess needs, phase inputs, secure funds from donors and higher-tier authorities, and garner the support of local communities, NGOs and the private sector.
- Examine available legislative and statutory options to see where lacunas need to be filled through locally issued statutory cover. This effort can be tied to the proposed land use planning and zoning interventions, making provisions for sanitation compulsory in all future water supply schemes, and filling the gaps in the legislation currently in force.
- Seek the participation and cooperation of local communities to find long-term solutions to the problem of sewage and waste water disposal, with the district government playing a coordinating role.
- Join forces with the three town administrations to undertake a comprehensive advocacy campaign, promoting awareness of the problem and highlighting how individual households can make a difference. Take on board NGOs, CBOs, opinion leaders and elected officials. This input should be intense and ongoing, since behavioural change for informed decision making cannot be brought about in the short term. It will take time to inculcate a sense of civic consciousness, personal responsibility and ownership in a populace long accustomed to indifference and apathy with regard to issues like sanitation and pollution. Breaking through this high indifference threshold will require a long-term concerted effort.
- Address the role of commercial establishments that add to the problem. Serve as facilitator to allow the three towns to tackle waste water generated by hotels, restaurants and other commercial establishments. Oversight measures will be required, along with indicators for permissible levels of pollution, punitive measures on the 'polluter pays' principle and legislation to control discharges from institutions. Simultaneously deal with waste water discharged by hospitals, examining alternatives such as treat-

ment plants and anaerobic treatment. Bring the AMC and Jougni plants back online and operating at full capacity.

- Encourage the use of untreated waste water for irrigating crops that are not intended for human consumption.
- Explore funding for infrastructure development, capacity building, technical inputs and awareness raising. Seek external financing to establish indicators and develop implementation, oversight and punitive processes and mechanisms. A team effort under the leadership of the district would be an effective way to approach this challenge.
- Institutionalise inputs at the district level, if only for coordination and feedback rather than direct intervention, so that the basic intervention principles are followed and continuity ensured.
- Make community involvement an integral component of planning, design and implementation for all new programmes. Seek similar participation in the execution of programmes already in implementation. This will create public awareness, engender wider support and community acceptance of proposed initiatives, and increase community involvement in the operation and maintenance of the assets created.
- Consider the possibility of private-sector involvement. Understandably an unpopular alternative, it is however realistic to keep in mind the resource crunch currently facing the municipal authorities.

LONG TERM

- Evaluate progress on remedial interventions and examine achievements against established indicators. In a joint review exercise conducted with the participation of lower-tier authorities and stakeholders, audit the performance of processes and mechanisms established at the town level. Particularly address areas where shortfalls persist, and determine additional inputs required to fill gaps in capacity, expertise, infrastructure and funding.
- Promote community participation and continue with mass awareness campaigns

to elicit active cooperation from households and commercial establishments. Pursue additional inputs and alternatives to strengthen participation, with active support from town administrations and oversight personnel.

- Ensure the full use of existing treatment plants and expand these facilities wherever feasible.
- Examine progress in the use of punitive measures and strengthen the process. As an adjunct to its mainly deterrent role, evaluate the use of fines as a means to generate resources for upgrading existing sanitation, sewerage and waste water handling facilities.
- In partnership with town administrations, assess and ensure adherence to statutory requirements for sanitation schemes in all water supply projects.
- Pursue privatisation of waste water handling. In partnership with town administrations, examine incentives to promote private-sector involvement and assess the viability of permanent user charges to sustain private-sector interventions.

- Pursue public-private partnerships in all new schemes and promote community involvement at all levels.
- Examine the possibility of establishing a district-level institutional home for these activities.
- Assess capacity development needs at the district level, and at the town level in the case of custodial agencies.
- Continue to solicit donor and higher-tier resource inputs to improve waste water treatment and sanitation services on a district-wide basis. Undertake joint lobbying with town administrations to improve prospects for resource generation.

SOLID WASTE

The generation of solid waste is intrinsic to the process of consumption, increasing both with population growth and as a society becomes more affluent. Inappropriate disposal poses a grave threat to human health and quality of life. While reliable figures are not available, conser-



At the solid waste disposal site at Salhad, accumulated garbage is often burned in the open.

vative estimates put the amount of solid waste generated annually in the district at 20,000 t.

The lack of formal documentation is not just a district-level problem. According to the SPCS, statistics are hard to come by even at the provincial level:

It is difficult to estimate the actual quantity of solid waste generated in various cities and settlements of the province, as the authorities involved have no system to monitor the quantities, the seasonal and regional variations and the composition of the solid waste (GoNWFP and IUCN 1996: 111).

A 1992 survey carried out by the NWFP EPA reveals that the now-defunct municipal committees of Havelian and Abbottabad, and the Abbottabad cantonment board, were generating 10.9 t of solid waste daily, of which only 50% was collected while the remainder was allowed to accumulate in streets and open spaces, and in public drains (GoNWFP 1992). There is no reason to believe that the situation has improved since.

Compounding the waste disposal problem is biomedical waste from health care institutions. Each day, the district's four hospitals generate 1.03 t of waste which is dumped in nearby open spaces. The AMC alone generates waste to the tune of 800 kg/day, which is handled by a recently installed incinerator. In the absence of a system to sort and separate waste, however, biomedical waste is frequently mixed with municipal and household refuse.

The solid waste collection capacity of the former municipal committees was rudimentary. These responsibilities are now borne by the town administrations. In some places, bins and skips have been provided but their use is limited, and open dumping is the preferred practice. Even where such facilities are in use, their ill-planned and often inconvenient location means that periodic removal of collected garbage by municipal authorities is difficult. Solid waste that is actually collected by the concerned agencies is dumped at Salhad, a site located alongside the Karakoram

Highway, where accumulated garbage is often burned in the open. While this practice has obvious environmental and health impacts, it also undermines the aesthetic appeal of the district, particularly since many visitors to the area enter by means of the Karakoram Highway.

The state of solid waste disposal across the country is summarised in the NCS:

Overall, municipal garbage collection [...] is a fiasco and a failure. It is a fiasco in that in spite of taking the largest single share of municipal expenditures the level of service is abysmal. It is a failure because garbage still constitutes a health hazard and an eye sore, blocking drains, exacerbating flooding, and providing a breeding ground for rats, flies, and disease (GoP and IUCN 1992: 233).

The situation in Abbottabad district is no different. Proper sanitation facilities are available to only 70% of urban residents and just 12% of rural inhabitants. Given the widespread public indifference regarding sanitation, implementing remedial measures and interventions is likely to prove difficult. A combination of financial inputs, expertise in scientific management and technical knowledge to design an integrated management system will be required, along with sustainable behaviour change among all stakeholders.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Identify the sources and quantity of solid waste generated in the district in various categories (municipal, hospital, toxic), under the aegis of the three town administrations.
- Develop procedures for the appropriate disposal of biomedical and toxic waste. Monitor compliance by maintaining on-site inventories to tackle the very serious threat posed by the mixing of municipal and biomedical waste.
- Critically examine the existing practice of open dumping and explore suitable alterna-

tives. In this context, immediate attention will be directed towards either finding an alternative dumping site or transforming the existing one into a landfill. The same will be done for dumping practices in Havelian, and an audit will be undertaken to assess current practices in Nawanshehr and the Galliyat area.

MEDIUM TERM

- As a precursor to identifying integrated management options, finalise an exhaustive audit of the entire solid waste disposal system. This effort will be carried out under the umbrella leadership of the district government with the active involvement of the three towns as well as the cantonment board and other stakeholders.
- Once a database for all administrative tiers has been developed, chalk out an intervention plan with the town administrations and cantonment board playing a major role in overseeing implementation. At a minimum, the intervention plan should take into account the following areas:
 - The extent of existing coverage, availability of financial and technical resources, and efficacy of existing implementation, monitoring review and enforcement mechanisms;
 - The extent of public involvement, civil society awareness and general under-

standing of the environmental and health impacts of indiscriminate dumping;

- The extent to which private-sector involvement through user charges can be pursued and gradually increased;
- The handling of biomedical waste and the possibility of building incinerators at all hospitals in the district;
- Formulating basic indicators, setting annual targets and assigning responsibility for meeting targets;
- Examining support for the recycling business already flourishing in Abbottabad to ease the pressure on municipal services; and
- Pursuing capacity building on an ongoing basis.

LONG TERM

- Focus on coordination, technical and capacity support, and pursue alternative sources of funding.
- Seek private-sector investment and provide the necessary support by enacting legislation and lobbying with concerned stakeholders, including local communities and financial institutions.
- Limit government intervention and encourage private-sector entry, employing market-based instruments and punitive measures based on the 'polluter pays' principle.



Land Use Planning and Zoning

Planning and zoning laws allow scarce land resources to be used wisely. In the absence of such regulation, the increasing pressure of population growth and urbanisation is likely to result in haphazard development, carried out with no regard for the long-term impact on quality of life or the environment.

Burgeoning poverty and rapid population growth have quickened the pace of urbanisation in Abbottabad, where cities and towns have in recent years witnessed unplanned construction and the mushrooming of illegal settlements. In the absence of robust land use planning and zoning laws, no regulatory framework exists to manage this growth. As a result, the district's urban environment is becoming severely congested, while green belts are increasingly being converted into residential areas. Municipal services such as water supply and waste disposal are struggling to cope with the increased pressure.

Rapid urbanisation has also distorted the pattern of land use in the district. With land prices escalating in the vicinity of urban areas, valuable agricultural land on the outskirts of cities is being sold off for commercial development. Without strict enforcement of the EIA regime, little can be done to regulate this development or mitigate its adverse

impacts. Meanwhile, artificially high prices affect the implementation of much-needed infrastructure projects, particularly in the case of amenities and services.

In a region known for its breathtaking landscape and natural beauty, the district's urban areas are now being robbed of parks, playgrounds and open spaces. Despite the serious nature of the problem, land use planning and zoning has not been a priority for the local administration. Poor communication and advocacy efforts, and the absence of both enlightened debate and stakeholder involvement, do not bode well for the future.

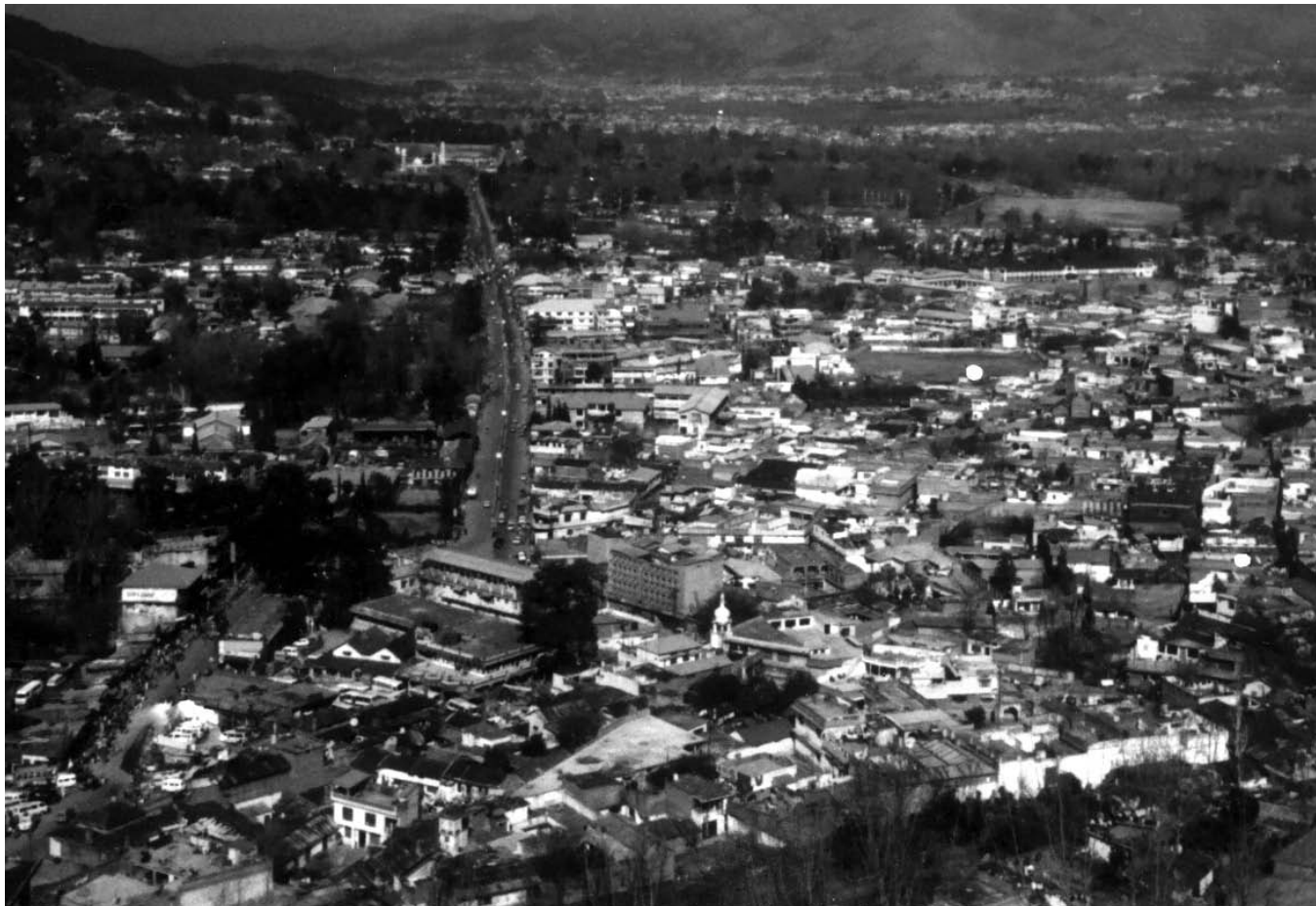
It is also important to recognise that land use and zoning is not simply an urban issue. While urbanisation and its attendant processes must be

brought under regulation, land use laws are equally relevant to the working of sectors such as mining and infrastructure development. Land use patterns also impact sectors such as agriculture, forestry, tourism and biodiversity. These complex interrelationships will need to be examined.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Develop specific zoning and building codes to address increasing urbanisation and haphazard urban development.
- In conjunction with town administrations, initiate steps to stop radical changes in land use.



Burgeoning poverty and rapid population growth have quickened the pace of urbanisation in Abbottabad, where cities and towns have in recent years witnessed widespread encroachment as well as unplanned construction.

- Carry out an in-depth analysis of current land use laws and zoning regulations. A key consideration here should be to assess whether existing regulations are able to handle the current development needs of the district as well as the future requirements of the three town administrations. The focus here should be on controlling unplanned growth and forecasting the need for public facilities.

MEDIUM TERM

- Provide an enabling framework for all three town administrations to formulate general and area-specific land use planning and zoning laws to supplement higher-tier provincial plans on the same subject.
- Support and strengthen designated protected areas by providing strict oversight of urban growth, tourist activity and construction in the vicinity of such areas.
- Ensure that land use laws cover Ayubia, Nathiagali, Thandiani and other tourist spots

to ensure that the unique natural capital of such areas is preserved.

- Address the interrelationships between land use decisions, infrastructure and land use impacts, as well as the linkages with biodiversity, agriculture, forestry, pollution and public health.

LONG TERM

- Once progress is made in higher-tier planning for this sector, provide coordination, technical support, capacity building, and assistance in developing oversight and enforcement mechanisms at the district and town levels.
- Promote advocacy, community awareness and stakeholder motivation to bring about behaviour change so that land use planning has the support of civil society. Keep in mind the fact that extreme poverty is a key contributor to urban migration.
- Develop long-term processes, systems and mechanisms for implementation, oversight, enforcement and feedback.





PART IV

Socio-Economic
Sectors



E

ducation

Education plays a critical role in human development. By improving individual employment prospects, thereby increasing household income, education enables economic growth to take place. On the community level, it is a precondition for informed decision making and serves as a catalyst for social change.

PUBLIC SECTOR

Despite substantial investment in the construction of new schools for both male and female students, enrolment ratios have not risen. This validates the hypothesis that the shortage of school buildings is not in and of itself a dominant concern. In fact, issues of gender, access, transport, location and quality are equally important.

No performance benchmarks have been developed for various levels of education. Vital indicators such as drop-out rates, repeat rates, promotion ratios, participation ratios and teacher-student ratios need to be formulated, to enable an accurate assessment of performance and to allow for the development of accountability mechanisms.

Rural schools are characterised by irregular teacher attendance, the reluctance of staff to serve in remote areas and substandard accom-

modation facilities for women instructors. Across the district, the quality of teaching is poor, with matriculation currently the only educational qualification required for appointment. Teacher motivation is dampened by the absence of in-service training, coupled with low pay and few prospects for advancement. For students and their families, the obsolete curriculum throws into doubt the necessity and relevance of education. The standard of middle, higher and intermediate schools is unsatisfactory, as reflected in the failure rate in high and higher secondary examinations. Teaching methodologies are not designed to encourage independent thinking, teachers are inadequately trained and a reliable teachers' examination system is lacking.

It goes without saying that primary education is the cornerstone of sustainable growth, a crucial first step towards developing human capital. Indeed, at both the national and international

level, primary education is recognised as a driving force for development. Under the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UN-MDG), all Member States have pledged to achieve universal primary education by the year 2015 (UN 2000). This commitment is endorsed in the NCS-MTR as well. On the ground, however, the reality is that a host of factors prevents districts such as Abbottabad from attaining this target. Instead, enrolment ratios at the primary level in Abbottabad have witnessed a steady decline over the past several years.

The middle level is a vital link in the chain of education. In the absence of reliable indicators, quality and output at this level cannot be monitored systematically. This makes it all the more difficult to bring about meaningful change or introduce transparency and accountability in the existing system. Indicators for Secondary School Certification and the intermediate level are



Awareness needs to be raised among children of school-going age as well as their parents about the realities of the job market and the importance of acquiring marketable skills and qualifications.

unsatisfactory, and improvements in the system are difficult to achieve in the current climate of administrative overlaps and low investment. Access to tertiary education is restricted to urban area residents, effectively marginalising 80% of the district's population. At the tertiary level, there is also a wide gap between the curriculum and the requirements of the job market.

Comprehensive indicators need to be developed for all levels not only to assess progress or failure but also to serve as a tool for initiating remedial measures. Across the board, the curriculum needs to be broadened to include subjects such as health, nutrition and environmental conservation. This process will be hindered by the fact that curriculum matters are currently under the jurisdiction of the federal government.

PRIVATE SECTOR

Across the country, private-sector education is flourishing and Abbottabad district is no exception. The public sector is no longer seen as an efficient service delivery mechanism and people are willing to pay significantly higher fees to send their children to private institutions in the hope that this will provide greater payoffs in the long term. In Abbottabad, the private sector is a major player in education, accounting for close to 17% of total enrolment at the primary level alone.

The activities of the private sector have not been systematically documented. In fact, data on private sector education is so scant that it is difficult even to reliably determine the number of institutions in operation. The absence of formal data hinders comprehensive planning for the future. Oversight mechanisms are also lacking, with the result that private sector education operates virtually without any form of regulation.

Despite the absence of formal documentation, it is safe to assume that the majority of private educational institutions is located in urban areas that are already relatively better served through the public sector. The inequity here is all the more alarming given the nexus between education, poverty and sustainable development—

and the fact that 80% of Abbottabad's population resides in rural areas.

With the increasing popularity of private-sector education, it is imperative for the government to build a vibrant partnership with private-sector institutions, providing incentives to extend their reach while regulating fees and developing oversight mechanisms. At the same time, the government can draw on the success of the private sector to improve its own performance.

Masjid and *maktab* schools are an intrinsic part of the country's history and culture. By educating the poorest segments of society, these schools serve to bridge the gap created by existing socio-economic conditions. Adjustments will be needed to expand and update the syllabus of such schools, allowing them to contribute to mainstream learning. These adjustments should be made in a consensual and participatory manner.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The concept of employment and economic viability is strongly tied with social status and job security. Government service and professions such as law, engineering, medicine and business administration are the employment options favoured by the residents of the district. This bias is passed down from generation to generation despite the fact that employment opportunities in these fields, limited to begin with, are now saturated and further squeezed by continual downsizing.

In this scenario, greater attention must be paid to the promotion of entrepreneurship and self-employment. There is also a need to diversify the economy, moving away from traditional, stereotypical ideas of employment. Strengthening the capacity and quality of technical and vocational skills training is one way to initiate this transition.

Given the limited employment prospects in traditional sectors and the increasing lack of interest in education generally, partly because of its

perceived irrelevance to practical life, technical and vocational training must be included as a key component of all future programmes aimed at improvements in the education sector. At the moment, the state of technical/vocational institutes is abysmal. Marginalised in terms of resource allocation and crippled by decrepit infrastructure, antiquated syllabi and poor quality instruction, the potential of such institutions in both the public and private sector is less than optimal.

In a fast-changing world where job opportunities are few and far between, skills acquisition is one way in which to break the cycle of poverty. It is unrealistic for young people to attend school in the hope that they will all eventually find work as lawyers, engineers or civil servants. Awareness needs to be raised among children of school-going age as well as their parents about the

realities of the job market and the importance of acquiring marketable skills. After all, in the sustainable development paradigm, the goal of education is to improve employment prospects, thereby serving as a means to mitigate poverty.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Build a comprehensive database for all levels of schooling and establish baseline indicators. Data must be disaggregated by gender and urban/rural area for each of the following: enrolment rates; participation rates; drop-out rates; failure rates; repeat rates; average class size; teacher-student ratio; performance in examinations, particularly



Private educational institutions are for the most part located in urban areas that are already better served through the public sector.

external, by means of pass ratios in various divisions; child reading skills (Class V); and adult literacy.

- Collect statistics on institutions operating in the sector, including: the total number of institutions at various levels; the private-sector component; total investment and the proportion of investment in various levels; and informal education, including *masjid* schools, *maktabs*, home schooling, female home schooling, NGOs and projects.
- Assess gaps to decide where new schools and colleges need to be established. Special consideration should be given to (i) improving female enrolment ratios and (ii) eliminating political interference from the process of identifying locations for new schools. Decisions regarding the location of new schools will be based on needs, accessibility issues and population.
- Examine key issues such as political interference in teacher transfers; teachers' refusal to serve in remote areas; the absence of accommodation, particularly for female teachers in rural areas; and the inadequacy of equipment and facilities.
- Devise measures to bring about depolarisation, transparency and accountability as an immediate input to improve the long-term sustainability of all interventions in the sector.
- Conduct a comprehensive survey of private-sector educational institutions to determine the scale of private-sector presence, its relative efficiency and the possible role it can play in lessening the burden on the public sector. Assess the performance of private-sector institutions on major indicators such as return on investment, cost per capita, student-teacher ratios, the average number of students per institution and performance, particularly in external examinations. Devise mechanisms to enhance its presence.
- Review the trend of declining enrolment in *masjid* and *maktab* schools. Pursue the mainstreaming of such institutions by expanding the curriculum and encouraging the use of modern technology.
- Ensure that the Government of Pakistan's commitment to the UN-MDG is built into all future planning and interventions in the edu-

cation sector. This will be done in partnership with the federal and provincial governments and, where required, with the assistance of international donors.

- Pursue options other than reliance on the profit-driven private sector to improve literacy and participation rates, particularly in remote rural areas with scattered communities where the large-scale construction of schools is not viable. Seek greater participation of NGOs already active in the sector and promote home schooling or home tuition, to be provided by specially trained mobile units using an intensive teaching regime for a few months each year.
- Discard the top-down, arbitrary, 'turf-protection' orientation that has characterised management of the education sector. Form parent-teacher associations (PTAs) and encourage the participation of CBOs to address issues such as drop-out rates, non-functioning schools, teacher shortages, and failures of accountability and transparency.
- Motivate both parents and civil society to value education and to encourage children to remain in school. At the same time, efforts should be made to improve public perception regarding the benefits of education, including its role in improving job prospects and socio-economic mobility. Launch a comprehensive advocacy campaign in this context.
- Evaluate the potential of adult education, particularly the nexus between adult education and poverty alleviation. This should enable a policy decision to direct greater investment towards adult literacy and basic education as a means to ensure a more immediate, pro-poor focus.
- Incorporate environmental education into the curriculum at all levels. The principle aim behind this move is to instil an ethic of conservation among young people and familiarise them with the importance of the sustainable use of natural resources.

MEDIUM TERM

- Finalise disaggregated baseline indicators and establish annual targets. For each indi-

cator, assign responsibility to specific education department functionaries.

- Establish a formal evaluation and promotion policy, at least for institution heads, based on performance in relation to progress on indicators.
- Develop an implementation, oversight and review mechanism, preferably housed outside the education department. A watchdog entity comprising civil society, stakeholders, technical experts and elected representatives will be required to monitor progress and evaluate policy guidelines.
- Establish PTAs in all schools, assigning responsibility for this task to each institution head. PTAs can supplement work on indicator targets, and provide grassroots supervision of teacher attendance, teaching quality and the general functioning of individual schools. PTAs should also be made an intrinsic component of advocacy efforts, particularly in rural areas, to encourage parents to value education and improve retention rates, particularly for girls.
- Prohibit the current practice of political-cum-influence-based transfers and promotions in order to ensure effectiveness in the implementation process for indicators. Mid-year transfers negate the entire concept of examining performance. Establish a minimum period of tenure. As a rule of thumb, no transfers should be allowed before the conclusion of a three-year posting.
- Seek the assistance of donors and technical experts to establish an oversight process. Facilitate measures that will allow interventions in the education sector to operate independently and remain sustainable.
- Introduce a system of shifts to maximise the efficient use of existing resources. This step should also allow other key issues to be addressed, such as lowering drop-out rates (children are often forced to quit school because their household responsibilities make morning attendance impossible) and expanding the reach of female education (using boys' school buildings to educate girls in different shifts and, where necessary, at different levels). The details will need to be fine-tuned through consulta-

tions with local communities, the education department, PTAs and NGOs. Replicable models from other parts of the country as well as other countries should be examined, and donors may be approached for assistance.

- Encourage the private sector to expand its presence, particularly at the tertiary level.
- Fully audit the private sector, which already accounts for two-digit enrolment, to introduce formal oversight, check abuses and curb unnecessary expenditure.
- Provide incentives such as loans and tax breaks to increase private-sector involvement in rural areas, female education, and tertiary and specialised education, including computer and vocational/technical skills training.
- Examine replicable models of NGO involvement in setting up community-based schools to broaden the base of service providers. Strengthen current NGO involvement in running literacy centres and invite NGOs to participate in informal education for girls, particularly in rural areas.
- Carry out capacity development to improve the management skills of education personnel, particularly heads of institutions. This aspect of education receives little attention even though effective management and administration are crucial if other interventions are to have any realistic chance of success.
- Use technical and vocational education as a tool to directly address employment and poverty alleviation. Implement interventions to improve access, particularly for girls; modernise the curriculum; provide equipment and facilities; and promote information technology (IT) training. Ensure the provision of competent faculty and adequate oversight.
- Encourage private-sector involvement in technical education. Take advantage of the federal government's current emphasis on IT training to seek resource inputs for the district.
- Pursue outside sources of funding such as user charges, donor contributions and philanthropic donations to cushion the resource crunch facing the sector as a whole.

LONG TERM

- Introduce local-level curriculum changes wherever possible, since an extensive overhaul of the curriculum at all levels is currently under the administrative authority of the provincial government. Introduce environmental issues into the curriculum, expand vocational/technical training and strengthen the examination system to eliminate widespread cheating. At the same time, pursue innovative options to fill the gaps at all levels in the education system.
- Continue to prioritise private-sector participation and examine partial privatisation of government schools.
- Strengthen regulation of the private sector, not in a punitive fashion but rather in a manner that ensures transparency and prevents unnecessary expenditure.
- Address the concentration of private-sector institutions in urban areas, providing incentives for education providers to expand operations to rural areas.
- Make the establishment of PTAs mandatory at all levels and pursue their increased involvement in school management. In this context, undertake capacity development and facilitate access to information. Formulate a long-term reporting and evaluation system to incorporate the findings of PTAs into future planning.
- In partnership with parents, local communities, NGOs and CBOs, undertake informal education activities, particularly for females in remote rural areas.
- Introduce mobile tutoring on an experimental basis and extend coverage of this system, based on feedback from pilot interventions.
- Pursue adult literacy programmes to provide basic education and marketable skills. The ultimate aim is to alleviate poverty, make a positive impact on demographic indicators, improve public health, increase civic awareness and promote respect for the law.
- Continue to focus on teacher training and the quality of education. This is a long-term effort primarily because, like curriculum matters, this area is not entirely within the discretionary power of the district government. The district should lobby higher tiers to bring about changes in the current system, while improvising local capacity-building interventions by pursuing opportunities for international exposure, national training courses and regional workshops.
- Undertake initiatives to address inadequacies in English language teaching and the sciences in partnership with NGOs, projects, donors and other entities.
- Increase the minimum academic requirements for primary school teachers and training instructors. Make minimum qualifications mandatory for all higher-level instructors.
- Continue to support *masjid* and *maktab* schools. Pursue the progressive mainstreaming of such institutions by adding to their curriculum and improving teaching technologies.
- Seek funding alternatives and innovative mechanisms to increase the salary of teachers. Although service structure issues are outside the district's domain, it is possible to find solutions at the local level.
- Strengthen technical/vocational training and reorient IT education to focus on employment opportunities, economic diversification and poverty alleviation.



Health and Population Welfare

A healthy population is better placed to pursue economic growth and sustainable development. Good health allows for an improved quality of life and increased economic participation, while lowering the cost to employers of work days lost due to illness. Public health standards are universally accepted as key indicators of development and investment in human resources. Population welfare is an issue of critical importance as well, particularly in the developing world. Fertility rates, maternal and infant mortality rates, and traditional practices such as early marriage directly influence population growth and critically impact development and quality of life.

HEALTH

On paper, Abbottabad's health sector seems to be performing well. Statistics show that the district ranks high in comparison with other parts of the province. With 108 health facilities of various types operating in Abbottabad with more than 1,500 medical personnel, in addi-

tion to the AMC, indicators for this sector are indeed positive. But when coverage and access considerations are factored into the equation, a number of serious issues arise with regard to the overall performance of the sector.

Indicators such as population per nurse, population per bed, population per medical institution and population per doctor need to be disaggregated to show the massive disparities that exist between urban and rural coverage. Most hospitals in the district are located in and around major urban centres with the result that rural communities, particularly those in remote areas, are left without access to proper medical facilities. Besides the concentration of health care facilities in urban and semi-urban areas, a number of other issues need to be addressed urgently. These include the substandard service provided by rural health centres, basic health units and rural dispensaries, which are cash strapped and lack even the most rudimentary health intervention capacities. It is critical as well to focus on primary and preventive health care in rural areas, with emphasis on clean drinking water, improved sanitation and household hygiene.

The construction of large-scale projects such as the AMC would be better justified if their contribution to district-based service provision was unambiguous. The opportunity cost of building more small hospitals with fewer beds but with adequate primary and diagnostic care capacities, and used to full capacity, rather than mega-projects must be critically examined in order to determine the future strategy required to cater optimally to the health care needs of the district's population.

Non-development expenditure, primarily salaries, consumes the bulk of the health budgets of various institutions, leaving insufficient funds even for basic needs such as repairs and maintenance, bedding, medicines and equipment. Recent cuts in developmental and non-developmental allocations have aggravated the resource crunch, with the greatest impact on the rural poor residing in remote areas. Political interference, a hierarchical approach, the short-

age of trained and qualified personnel, inadequate operational funds, the lack of coordination with NGOs, and the absence of private-sector involvement exacerbate problems confronting the sector.

It is clear that Abbottabad's urban residents are fairly well covered by a diverse health care delivery system in the public sector, supplemented by a significant private-sector presence. The opposite is true for the vast majority of rural residents whose health care needs are intensified by contaminated drinking water, poor sanitation, the absence of family planning, ignorance about nutrition and overwhelming poverty. It is critical that rural/urban disaggregated health indicators are formulated to plan more effectively for the future. These indicators should be used to develop a district-specific health sector policy that is not centred on large projects that are heavily skewed in favour of urban residents.

Under the UN-MDG, the Government of Pakistan has pledged to reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five and reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio by the year 2015 (UN 2000). Given these commitments, and the cross-sectoral impact of health, action in this sector is all the more important.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Develop indicators and benchmarks for the sector, disaggregated for rural/urban areas, to reveal the inequitable distribution of health care facilities. Indicators should cover a wide range of performance areas including: population per bed, population per health institution, population per nurse, population per doctor, health expenditure per capita, maternal mortality, child mortality, malnutrition, water sources and sanitation.
- Establish guidelines to limit political interference and fix the duration of postings to promote transparency. These guidelines should

be in the form of indicators, covering the number of patients seen, revenues generated, savings, access to diagnostic facilities (x-rays, laboratories) and staff attendance.

- Examine the functioning of rural health centres and basic health units. Develop indicators related to the performance of such facilities; their contribution to improving health care; and the compulsory, rotational posting of all medical personnel to rural areas. Communities and elected representatives must be actively involved in determining the broad parameters for these indicators.
- Examine options to shift the basic orientation of health policy, based at the very minimum on the following components:
 - Refurbishing and improving existing basic health units and rural health centres,

especially considering that a complete package of health facilities cannot realistically be delivered to the doorstep of all rural residents because the population in such areas is widely dispersed.

- Establishing smaller hospitals with strong primary and preventative capacities, as well as improved diagnostic and treatment facilities, to improve coverage more cost-effectively than by the construction of mega-projects with greater public relations value.
- Emphasising primary and preventative health care with particular focus on nutrition, clean drinking water, sanitation, waste management and personal hygiene. This should serve as the starting point for all future health interventions.



The construction of large-scale projects, such as the Ayub Medical College and Hospital Complex, would be better justified if their contribution to district-based services was unambiguous.

- Address primary health care issues by increasing resources allocated to such facilities operating in district and town hospitals.
 - Evaluate the establishment of mobile teams, particularly for paediatric and reproductive medicine, to cater to remote and inaccessible areas until such time that full coverage is made available. This is critical to lower maternal and infant mortality, which is also part of the federal government's commitment under the UN-MDG.
 - Strengthen preventive health care with particular focus on principal disease sources: contaminated drinking water, improper waste management, malnutrition, poor personal hygiene and self-medication.
 - Formulate a communications and advocacy package involving NGOs, elected representatives, CBOs and opinion leaders. Creating a nexus between environmental and human health should form the core of this package.
 - Pursue increased public-private partnership in the health sector. Extend financial incentives to promote the establishment of auxiliary facilities such as laboratories and x-ray units. At the same time, devise comprehensive regulatory mechanisms to mitigate abuses witnessed in private-sector institutions.
 - Address serious problems that plague the sector, such as unqualified doctors, sub-standard drugs and the availability of medication without prescriptions. These are enforcement issues, directly related to governance.
 - Develop oversight and regulatory mechanisms to govern both the private and public sector.
 - Extend the public-private partnership in health care to include NGOs, a number of which are already active in the field.
- basic health units and rural health centres should be developed.
- Ensure that all new facilities, particularly basic and rural health centres, are established on the basis of need and in consultation with stakeholders. Increasing coverage will be the principal aim of all such interventions. Community involvement in management and operation will form an integral component of interventions, along with equitable user charges based on the ability to pay. The long-term goal is for all such units to attain a degree of self-sufficiency so that government funds can be channelled to development and expansion.
 - Ensure that health facility management includes community oversight, in a manner akin to PTAs, to check rampant malpractice such as the black market sale of medicines and supplies, and routine doctor and staff absenteeism. Develop a district-level oversight mechanism backed by legislative cover.
 - Tackle preventive health care, particularly in rural areas, through the informal sector. Involve the community as a whole and seek support from the vast network of CBOs and village organisations already operating in the district under the aegis of projects and NGOs.
 - Explore the option of community involvement in the selection and recruitment of health workers, perhaps through a system of quotas, making the communities themselves responsible for oversight, review and feedback.
 - Liaise with the concerned government departments to raise awareness about preventative medicine. Involve municipal and town authorities to promote the supply of safe drinking water and the proper handling of waste; to address issues of air, noise and water pollution; and to deal with the health risks posed by the operation of certain commercial entities such as poultry farms.
 - Persuade the education department to include subjects like nutrition, sanitation and personal hygiene into the existing curriculum, and create awareness about these topics among parents and civil society in general.

MEDIUM TERM

- Finalise short-term planning issues and indicators to develop an integrated master plan for promoting sustainability in the sector. This master plan must be prepared in a participatory manner and operationalised through the health department. Oversight and evaluation mechanisms at the level of

- Put in place a mechanism to oversee the working of the private sector. A few pilot privatisation exercises should also be undertaken and subjected to an intense analytic exercise to evaluate the pros and cons of extending the system to other areas and at various levels of service delivery.
- Extend incentives and provide investment security in tandem with oversight and regulatory mechanisms to ensure a smooth transition of ownership and simultaneously block avenues of exploitation and misuse.
- Provide statutory cover for the compulsory posting of government doctors to rural areas for a minimum three-year period and ensure that this requirement is strictly enforced.
- Develop a more attractive remuneration package for medical technicians and address their capacity shortfalls by providing training, to increase staff retention and optimise the use of expensive diagnostic equipment.
- Build incinerators at all major health facilities to ensure that medical waste is disposed of properly. Increase the capacity of the existing incinerator at the AMC and upgrade its treatment plant. Such measures must be mandatory for all hospitals. In addition, health personnel should be trained to separate, bag and transport biomedical waste to prevent the mixing of municipal and biomedical waste.

LONG TERM

- Examine critical bottlenecks and stumbling blocks. Assess performance against indicators to determine the success or failure of various innovations and to introduce new processes and mechanisms to strengthen transparency and accountability.
- Assess progress on coverage, capacity development, funds generation through user charges, and the training and retention of technicians and nurses.
- Evaluate progress in attaining the UN-MDG and measure the success of attempts to establish linkages between concerned departments.

- Make privatisation of the sector a priority for all new interventions. Stringent government oversight should be part of this agenda, along with the provision of public-sector services in cases where private-sector involvement is not viable.
- Enhance the share of health in the district budget, and allocate resources for the acquisition and use of the latest technology, equipment and medical practice.
- Continue to provide mobile clinic services to remote areas and incorporate new technologies to further improve service delivery.
- Address public health issues such as the adoption of healthy living practices.

POPULATION WELFARE

Unchecked population growth is a major stumbling block in the path of sustainable development, increasing the pressure on land and natural resources, and leading to urbanisation and high-density habitations. Successive administrations have failed to break through socio-religious taboos with regard to family planning, adding to the problems of poor public health and deepening poverty.

Rural population welfare coverage is poor, with generally ineffective implementation of family planning and reproductive health programmes across the district. No visible impact has been made in reducing fertility or maternal mortality. Abbottabad's failure in this regard is clear from the population profile of the district which is predominantly youthful with 40% of the population under the age of 15 years. In the short term, the district must cater to the nutrition, education and health needs of this burgeoning population. But in the medium and long term, housing and employment requirements will also add to the pressure on an already constrained local administration. At the same time, the dependency ratio continues to rise, along with congestion, poverty and unemployment. Early marriage and high-risk reproductive behaviour in ever-married women continue unchecked, further demonstrating the administrative failure in controlling demographic variables.



Since family planning requires overcoming age-old biases grounded in tradition, advocacy efforts will need to target men who have greater decision-making power in such matters.

Even with relatively low growth, the population of the district is expected to double in 45 years. This poses a serious threat to development prospects for the future since population density in the district is already high at 446 persons/km², around twice that of the province as a whole. The expected rise in urbanisation, poverty and public health issues will need to be addressed in an integrated manner.

As with all the sectors discussed in this strategy, issues affecting one sector have a direct impact on a number of other sectors. Similarly, progress in one sector is likely to have far-reaching positive impacts in other areas. For instance, research has shown that in urban areas strong linkages exist between low fertility, post-primary education and formal-sector employment. In rural areas, lower fertility is linked more strongly with women's autonomy and paid employment outside the home. In either case, reducing fertility will require a major departure from the existing gender imbalance in education as well as employment.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Examine density, urbanisation and the population growth trends to evolve appropriate interventions. In this context, the following indicators will be established, both at a baseline level and at the level of targets to be achieved over the period covered by the strategy: population growth, disaggregated on an urban/rural and male/female basis; household size; infant mortality; crude birth rate; total fertility; maternal mortality and morbidity; high-risk reproductive behaviour among ever-married women; mean age at marriage; population age profile; contraceptive prevalence; and immunisation.
- Develop a communications and advocacy package aimed at behavioural change, since the success of family planning relies on community motivation and response.

This is by its very nature a long-term process. In addition to targeting women, advocacy will also address men who often have greater decision-making power in such matters. A number of studies and policy documents address these issues, and insights from their approach should be included in district-level interventions.

MEDIUM TERM

- Undertake a cross-sectoral planning exercise and formalise a population control plan for the district. The plan should cover mechanisms and processes needed to operationalise and monitor progress on indicators, and will delegate responsibility to line personnel in order to promote accountability.
- Tackle demographic issues and their far-reaching impact on all facets of life by introducing these topics into the curriculum starting from the secondary level. Provide teachers with capacity support to enable them to spread the message.
- Encourage private-sector involvement, particularly in areas such as advertising and reproductive health training.
- Liaise with the population welfare department to make greater inroads in the area of controlling population growth. Since this involves overcoming age-old biases grounded in socio-religious tradition, innovative approaches will be needed and advocacy efforts will have to be made involving prominent members of the community as well as religious leaders.
- Undertake population welfare and reproductive health interventions, particularly database development and the establishment and monitoring of indicators, assigning

responsibility for overall coordination. Strengthen these interventions through extensive capacity development. The institutional home of this initiative will be located in the health department with sub-offices in each town in the district.

- Devise multiple-project proposals to attract resources from international donors as well as the federal and provincial governments. Address funding issues through public-private partnerships.

LONG TERM

- Ensure that annual, ongoing evaluation and monitoring are incorporated into planning. In the long term, this will provide invaluable data on progress achieved in key areas such as fertility, marriage age, contraceptive use, household size, population growth and density trends. This information will be compared to baseline figures established in the short term, and achievements will be measured against targets related to higher-tier plans and international commitments.
- Progressively increase private-sector involvement in the sector and promote greater community participation to capitalise on the outreach capabilities of CBOs.
- Aim to lower fertility rates by addressing the deeper issues involved such as gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment and improved prospects for income generation. These issues will be addressed through cross-sectoral inputs from the education and health authorities, through advocacy and by increasing employment opportunities for women.
- Address resource needs by examining new funding options, keeping in mind the recommendations of the PRSP and donors.



Infrastructure: Roads and Communications

From the perspective of sustainability, infrastructure development is a double-edged sword. While increasing mobility and serving as a catalyst for economic activity, infrastructure projects wreak havoc on natural resources, and generate noise and air pollution. Infrastructure development decisions must be taken with the aim of finding a balance between these contradictory tendencies.

The adverse impacts of infrastructure development can to some extent be mitigated with careful planning, vigilant monitoring and aggressive regulation. This in turn requires strict enforcement of land use planning and zoning laws, as well as the EIA/SEA regime.

In Abbottabad, infrastructure development has been allowed to proceed without recourse to EIAs/SEAs or land use zoning. Regulatory oversight for the sector is further complicated by the involvement of several players including the National Highway Authority, Frontier Highway Authority, works and services department (replacing the now-defunct communication and works department), and town municipal administrations (TMAs). Meanwhile, centralised planning and compartmentalised decision making leave little room for community involvement. This prevents local ownership of the assets created, with

the result that communities have no incentive to protect and maintain such assets.

In this capital-intensive sector, maintenance funds are constantly required. Infrastructure development is chronically under-funded, hampered by a lengthy approval and funding process, and subject to constant political interference. Private-sector involvement and NGO participation are notably absent, while public-sector actors and agencies involved in infrastructure development lack capacity at various levels.

The focus of future projects needs to be examined, keeping in mind the requirements of local communities. To address the needs of farmers, significant attention needs to be given to providing easier access to markets. To reduce the congestion generated by transit traffic in and around Abbottabad town, the Abbottabad bypass proposal needs immediate attention.

In terms of improving rural access, a number of initiatives have been undertaken to expand the roads network in mountainous areas. In the absence of formal documentation, however, it is difficult to realistically appraise the success of such projects. Similarly, the impact of infrastructure development on pollution, health, tourism and biodiversity has never been studied to assess the trade-offs with sustainable development objectives.

While economic diversification depends on reliable communications networks, infrastructure development must be viewed in terms of the trade-offs between environmental management and quality of life considerations. Abbottabad must preserve its natural beauty and biodiversity to attract tourism, which is also a key component of diversification.

By its very nature, this sector requires integrated, cross-sectoral oversight. This administrative aspect is important because of the challenges it poses in terms of coordination. At the same time, opportunities are available for revenue generation through user charges such as tolls, tourist taxes, pollution charges and transit fees. These options will need to be explored to pro-

vide for operation and maintenance as well as to fund new development.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Ensure that key environmental considerations are incorporated into all future infrastructure development plans.
- Make EIA/SEA inputs compulsory prior to the construction of roads and communications networks.
- Ensure compliance with proposed land use and zoning laws so that new projects optimise the use of scarce land and avoid unnecessary loss of land, particularly in ecologically valuable areas.
- Quantify the impact of transit traffic in terms of congestion, air pollution, noise pollution, deforestation, biodiversity loss and soil erosion. These are social costs that cannot be subsidised by the district. Pursue other avenues to meet these costs to make up for the losses.
- Analyse available financing options for infrastructure development as well as operation and maintenance costs. Given the marginalisation of operation and maintenance requirements and poor attention to road management, there is also a need to explore alternative options such as community initiatives of the kind that have already been launched by some NGOs in the district.
- Examine the question of farm-to-market roads to address the needs of rural residents who require an efficient distribution network for their largely perishable agricultural products. Funds should be made available through the district budget, the Tameer-e-Sarhad Programme and federal initiatives. Efforts should also be made to link the district's needs with the PRSP recommendations, since roads are a key component of economic diversification.
- Develop the capacity of the works and services department and TMAs in modern road construction technologies. Encourage a

participatory orientation in the management of infrastructure.

- Analyse prospects for greater district control in the sector and explore opportunities offered by the ongoing devolution process. Seek alternative avenues for revenue generation through user charges such as tolls, tourist taxes, pollution charges and transit fees to provide for operation and maintenance as well as to fund new development. Pursue revenues generated through the collection of National Highway Authority toll taxes to achieve financial stability.
- Establish a coordinative mechanism to ensure that road repair and maintenance, or sewerage, water and gas pipeline work is not undertaken in isolation, and that such projects are executed cost-effectively, creating minimum inconvenience to local communities.
- Evaluate the impact of NGO activity in small-scale projects, primarily to promote

rural access. Consider adopting these approaches in the public sector.

- Eliminate political interference from the processes of project identification, awarding contracts and implementation. Ensure transparency and local-level decision making.
- Ensure that community participation is incorporated in all phases of future development work.

MEDIUM TERM

- Finalise and operationalise a coordinative mechanism that ensures integrated oversight by the four major players in the sector. Create an institutional entity operating under the aegis of the district government, with the necessary statutory cover to carry out cross-sectoral integration while adhering to sustainable development objectives.



Infrastructure development in Abbottabad has been allowed to proceed without recourse to environmental impact assessments or land use zoning.

- Develop indicators to examine progress in major arrears such as enforcement of the EIA/SEA regime, generation of funds through user charges, sharing toll revenues, taxes on transit traffic, pollution control and coverage of farm-to-market roads. Where it is within the district's mandate, assign responsibility for progress on indicators to the concerned officials in a bid to promote accountability and good governance.
- Prioritise capacity building, with mandatory training for contractors as well as for technical and general staff of the concerned government departments. Appropriate training becomes all the more important given the additional demands imposed on actors in this sector by considerations such as EIAs, community sensitivity, cross-sectoral coordination, revenue generation, punitive measures and accountability through indicators.
- Pursue private-sector investment and participation. Encourage the establishment of pilot projects and provide incentives to increase private-sector presence, supplemented with dialogue and administrative backing. Promote public-private partnerships, particularly in operation and maintenance.
- Assess all future roads development projects from the perspective of their potential contribution to sustainable development. This will include considerations such as poverty alleviation in rural areas, promoting the livestock industry, catering to tourism needs, mitigating pollution and congestion, reducing negative environmental impacts, and ensuring that the aesthetic appeal of the district is not compromised. In this context, construction of the proposed Abbottabad bypass should be given high priority and advocacy measures must be undertaken to garner the support of the provincial and national legislatures.

LONG TERM

- Undertake a synthesis of annual progress on indicators. Examine alternative measures in areas where considerable shortfalls persist or where district-level interventions have been insufficient.
- Pursue increased revenue generation through user charges, along with punitive measures to attain a degree of self-sufficiency in road construction and upkeep. Examine new alternatives to facilitate revenue generation and collection, with the involvement of local communities and the private sector.

A number of initiatives have been undertaken to expand the roads network in mountainous areas. In the absence of formal documentation, however, it is difficult to realistically appraise the success of projects aimed at improving rural access.

- Ensure compliance with the EIA/SEA regime and apply stringent punitive measures in cases where the rules are violated. Incorporate community oversight and audits to optimise progress in this area.
- Continue capacity building to introduce modern technology and managerial practices in road management and maintenance. Develop implementation schedules to eliminate delays that are currently a matter of routine. Indicators for completion dates and quality can serve as auxiliary inputs, and will form part of the accountability exercise conducted to assess the work of designated implementers.
- Evaluate infrastructural inputs needed to support tourism, particularly in the context of Thandiani. An EIA should help in understanding the trade-offs involved, and a decision should be taken from the point of

view of economic impact and poverty alleviation.

- Strengthen partnerships, and design communication and advocacy packages to address issues such as road safety, protection of infrastructure assets and the rationale for user charges.
- Operationalise indicators for emissions control, particularly in the case of transit traffic. Impose punitive measures to mitigate extreme variances.



Drinking Water

The availability of potable water is a critical quality of life indicator with far-reaching impact on a number of other sectors. The provision of clean drinking water is an intrinsic part of the implementation mechanisms outlined in the PRSP and NCS-MTR. It is also one of the Government of Pakistan's commitments under the UN-MDG to "reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water" by the year 2015 (UN 2000). In keeping with these commitments and objectives, the provision of clean water is a key goal for the district government.

Only 53% of the country's population has access to safe water: 79% in urban areas and a mere 40% of rural residents (GoP and IUCN 1992: 76). For Abbottabad, available records show that coverage of water supply schemes is comparatively good, extending to 85% of rural areas and 90% of the urban population. But coverage figures provide no information about the quality of water supplied or the reliability of coverage. For a more realistic assessment, it is necessary to consider factors such as water sources and quantities available. For instance, just 33% of households in the district receive water from an in-house source. In rural areas, 70% of the distribution network, now the responsibility of the works and services department, depends on

community standposts with a maximum capacity of five gallons per capita per day, falling grossly short of actual demand. Supply in urban areas is patchy and intermittent, ranging from 15 minutes to one hour a day.

Obsolete and inefficient supply systems are rendered even less effective when unauthorised water connections are taken, upsetting the hydraulic balance so that communities further down the supply line are faced with water pressure problems. Added to this is the fact that conservative estimates put water losses due to misuse and leakage at 30% in rural areas and as much as 50% in urban schemes.

With a burgeoning population and growing pressure from seasonal and permanent migration, the city of Abbottabad confronts acute water shortages. Although 75 tube wells have been installed, a significant number of these have ceased to function because of groundwater depletion.

As with so many sectors, water supply issues are cross-sectoral by nature. Poor management in other sectors impacts water quality, so that a concerted effort will be required to address a wide range of issues such as waste management, the pollution of river bodies, and the absence of oversight and civic consciousness, before water quality issues can be tackled effectively. For instance, the absence of adequate sanitation and sewage disposal facilities, a serious problem in and of itself, has also led to dangerously high levels of drinking water contamination. Untreated waste water is discharged into drinking water sources, with no system in place to monitor the effects on water quality. As such, it is not surprising that the incidence of water-borne disease has not been reduced despite numerous interventions in the health sector.

In the race to extend coverage, quality considerations have received low priority. According to a study conducted by the SUNGI Development Foundation, with technical input from the National Institute of Health, both urban and rural tap water was found to be unfit for human consumption, with urban samples categorised as high risk (SUNGI 2000). The lack of oversight

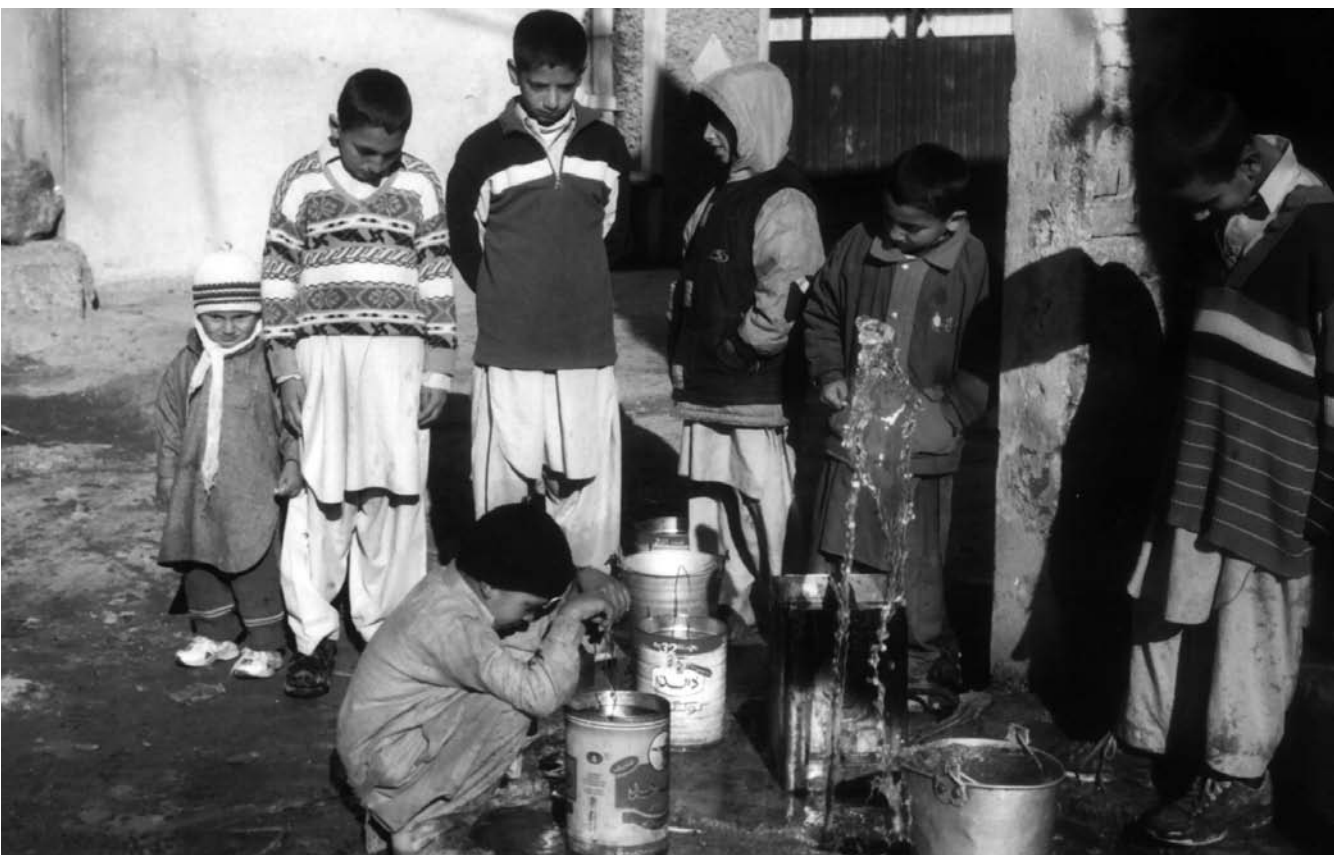
and quality control, in favour of greater coverage, demonstrates the myopia of successive administrative bodies and the conflicting agendas pursued by various players.

Besides the obvious health implications for the district's residents, water supply and quality issues also affect the tourist industry. The Galliyat area faces a serious drinking water supply problem, which in turn deters tourists. In addition, considerable resentment and anguish exists among local residents regarding an 1894 agreement under which the district is bound to supply 280,000 g of water daily to Murree. This contentious issue needs to be resolved once and for all to improve supply to the Galliyat area.

Water supply and sanitation require major resource inputs which the district is not likely to be able to provide single-handedly. Even so, potential avenues for resource generation have been ignored. The district continues to levy a flat rate for water use while supply from community-based systems is free of charge. In the past, revenues collected have covered barely 16% of maintenance costs. As a result, the concerned departments have faced a massive resource gap, in some cases as high as 79%, requiring heavy subsidies. Meanwhile, community involvement has been negligible, with many local residents reluctant to pay for the maintenance of schemes handed over to them after completion.

Given the acute resource crunch, all available funding sources need to be tapped and fully utilised. The Khushhal Pakistan Programme has earmarked 30% of its outlays for water channel remodelling and it is up to the district government to utilise this grant in an integrated manner. Such efforts can receive vital support and assistance from NGOs as well as the private sector, with contributions in the form of community mobilisation and technical expertise.

As far as administration is concerned, political interference, centralised planning and cumbersome sanctioning and disbursement procedures are prevalent here as in so many other sectors. Gaps in the technical capacity of concerned personnel, coupled with lack of awareness about



Obsolete and inefficient supply systems are rendered even less effective when unauthorised water connections are taken, upsetting the hydraulic balance so that communities further down the supply line are faced with water pressure problems.

efficient use of this scarce resource, only add to the problems plaguing the sector. On the enforcement level, statutory cover provided by the provincial Water Act 1985, which aims to control the illegal use of drinking water, is not enforced. The concerned departments lack the legal and institutional capacity to check illegal use.

Despite significant resource allocations since the 1980s, aimed at improving piped water supply and providing adequate sewage disposal services, today Abbottabad's drinking water distribution system is close to collapse. The contribution of past efforts is in any case hard to assess in the absence of reliable data.

Rapid population growth and increasing urbanisation are expected to magnify problems with both supply and water quality, particularly with the mushrooming of unauthorised settlements that lack basic amenities. The district govern-

ment will need to undertake a comprehensive survey of the existing situation. It must also resolve issues of jurisdiction arising out of devolution and the subsequent creation of three new town administrations, since drinking water is now essentially a municipal function.

Although a number of development projects and NGOs have carried out work in the sector, such activities have been characterised by an isolationist approach, the lack of coordination and the absence of community participation. Community participation was addressed in 1995 through a unified policy on rural area water supply, but the policy itself was developed without input from local communities, thus negating their ownership of the process.

Water is often taken for granted as a gift of nature rather than a valuable and scarce resource which must be conserved and used

wisely. This attitude promotes waste and indifference. If water supply issues are to be tackled at the grassroots level, such ideas must change.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Develop indicators that are more meaningful than coverage figures to assess progress in areas such as reasonable access to improved water sources. ('Reasonable access' is defined as a supply of at least 20 litres per person per day from a source within 1 km from the user's dwelling, while 'improved sources' include household connections, public standposts, protected springs and rainwater collection.)
- Eliminate political interference and patronage, and instead ensure that supply schemes are implementing purely on the basis of needs. This issue is all the more urgent in view of the increased number of elected representatives holding office at various levels following devolution. Support community involvement and dialogue to assess needs.
- Modify the current system of rural area user charges, which is based on an obsolete and anachronistic flat rate system that is uneconomical and promotes wasteful use. Introduce use-based charges, install meters and devise a multi-tier tariff structure to subsidise poorer households.
- Develop monitoring and enforcement mechanisms for urban areas to check illegal use, leakage and misuse which account for losses as high as 50%. Examine alternative processes and systems to be implemented in conjunction with the three town administrations.
- Improve the planning and execution of schemes by adopting a cross-sectoral approach, taking into account factors such as population growth, urbanisation and environmental degradation as well as the adverse impacts of activities in other sectors.
- Make it mandatory for all new drinking water schemes to include a sanitation component

and enforce this requirement across the district. Examine loopholes in the Water Act 1985 and provide legislative cover for district and town control over sanitation, water treatment and pollution.

- Make community participation mandatory for all new policy initiatives and explore possibilities for private-sector participation.
- Explore the use of springs and alternative water sources, and encourage the adoption of gravity-based systems that are cheaper to operate and maintain.
- Provide advocacy and communications inputs so that issues such as water conservation and economical use can be incorporated into the school curriculum at all levels.

MEDIUM TERM

- Develop explicit indicators to assess progress on the government's UN-MDG commitment to halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.
- Introduce fines and other punitive measures to tackle the pollution of drinking water, dealing severely with persistent violators.
- Improve sewerage and sanitation facilities, and pursue the construction of water treatment plants with funds generated through user charges and fines.
- Implement and strengthen a multi-tier tariffs regime based on the ability to pay, relying on community feedback and cooperation. Abolishing the existing flat rate system is bound to be an explosive issue. A participatory approach will need to be adopted and consensus will be pursued by increasing public awareness about the severity of the problem.
- Link land use planning and zoning to water supply issues by ensuring that the proposed legislation contains provisions requiring basic amenities including water, sanitation and waste disposal to be provided in all schemes. By addressing sewerage and sanitation concerns as part of this linkage, the quality of existing water supply will be addressed as well.
- Use the experience of NGOs working in the sector to develop replicable approaches,

particularly in relation to community sharing of operation and maintenance expenses.

- Include drinking water issues in the school curriculum at all levels. Seek parental participation and make sure that adult literacy centres and informal institutions are included in this awareness-raising effort.
- Continue with communications, advocacy and awareness raising, and explore new alternatives to break through the barrier of public indifference. The involvement of the *ulema*, elected representatives and opinion leaders can be a valuable tool in this regard, along with CBOs.
- Strengthen capacity building and development efforts so that all actors are equipped to handle the technical aspects relating to schemes, as well as a whole range of new ideas and approaches that will be introduced as part of the ASSD framework, including corporate-oriented management, the formulation of indicators, establishing indicator-related targets, revenue collection, participatory approaches, and community involvement in project identification and management. Attitudinal changes will be inculcated in line personnel unaccustomed to a cross-sectoral, participatory approach.

LONG TERM

- Gauge progress on the development of indicators, and assess their relevance and efficacy.
- Examine trends in revenue generation to pursue new options that might become available. With the consolidation of devolution, it is possible that local charges will no longer be fiercely resisted since their positive trickle-down effects will have contributed to gradual improvements in living conditions. In addition to internally-generated funds, Annual Development Programme allocations, donors and project support will be tapped.
- Align investment in water supply with poverty alleviation initiatives to make full use of the synergies that exist between poverty reduction, nutrition and disease prevention programmes.
- Explore alternative technologies such as jack pumps and solar pumps to minimise the use of electricity. Extend electricity supply to schemes where no other source of power can be utilised cost-effectively.



Ecotourism

The concept of ecotourism is based on the idea of promoting nature-based activities with minimal negative social and environmental impacts. Particularly in areas of outstanding natural beauty, ecotourism can serve as a crucial component of the local economy. By creating employment as well as other avenues for income generation, ecotourism directly addresses poverty alleviation while also providing other benefits for local communities. Conservation efforts aimed at promoting ecotourism, for instance, will serve as well to promote the long-term interests of the area and its residents. Similarly, roads and communications infrastructure developed to boost the travel industry will also facilitate trade, commerce and labour mobility. If undertaken with an eye to promoting and developing the district's natural resources, ecotourism can have a positive impact on a host of other areas.

Despite the area's natural beauty, tourism has not flourished in the district. Going by hotel occupancy figures for Abbottabad and Nathiagali,

the number of visitors to the district fell 60% between 1991 and 1999. Instead, Abbottabad has emerged as a point of transit, with the number of day visitors to the district estimated at 1,000–8,000 during the peak June–August period. No worthwhile economic benefits accrue to Abbottabad as a result of this influx, which only adds to traffic, pollution and congestion.

Administration of the tourism sector is in a shambles. The Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), Sarhad Tourism Corporation (STC) and GDA are all involved in some degree of tourism development. In the absence of even rudimentary coordination between these players, and the lack of laws, policies or plans pertaining to tourism, no meaningful interventions have been made to develop or promote Abbottabad's tourist sector. Previous administrative arrangements did not fare much better. The activities of the now-defunct Hazara Hill Tract Improvement Trust, charged with developing abandoned cantonments as tourist destinations, were erratic and short-sighted. Its only noteworthy contribution was an ambitious plan to build a ski resort in Ayubia. The scheme eventually faltered and the project was abandoned after the construction of a chairlift. Its successor, the GDA, is mired in an administrative morass that makes it a poor catalyst for improvements in the sector.

In the absence of effective oversight, support activities for the sector are restricted to the indiscriminate construction of down-market hotels with poor service, inadequate facilities and abysmal hygiene. This is compounded by an erratic and unreliable local transport system that operates without regulation.

Few efforts have been made to develop the ecotourism potential of the area and promote places of tourist interest. While the Ayubia National Park has the potential to attract nature lovers, nothing has been done to build on this appeal to attract hikers, trekkers and bird watchers. The Ayubia facility has not been upgraded to a full-scale ski resort, which would have resulted in the critical shift from summer tourism to year-round activity.

As far as employment in the tourist industry is concerned, local residents are engaged in unskilled work with the better-paying jobs going to outsiders. This drastically reduces the trickle-down economic benefits accruing from tourism, making only a nominal impact on poverty alleviation in the district. Revenues generated by tourism are not retained since essential commodities and supplies need to be imported. No attention has been directed towards generating additional revenue through indigenous products and handicrafts. Greater employment of local residents in the tourist industry, community participation, skills training and capacity building need to be addressed as part of a pro-poor tourism concept.

Area-specific problems need to be tackled as well, including the acute water shortages that persist in Abbottabad town and Nathiagali. More generally, attention must also be paid to the degradation of the district's environment, poor waste management, unplanned construction and increasing pollution, as part of the effort to promote tourism. Tourist-friendly practices should be encouraged and specific measures related to the tourist trade will be required. These include regulating the quality and pricing of facilities, providing better information to travellers and developing an integrated tourist policy for the area.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Undertake a widespread, participatory analytic exercise to formulate a rudimentary integrated plan for the district in which tourism, ecotourism and pro-poor tourism occupy a pivotal role. With the involvement of stakeholders and local communities, this exercise will begin with the collection of data in a number of areas:
 - current tourist activity including the number of visitors, disaggregated by location; the duration of their stay; preferred accommodation; and trends over the last five years;



While the Ayubia National Park has the potential to attract ecotourism, little has been done to build on this appeal by providing facilities for hikers, trekkers and birdwatchers.

- ❑ quantity, quality and type of accommodation available, disaggregated by location; occupancy ratios; and trends over the last five years;
- ❑ approximate economic benefits accruing to the district;
- ❑ cost, quality and impact of various tourist services currently available, based on comparative figures and the actual level of tourist activity;
- ❑ 'strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats' (SWOT) analysis of existing tourist facilities, aimed at uncovering gaps that can be addressed in the next stage of planning. This aspect of the exercise should cover individual tourist spots, including Abbottabad town, Ayubia, Dongagali, Nathiagali and Thandiani, and should also address tourist-related needs such as pricing, services, accessibility, information, safety, quality, hospitality and recreational activities; and
- ❑ SWOT exercise for major players in the field including the PTDC, STC, cantonment boards, TMAs and GDA, as well as smaller players such as hoteliers and transporters.
- Critically examine haphazard construction and development work undertaken in the name of promoting tourism. Bring these activities under the statutory cover of land use planning and zoning legislation.
- Examine options to develop year-round tourism in Abbottabad to ensure the long-term vitality of the sector. Building year-round facilities centred on a ski resort at Ayubia should be a priority. Expanding and enlarging the chairlift facility also needs to be evaluated, along with the provision of accommodation and related facilities to attract tourists and improve retention.

- Launch ecotourism activities with initial inputs geared towards the Ayubia National Park. Examine the incremental extension of such activities to the Birangali, Chhatri and Phalkot reserve forests. Provide hiking and walking tracks, camping grounds, benches and toilets, as well as travel maps, tourist guides, and information on the flora and fauna of the area.
- Develop a comprehensive marketing package to sell the district as a unique travel destination. To turn tourism into an industry firmly grounded in modern business practices, the concerned agencies must rely on promotional inputs on the lines of corporate product advertising to create regional, national and international interest in Abbottabad. Given the popularity of areas such as Gilgit, the Kaghan valley, Murree and Swat, visitors will have to be enticed away from these destinations by the promise of something better.

MEDIUM TERM

- Undertake participatory interventions to popularise ecotourism and make it a vibrant industry. Strengthen the information base; extend camping facilities; improve security; develop adventure trekking routes; provide souvenirs, maps and rest areas; and train a cadre of guides and guards recruited from local communities. Additional inputs should include guided tours, slide shows, displays of indigenous flora and fauna, and special tourist packages.
- Create a custodial body to oversee the sector. This body will evolve processes, mechanisms and systems to implement and monitor the numerous interventions necessary to take tourism out of its current moribund state. This will be a cross-sectoral entity, since waste management, drinking water, security, information and accommodation, to name but a few of the necessary inputs, require efforts to be made in a number of sectors. The success of this venture will also depend on forging dynamic partnerships with all stakeholders, particularly hotel owners, transporters, traders, local communities, NGOs and line departments. Legislative cover must be extended to such an entity, enabling it to effectively monitor and control fares, pricing, service quality, accommodation and community involvement, and to ensure that the benefits accruing from tourism are shared equitably.
- Explore strong punitive measures to put an end to encroachment, unauthorised construction and other activities that cause damage to natural capital.
- Build the capacity of local residents, in line with the pro-poor focus of sustainable tourism, so that they are able to gain higher-paid skilled employment in the sector. This initiative will cover all tourist industry workers and stakeholders including tour operators, hotel owners, service personnel, transporters, traders and local communities.
- Establish baseline indicators to assess the performance of critical components such as service quality, pricing, and hygiene. Develop codes of conduct for industry personnel, covering matters such as sales techniques and hospitality.
- Work to make tourism a year-round activity by exploring the possibility of developing a ski resort at Ayubia. Options include inviting private-sector investment and seeking donor support. Expand the existing chairlift facility and find ways to extend the tourist season.
- Launch ecotourism activities along with a comprehensive advocacy and promotional package targeting a diverse audience. The move from traditional commercial tourism to nature-based outdoor activities requires behavioural and perceptual changes which are possible only in the long run through sustained awareness efforts and consistent positive reinforcement. The involvement of the private sector will be evaluated for inputs in this area.
- Develop facilities at Thandiani to capitalise on its tremendous potential. This effort must include environmental concerns as well as the needs of local communities, but trade-offs will also be necessary.

LONG TERM

- Evaluate the progress of key initiatives launched in the short and medium term, including:
 - database development and information dissemination, particularly related to tourist numbers, destinations and trends;
 - community/public-sector partnerships and trends in revenue sharing with local communities;
 - the creation of an institutional home or custodial entity to oversee tourism development and provide an integrative mechanism for various interventions;
 - private-sector participation and incentives to increase its presence, including investment in tourist facilities and an assessment of the public sector's adherence to indicators and standards;
 - cross-sectoral interventions to mitigate the adverse impacts of waste, pollution and noise;
 - compliance with land use and zoning laws, security, and the provision of basic amenities;
 - marketing and promotion aimed at selling the district as a unique tourist haven;
 - capacity building, particularly for personnel directly involved in tourist-related activities and principal stakeholders such as the PTDC, STC, line departments and hoteliers.
- Focus greater attention on turning tourism into a year-round activity. With the move from patchy tourist activities to increasingly professional operations, promoting growth of the sector through retention and repeat visitors will require the provision of additional incentives and facilities.
- Formalise interventions to enhance ecotourism, possibly with the involvement of donors or private-sector actors. Such interventions will include building a ski resort, expanding the chairlift facility, extending protected areas and designating new protected areas.
- Upgrade facilities at Thandiani and provide a greater number of recreational opportunities at tourist hot-spots to maintain viability in what is expected to become an increasingly competitive market.
- Quantify the economic benefits accruing to the district and assess the filter-down effects to the grassroots level. This will involve a closer examination of (i) poverty alleviation and employment indicators, and (ii) return on investment to private sector entities, local communities and principal stakeholders.
- As tourism assumes the form of an industry, increasing resource needs will need to be met by improving governance and ensuring the economic viability of interventions. Private-sector support will also be necessary.



Enterprise Development

An explicit recognition of the nexus between poverty and conservation lies at the heart of the sustainable development concept. Microenterprise plays an important role in this paradigm because of its potential to alleviate poverty and upgrade human capital.

In the context of Abbottabad, enterprise development is particularly important since few alternatives exist to increase employment and generate income. With no manufacturing or other industry to speak of, the prevalence of subsistence-level agriculture, and the lack of technical and vocational facilities, the district suffers from widespread poverty. Other demographic trends, such as population growth, urbanisation and the youthful age profile of the population, point to the fact that poverty alleviation is likely to be an even more serious concern in the years to come.

In the absence of integrated long-term planning, government interventions undertaken to promote microenterprise have proved to be a dismal failure. NGOs, projects and the private sector have not had much success in this area. The Export Promotion Bureau has made nominal headway in promoting exports, while projects and NGOs have undertaken interventions to promote credit extension.

Nevertheless, employment opportunities have not grown significantly. The BADP, working through the SRSP, created a network of CBOs and provided credit to small enterprises. But this effort was overstretched, and marred by poor follow-up and the unproductive use of borrowed funds.

Access to credit is critical for the rural poor and credit availability has in recent years improved to some extent, largely through the intervention of NGOs. Financial institutions too have become more amenable to the idea of microfinance but capacity to optimally utilise credit is still lacking among many communities. At the same time, credit facilities have for the most part focused on more traditional activities such as livestock rearing, commercial establishments (mainly shops and public call offices) and agriculture. No effort has been made to identify innovative projects. With high interest rates, poor returns and a focus on already saturated sectors, microcredit extension has been unable to make a significant impact on poverty alleviation.

Tradition crafts and products, particularly those made by women, have not received sufficient attention. Even where funds have been available, as in the case of the Khushhal Pakistan Programme which earmarked 10% of its allocation for gender development, this money could not be properly utilised. As with many other sectors, the sidelining of women in microenterprise initiatives has proved detrimental to the sector as a whole.

The absence of systematic marketing support is an added impediment to microenterprise, along with poor technical skills and inadequate support in promoting value-added products. Development activities in the sector have been hampered by a number of additional factors including the lack of coordination between concerned players and the absence of a clarity of purpose. Private-sector involvement has not been sought, nor have NGOs and projects been approached for guidance. Given the apathy of the concerned departments, it is perhaps not surprising that community involvement in microenterprise has also been lacklustre.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Improve statistics on unemployment, poverty, the formal and informal sector, existing avenues of employment and the extent to which they are being exploited. Collect authentic and comprehensive data on women's employment, examining categories such as formal employment, unpaid work, domestic help, and participation in the informal economy. Assess employment opportunities available to women.
- Examine current efforts and initiatives that directly or indirectly address poverty alleviation through microenterprise development and access to credit.
- Establish indicators for credit extension, credit utilisation, the proportion of financial institutions' portfolios devoted to microcredit, capacity identification and development, cross-sectoral coordination and oversight, accountability and transparency, and systems and process as well as baseline poverty indicators disaggregated for male/female and rural/urban areas.
- Interact with financial institutions to change their policy towards microenterprise, and to influence their decision making in areas such as interest rates, credit extension procedures and disbursement.
- Examine the capacity shortfalls of stakeholders as well as credit providers in cases where credit and opportunities do exist. This effort will cover loan acquisition, investment choices, managerial inputs, marketing, pricing and quality. Inputs from NGOs already active in the field will be sought to facilitate planning.
- Create a master plan for microenterprise development. This exercise will require inputs from the entire spectrum of stakeholders and players, and will start by building on human and natural capital. Enterprises revolving around floriculture, off-season vegetables, dairy production, poultry, woodwork and handicrafts should be promoted along with innovative ventures. Issues such as



Small enterprise development is particularly important in a district such as Abbottabad where few alternatives exist to increase employment and generate income.

institutional support, oversight and capacity building must also be addressed.

- Upgrade and modernise technical and vocational institutions to increase opportunities for individuals seeking to set up businesses.

MEDIUM TERM

- Establish coordination between projects, programmes and donors working in the field. The direct involvement of key players such as financial institutions and NGOs will be critical.
- Design and implement a multi-pronged capacity-building effort, ranging from basic knowledge and skills to marketing and promotion, in order to maximise returns on investment.
- Identify indigenous activities that are likely to benefit from microenterprise development interventions, such as bee keeping, fish farming, floriculture, off-season vegetable cultivation, traditional handicrafts and agricultural production.
- Develop the capacity of the district's human resources. This is especially important for

women and for the residents of rural areas where income from subsistence farming cannot keep pace with inflation, growing needs and increasing household size.

- Examine prospects for promoting microenterprise as well as small and medium enterprise, working in close liaison with the Small Industries Development Board, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority, Khushhali Bank, Export Promotion Bureau and private sector.

LONG TERM

- Review the efficacy of the systems, processes and mechanisms established for integrated planning, especially in relation to cross-sectoral cooperation. Provide managerial and technical inputs where gaps persist.
- Create an institutional home for microenterprise development activities, with special emphasis on bringing about a reorientation in thinking.
- Induct female personnel in the extension components of various departments, such as livestock and agriculture, so that women are able to benefit freely from these services. Provide legislative cover for this measure, perhaps by operationalising the employment quota commitments of the provincial government.
- Pursue resources to strengthen microenterprise development by seeking donor intervention and support from projects, and by improving the utilisation of existing outlays. Financial institutions will be pursued to make interest rates more competitive, and to extend support in project identification and credit utilisation.
- Encourage private-sector entry into the field by providing incentives and creating a favourable investment climate.



Culture

Traditional cultural norms, particularly the influence of tribal affiliations, continue to govern many facets of life in the district. The positive aspects of these traditions should be harnessed to promote sustainable development. Cultural heritage and local arts and crafts, for instance, can serve to promote tourism. While the advent of the information age is bound to transform cultural values, efforts will be undertaken to preserve those traditions that compliment the sustainable development agenda of the district.



Gender

Women have a crucial role to play in virtually every sector of the economy. Mainstreaming their contribution to society is therefore essential. Education, capacity building and income generation opportunities will accelerate the pace of gender mainstreaming, coupled with specifically targeted measures such as the strict enforcement of women's quotas in government jobs.

The concept of gender is often taken to mean biological difference, a misconception that clouds the actual issues at stake. In fact, the term gender refers to social differences created by the influence of upbringing, conditioning, and socio-cultural norms and expectations. Once this idea is understood, gender issues no longer appear marginal to the wider concerns of society as a whole. One of the aims of sustainable development interventions must be to influence socially constructed differences and introduce equity in all aspects of female life. This involves mainstreaming women's role in society and enhancing their potential to contribute to development.

Gender concerns must be addressed as part and parcel of the issues confronting other sectors. Economic development and prosperity cannot be achieved if half the population is underprivileged and marginalised. Gender-sensitive initiatives are therefore crucial to economic

progress. For instance, access to microcredit is essential if women are to attain some degree of financial autonomy. Here, current regulations requiring male guarantors for loans severely restrict women's economic opportunities.

Similarly, women are key players in natural resource management activities, particularly fuel wood collection, livestock rearing, dairy production and backyard poultry operations. Yet social norms prevent them from acquiring capacity development inputs, such as up-to-date information to improve production, since agricultural and livestock extension services are provided exclusively by men.

Women's participation in economic life is further restricted by social attitudes towards female education. Participation at all levels is lower among females, partly owing to the inconvenient location of schools. But social perceptions also play an important part in keeping girls out of school or preventing them from pursuing higher education. When the role of women is perceived to be confined to marriage, domestic work and child-rearing, skills acquisition and education are considered superfluous. This is borne out by the fact that between primary school and higher levels, the contraction in female enrolment is as high as 46%. The shortage of intermediate schools in rural areas and unequal access to degree colleges restricts women's participation in higher education, which in turn limits their employment prospects.

Women's role in poverty alleviation is still not acknowledged or fully understood. As such, they are at a significant disadvantage in terms of employment. Arriving at an accurate assessment of the situation is complicated by the 1998 census, where the participa-

tion rate excludes domestic workers while unemployment figures includes this category of work.

Environmental health and natural resource conservation is another area where the role of women has been sidelined. Developing effective management strategies requires a solid understanding of women's relationship to natural resources as well as their rights and role in resource planning and management. Women's perspective on environmental matters must be incorporated into planning, along with an understanding of the gender-specific impacts of environmental degradation and unsustainable use.

Following the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) in Beijing, both the federal and provincial governments committed to providing fixed quotas for women's employment in the public sector. Despite the establishment of three major commissions and the promulgation of the National Commission on the Status of Women Ordinance 2000—moves aimed at increasing the number of women in the judiciary and raising to 25% their presence in all public, semi-autonomous and government institutions—the



Developing effective management strategies requires a solid understanding of women's relationship to natural resources.

impact of these gestures remains to be felt on the ground (ADB 2002).

Under the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the federal government committed to a 5% quota for women in government service, which the NWFP government reduced to 2%. Nothing was done to achieve even these low targets, and women continue to be under-represented in law enforcement, the judiciary and extension services. Under the devolution of local government, reserved seats have been created for women in all levels of government. But with the traditional dominance of men in the political arena and social mores that restrict the participation of underprivileged women in political activity, even this move has amounted to little more than a cosmetic measure.

So severe is the administrative myopia regarding gender issues that the Khushhal Pakistan Programme allocation for gender development created a dilemma for district administrators who could not find ways to utilise these funds beyond the establishment of a few handicraft centres.

Clearly, gender issues are poorly understood and rarely given serious attention. Efforts in this area have for the most part been restricted to erratic and cavalier announcements aimed at gaining political capital or rousing popular sentiment, followed by nothing in the way of implementation. Women's contribution to the economic life of the district is stifled by patriarchal views, traditional norms and social prejudice. Even in Abbottabad, which is thought to be a relatively enlightened district, women are placed in a subordinate role.

The WSSD draft declaration makes a commitment to:

promote women's equal access to, and full participation, on the basis of equality with men, in decision making at all levels, mainstreaming gender perspectives in all policies and strategies, eliminating all forms of violence and discrimination against women, and improving the status,

health and economic welfare of women and girls through full and equal access to economic opportunity, land, credit, education and health care services (UN 2002).

The ASSD endorses this commitment, with the understanding that sustainable development cannot be achieved while half the population is excluded from active involvement in economical and public life. The critical importance of empowering women through increased self-reliance and economic independence cannot be over-emphasised. It is incumbent on the district government to promote the economic participation of women and create avenues for employment.

Social equity is fundamentally linked to gender equity. No society can thrive unless all its members are allowed to live in dignity. Prejudice and discrimination against any social group, whether on the grounds of faith, political opinion, socio-economic status or sexual orientation, are clear indicators of social inequity. As part of the larger, complex fabric of society, gender issues can be meaningfully addressed only after attitudinal and cultural inhibitions are addressed. The process will require patience and persistence.

INTERVENTIONS AND INITIATIVES

SHORT TERM

- Begin by directly addressing those issues that are amenable to improvement within the existing non-supportive, socio-cultural milieu.
- Address gender issues in the spirit of the WSSD draft declaration.
- Take advantage of funds available through federal and provincial development programmes, and international donors to promote microenterprise activities among women. This effort will not be confined to cosmetic interventions or to run-off-the-mill solutions, such as setting up sewing centres, but will seek innovative, long-term, sustainable ventures. Agro-based enterprise, kitchen gardening, off-season vegetable cul-

tivation, poultry, livestock and orchards are some sectors that can be explored.

- Improve population welfare activities through integrated inputs involving health, education and population welfare workers to change negative perceptions about family planning. Men will be the target audience, particularly in rural areas, since the success of reproductive health interventions depends on changing their obsolete cognitive paradigms. In this context, advocacy and communication to promote smaller families and overcome religious and socio-cultural barriers to birth control will be analysed and tentatively developed in a broad-based, participatory process that involves all stakeholders.
- Establish performance indicators, promote service delivery mechanisms and evaluate

the entire spectrum of possible alternatives, including NGOs, CBOs, the health department, lady health visitors, the private sector, projects and donors.

- Promote the economic participation of women and create opportunities for greater income generation.
- Provide institutional inputs and design interventions to facilitate credit acquisition, improve mobility, and provide access to modern skills and techniques in livestock, dairy, floriculture, poultry and bee keeping. Use the NGO platform of village organisations and CBOs as a springboard to disseminate information and skills related to loan utilisation, credit, savings and expenditure. Provide distribution, storage and marketing support.



As primary users of resources such as fuel wood, women play an important part in popularising the use of cleaner and more energy-efficient technologies, including solar cookers.

- Examine the option of establishing a coordinative, institutional home for gender-specific interventions. The 33% presence of women in local councils should be used to lobby for this measure.
- Establish oversight, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure continuity in gender interventions.

MEDIUM TERM

- Ensure progress in enrolment at all levels of education by providing the necessary facilities, as outlined in the vision for the education sector. Develop indicators to allow for accurate assessment and the introduction of remedial measures, as well as to establish accountability.
- Promote capacity building, particularly in relation to credit utilisation, to develop microenterprise run by women. Establish indicators for credit access, technical and managerial assistance, and the setting up of microenterprise.
- Examine and consolidate advocacy inputs and find innovative ways to target male audiences in order to address behavioural and attitudinal changes that stand in the way of gender mainstreaming.
- Promote greater female employment in the public sector to allow women to participate in decision-making and policy development. Progress on implementation of the 2% women's quota should be assessed, and its application to overall employment in government organisations, rather than to new recruitment alone, must be sought. Legislative cover and statutory support will be needed to ensure implementation and continuity.
- Review progress on technical and vocational skills for women, and examine loopholes in institutional support to improve performance.

- Pursue broad-based partnerships with NGOs, CBOs, village organisations, projects, financial institutions, women's representatives and the private sector to ensure continuity in efforts to promote gender equity. These partnerships should be used as platforms to address gender issues ranging from health, nutrition, education and fertility to employment and capacity development.

LONG TERM

- Undertake a comprehensive audit of progress in areas critical to gender issues, and assess results achieved in the context of the UN-MDG, and in terms of poverty alleviation and population welfare. Individual indicators will be critically analysed and significant shortfalls will be addressed through specifically targeted interventions.
- Examine progress in economic interventions and microenterprise development efforts, and assess their impact on the economic empowerment of women to identify key areas that require further attention.
- Expand advocacy and communications inputs to change behaviours and attitudes that are a barrier to gender mainstreaming. The target audience will continue to be men, and the support of community and religious leaders is vital.
- Examine the option of increasing women's quotas in public-sector employment. Explore the possibility of adopting both the federal government's commitment of 25% representation for women in all public-sector organisations as well as its 5% quota commitment under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. Eventually, 30% of all employees in public-sector organisations should be women.





PART V

Towards Sustainable
Development





Sustainable Development Priorities

Many of the inputs necessary for sustainable development to take root are complex, extensive and time-consuming, requiring major changes in the macro-structural environment of the district as well as the attitudes of its people. Some of these measures have already been addressed in the sector-specific strategic initiatives proposed in previous chapters. A crucial first step towards implementation is to understand the deeper issues at stake.

Abbottabad's economy depends overwhelmingly on subsistence agriculture, with activity in livestock and poultry patchy at best. The public sector is the district's major employer, with variations in income witnessed as a result of small-scale seasonal tourism. From the standpoint of sustainability and long-term viability, this state of affairs is not tenable for a number of interrelated reasons.

To begin with, the district's agriculture sector is close to saturation. With irrigation made increasingly difficult owing to persistent water shortages, no significant gains in productivity can be achieved. Nor can this situation be radically transformed. Some gains are possible through the application of improved farming techniques but choices

and prospects are limited, particularly in the short term. Establishing even rudimentary irrigation networks is a capital-intensive undertaking. Add to this the fact that the majority of landholdings is small, and goals such as increasing yields or bringing more land under cultivation begin to lose their appeal.

While the livestock and poultry sectors are an integral part of the local economy, activity here is sporadic. Growth is hampered by chronic fodder and feed shortages as well as the absence of proper markets and extension support services. As a result, the livestock and poultry industries are not sufficiently developed to constitute a significant component of the economy.

Income-generation opportunities are few and far between, while employment prospects in both the public and private sectors are limited. In the absence of large-scale manufacturing, commerce and trade, it is unrealistic to expect a radical metamorphosis of the employment landscape in the foreseeable future.

Tourism has not been developed to fill the gap in employment and income generation. Attempts to promote the tourist industry have been erratic and half-hearted, perhaps because the sector has not traditionally been viewed as a means to promote development.

The people rely heavily on forest resources to meet immediate needs but this dependence is not sustainable. Forests have suffered heavily as a result of indiscriminate use and today stand dangerously depleted.

DIVERSIFYING THE ECONOMY

Abbottabad's future prospects for sustainable development depend on diversifying economic activity and improving institutional efficacy. Key stakeholders, the administrative machinery, public representatives, NGOs and civil society at large must be involved in this process. A number of areas will need to be targeted simultaneously, if diversification is to be achieved.

AGRICULTURE

Given the district's overwhelming dependence on subsistence agriculture, inputs such as seed, fertiliser and crop rotation techniques will need to be improved to optimise output within existing constraints. In addition, sericulture, floriculture and off-season vegetable production must be evaluated for further development, along with the cultivation of high-value crops such as cherries and tea. More efficient use of existing resources will be required.

RANGELANDS

Critical natural resource management players such as the agriculture, forest and livestock authorities will need to coordinate their efforts. This coordination is vital for the development of sectors such as rangelands and livestock, various aspects of which fall under the administrative ambit of all three departments. The problem here is that the forest department, which is technically responsible for rangeland management, has focused its efforts on timber, largely through policing and afforestation. Similarly the agriculture department, responsible for fodder, is primarily concerned with increasing cereal crop production and bringing land under cultivation. Even watershed projects implemented in the district have ignored rangeland development, instead favouring afforestation and agriculture. Specific attention and support for rangelands, as part of an effort to boost the livestock industry, is a viable objective and needs immediate attention.

POULTRY

This is another sector that should be targeted for development, particularly since extensive activities in poultry rearing are already being undertaken, although without the benefit of long-term integrated planning.

FISHERIES

The district provides ideal conditions for the development of fisheries. The area's aquatic resources could be developed as an industry, albeit on a relatively small scale. Prospects for

trout farming should be explored, and technical and research support should be extended to concerned stakeholders and departments.

MICROENTERPRISE

Given the current climate where microenterprise development through credit extension has become increasingly popular, the district should explore ways in which this orientation can be channelled to support small businesses. Building on local handicraft manufacture, and providing support to livestock, poultry, horticulture and floriculture activities, can be vital components of such an intervention.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Credit will not serve to alleviate poverty if borrowers lack the capacity to utilise loans effec-

tively. Similarly, enterprise development will fail to bring about significant change in the socio-economic climate if new jobs are created but workers lack the skills to avail of these employment opportunities. For this reason, it is critical to provide up-to-date technical and vocational skills training that is relevant to local conditions and market needs.

ECOTOURISM

The rudimentary inputs made in the tourism sector are for the most part restricted to the indiscriminate construction of low-quality hotels and the auctioning of plots for commercial development. The true benefits that could accrue from ecotourism have yet to be explored. Tourist numbers have steadily fallen over the years and Abbottabad now sees a substantial number of day visitors who are based in Murree. The district serves as a transit point for tourists travelling to the Kaghan valley and the Northern Areas, rather



Enterprise development will fail to bring about significant change in the economic landscape of the district if new jobs are created but workers lack the skills to avail of these employment opportunities.

than being a tourist destination in its own right. Whatever little tourist attention it does receive is seasonal and this trend needs to be reversed.

MINING

The area is rich in mineral reserves which should be developed systematically with particular focus on magnesite, phosphate and soapstone deposits that have not received sufficient attention. Mining-related industries such as manufacturing and processing plants should be established locally so that the benefits of value addition accrue to the district. At the same time, the EIA/SEA regime will need to be strictly enforced and a regulatory mechanism developed to minimise potential damage to the environment. Acceptable trade-offs will need to be considered so that mining can be developed with minimal adverse impact on the surrounding area.

INDUSTRY AND VALUE ADDITION

It is not just in the case of mining that value-addition activities must be pursued. A number of industries based on such indigenous resources as wood, minerals and livestock products can be developed to help diversify the economy. Furniture making, woodwork, handicrafts and cottage industry, maize products, and dairy production are all economically viable operations.

STANDARD OF LIVING

In addition to poverty alleviation and sustainable development, issues related to the standard of living must also be taken into consideration. An integrated analysis will be required before the topic can be tackled effectively.

EDUCATION

A fundamental indicator of social development, education enhances individual social status and boosts the economic prospects of the population. Improvements are needed here with regard to quality, access, relevance and continuity. Despite significant investment in infrastructure for the sector, participation rates fall steadily for higher

levels of education while repeat and failure rates are high. This suggests not only that quality is wanting but also that students are poorly motivated to pursue higher education. In rural areas, access to education for girls is restricted. Across the board, the quality of technical and vocation training is poor, reflected in the low market absorption of graduates from such institutions.

Problems in the education sector need to be addressed through a combination of traditional and innovative mechanisms. Rather than simply building more schools, which has been the conventional approach, existing facilities could be utilised more efficiently by introducing a shifts system, launching summer schooling and using existing facilities to conduct classes for different levels. Gender and rural/urban equity issues will also need to be addressed in the planning and sanctioning process for new schools. The priority here should be to achieve maximum benefits for recipient communities and to mitigate existing imbalances.

Other inputs will be required including improving the syllabus, actively pursuing parental involvement in education, creating community oversight mechanisms to facilitate monitoring, improving teacher quality, providing training and developing a more rational testing system. These are in large part issues of governance and will need to be addressed as such, but in a participatory manner that centres around PTAs and local communities.

HEALTH

The district's health indicators seem impressive on paper, surpassing provincial averages in most categories. These figures are in large part distorted by the existence of a mega-project, the AMC, confined to tertiary care and accessible only to the urban community. Rural health care is marred by erratic and inadequate coverage and poor funding. Overall, health care in the district is characterised by the absence of both health equity and health security. Attention now needs to be given to improving rural facilities and to preventive measures such as the provision of clean drinking water, proper sanitation, hygiene education, balanced nutrition and pollu-

tion control. Given the district's relatively extensive roads network, mobile facilities should be established to reach scattered rural populations.

POPULATION WELFARE

In tandem with activities to improve health care, population growth needs to be curbed. Excessive growth negates whatever little benefits have accrued from interventions in the past and threatens the long-term prospects for sustainable development. High population growth also distorts the demographic profile. This is already the case in Abbottabad where a massive 43% of the population is below the age of 15 years. Besides increasing pressure on health and education service providers in the short term, a youthful population will exert additional

pressure on a number of sectors in the medium and long term, including employment and housing. Once again an issue primarily of governance, improvements here can be brought about through private-sector interventions as well as community support for preventive health care and birth control.

DRINKING WATER

Government statistics claim that drinking water supply schemes cover 85% of rural habitations and 90% of the district's urban areas. The quality of the water supplied is not factored in to official numbers. The fact is that much of the water supply is contaminated, particularly in congested urban areas where improper management of waste water and the indiscriminate dumping of solid waste pollutes major rivers and streams. These waters are also used for irrigation, creating risks of contamination in the food chain. Only recently has explicit attention been directed to sanitation. But with the concerned departments facing severe resource shortfalls, it has not always been possible to implement more than the most rudimentary schemes. This too is an issue of governance and needs to be addressed as such both at the administrative level and through community participation. Conservation and rational use of this scarce resource can be achieved only through general and widespread support for such an effort. Investment will be needed to upgrade the outdated supply network and to address issues of erratic supply.

WASTE WATER AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste management in the district is inadequate, with a disquieting level of administrative and community-level apathy regarding the issue. While the concerned authorities fail to fulfil their responsibilities, civic sense is also absent. The indiscriminate dumping of



While farm-to-market roads boost the economy by providing growers with improved access to wider markets, infrastructure development often comes at the cost of the natural environment.

solid waste in the immediate vicinity of homes does not seem to be a matter of public concern. Arrangements for waste water treatment are far from adequate, the municipal dumpsite at Salhad employs inefficient and harmful disposal methods, and the need for sanitation schemes has only recently been recognised. It goes without saying that this situation impacts a host of other sectors including drinking water and health, not to mention the aesthetic appeal of the district. Essentially an issue of governance, strong community involvement as well as continuous advocacy and awareness raising are also needed. Resource shortfalls need to be examined as well. Imposing rational user charges is one way to generate funds for investment to improve service delivery. Supplementary administrative measure that would go a long way in mitigating the current crisis include imposing fines on polluters, establishing an oversight and monitoring mechanism, and encouraging community participation.

LAND USE PLANNING AND ZONING

Development in the district is carried out without the regulatory cover of land use planning and zoning laws, building codes or EIAs. This has led in urban areas to the mushrooming of illegal townships lacking even basic amenities such as water supply and sewerage systems. Under heavy pressure from unchecked development and unregulated construction, municipal services are stretched to the limit. Increasing urbanisation, largely the result of population growth and rural poverty, will aggravate the situation even further. Once again, this is a governance problem and will require that solutions are sought for key issues such as the inadequacy of laws, poor implementation and enforcement, the lack of accountability and the interference of influential vested interests.

ROADS

While Abbottabad's roads network is impressive, the district's location gives rise to a number of problems. Infrastructure development has been undertaken without recourse to EIAs/SEAs—a

trend which cannot be allowed to persist in the future. Currently, transit traffic on the Karakoram highway creates severe congestion and heavy pollution in and around Abbottabad city, marring the aesthetic appeal of the area. Construction of the proposed Abbottabad bypass should be pursued to redress this problem. At the same time, road user charges and pollution levies should be considered as options to generate resources for maintenance. To deal with increasing pollution, conversion to CNG should be encouraged. Farm-to-market roads and rural access in general need greater attention. These are administrative and governance issues but it will be necessary as well to ensure grassroots involvement in project identification and implementation.

ENERGY

Abbottabad's energy dependency is already a drain on the local economy but the long-term impact of this dependence will seriously hinder the district's efforts to pursue sustainable development. What is worse, no immediate options exist for self-reliance in this capital-intensive sector. As such, a two-pronged approach will be required. The district will need to develop local energy sources such as microhydel power plants while simultaneously launching a massive effort to promote energy conservation through the use of fuel-efficient cooking and heating devices and the construction of energy-efficient buildings. In the long term, other alternatives such as solar energy and wind power should be examined to diversify power production, reduce reliance on the national grid and achieve the maximum possible level of autarky in power generation.

Natural gas supply to rural areas covers barely 10% of the population, with the overwhelming majority of rural residents relying on wood for cooking and heating. Although much of this wood is imported from outside the district, this has not served to ease the pressure on Abbottabad's forests. With widespread rural poverty, those unable to pay for firewood are forced to resort to illegal felling. As a result, forest resources are rapidly nearing depletion. Increasing gas coverage is one way to tackle

this problem. At the same time, localised efforts to promote alternative fuels and wise use will be beneficial. This is not only a matter of governance; equally important is the role of various stakeholders including research organisations and new technology providers. Local communities can lend a hand in conservation, economic use and theft prevention.

GENDER

Conscious long-term efforts need to be undertaken for gender sensitisation, and to improve education and employment for women. Women's role in natural resource management activities and their dependence on natural resources makes them ideal partners in conservation efforts. Their income-generation activities such as kitchen gardening, poultry rearing and animal husbandry can make an important contribution to poverty alleviation. Women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming involves attitudinal changes as well as cultural transformation, but it is not too early to begin advocacy. Synergistic input will be required from civil society, elected representatives and opinion leaders.

IMPLEMENTATION: PARTNERSHIPS AND SYMBIOSIS

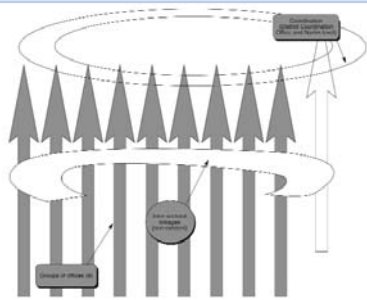
There is a long-standing tradition in developing countries to look to the government for the delivery of services in a wide range of areas. Perhaps as a result, the general trend in development interventions has been to seek external funding, either through donors, the federal and provincial governments or NGOs. This system is not sustainable. It is, rather, as some have described it, a form of 'fund addiction'—a subsidy-dependent mindset that will prove to be a serious handicap in the long run.

Pursuing external funding is, therefore, not the central thrust of implementing ASSD initiatives. The ASSD aims to chart a course towards sustainable development which by definition means that interventions must in some way be self-sustaining. This requires the involvement of a host of actors outside the public sector. Civil society, local communities, NGOs, CBOs, village organisations, external specialists and resource providers, banks, development finance institutions, opinion leaders and specialised organisations are all part of the ASSD vision. The hope is that this broad-based participatory orientation will be spurred by the devolution of local government.

The onus for implementation of the proposals presented in the ASSD lies with the people of the district. The success or failure of the effort hinges on broad-based community involvement and civil society mobilisation. For implementation to begin, what is required is commitment from the district government, as well as concerned government departments, elected representatives, the business community and stakeholders.

In terms of resources, the ASSD advocates sustainability and self-reliance while simultaneously seeking institutional, financial, technical and capacity-building support so that the district is better positioned to implement the proposed strategic initiatives. A great deal can be achieved simply by radically improving existing administrative mechanisms, institutions and capacity. The education, agriculture, livestock, and finance and planning departments are key areas where such reform is vital.

In essence, external resource inflows will, in the long run, be viewed as technical and tactical inputs to realise the broad strategic initiatives proposed here. Meanwhile, capacity building through international donors will enable the district to use its own resources to implement the ASSD.



Implementation Framework

The pursuit of sustainable development is a formidable challenge. Progress is at best painfully slow and only incremental changes can be expected. The hurdles that need to be overcome are not related exclusively to resource shortfalls and capacity constraints. At every turn, intractable rigidity and colonial thinking block understanding and acceptance of sustainable development concepts. On the level of governance, uncertainties persist both about the tenuous state of democracy in the country and the continuity of the devolution process in lower tiers of government. Deep-seated administrative biases, such as the absence of a participatory orientation, weaken the efficacy of public-sector interventions. There is a marked tendency to favour personal aggrandisement, rather than working for the collective good. As a result, accountability, transparency and altruism are sorely lacking.

It is important to consider these issues at the very outset and to recognise existing limitations at all levels—human, administrative,

structural and financial—so that the prescriptive interventions outlined in earlier chapters are firmly grounded in reality. In committing to the vision developed in the ASSD, the district government and zilla council must ensure that these constraints are taken into account in all routine planning and development interventions.

Understanding the administrative context in which the ASSD is grounded also allows this document to be viewed more realistically, particularly in terms of the time frames required for implementation. For those who might be tempted to see the ASSD as a quick fix for all of the district's problems, it is also important to introduce an element of pragmatism. As such, it is worth repeating that the pace of change is slow, that the consolidation of processes and systems is incremental, and that capacity gaps, particularly in the early stages of devolution, can sometimes be disheartening.

For the ASSD vision to become a reality, support for the strategy will be needed across the board, regardless of ideological and political divides. This can only be achieved through debate, accommodation, consultation and trade-offs in the spirit of the sustainable development paradigm. Strong political will is also required to reconcile the conflicting agendas of various interest groups and stakeholders, whose commitment and involvement remains critical to the success of ASSD implementation.

ISSUES IN IMPLEMENTATION

Major concerns regarding implementation are of course related to devolution and the administrative uncertainty that prevails as the structure of local government changes. The country's tenuous return to democracy is also a factor to consider. Further afield, implementation issues are affected by the radical shift in sustainable development thinking that is taking place at the international level as well as the geopolitical realignments that have occurred in the wake of the events of 11 September 2001.

DEVOLUTION

The entire administrative framework across the country is in a state of flux following the promulgation in 2001 of provincial LGOs which set the ball rolling for the devolution of governance to lower tiers. Ambiguity regarding governance prevails in Abbottabad district as well. Adding to the uncertainty are the 2002 elections for the national and provincial assemblies, which have led to confusion regarding the responsibilities of elected representatives at various tiers of government. This problem has yet to be addressed by the National Reconstruction Bureau.

As the devolution plan unfolds, new and unexpected problems are likely to arise. In Abbottabad, the creation in 2002 of three new town councils is one such example, where only skeletal details have been provided regarding jurisdiction and coordination with higher tiers. At present, overlaps in jurisdiction and responsibilities exist with elected representatives at higher tiers, resulting in competition for turf. The division of responsibility for development interventions between a number of different tiers adds to the general uncertainty that prevails at the moment.

The ambiguity created by the decentralisation of mandates from the province to the local level leads to administrative inertia and in some cases a vacuum of authority. While lower-tier governments have been handed new responsibilities, they are at the same time undergoing a radical structural metamorphosis. The District Government Abbottabad has been created by reforming line departments that were earlier under the jurisdiction of the provincial government but the necessary fiscal and civil service transformations are still awaited. Below the provincial and district hierarchy lies the third tier of this new set-up, which in Abbottabad consists of 46 union administrations.

Across the board, the expanded mandate of various tiers has not automatically resulted in an accompanying enhancement of capacity. The LGO commitment to formulate a sustainable development vision is also hampered by the lack of requisite knowledge and training. In the short

term, the agenda for the district government is to consolidate the changes introduced under the devolution plan and attend to basic issues of capacity development and systemic evolution. This should not, however, suggest that the picture for the immediate future is one filled with gloom. The process of change in itself offers major opportunities for the pursuit of human well-being and sustainable development.

DEPARTMENTAL THINKING

Partly as a result of administrative necessity and partly owing to an increasing need for functional specialisation, departments emerged with exclusive jurisdiction over their respective domains. With the evolution of thinking on development issues at the international and national level, it is

As the devolution plan unfolds, new and unexpected problems are likely to arise. In Abbottabad, the creation of three town councils is one such example, where only skeletal details have been provided regarding jurisdiction and coordination with higher tiers. This ambiguity leads to administrative inertia and in some cases a vacuum of authority.

misleading to believe that this departmental approach will be able to promote sustainable development. On the contrary, the tunnel vision this breeds, accentuated by departmental rather than collective interests, is a major barrier to achieving optimal returns on development interventions. In the current scenario, concepts such as holistic, integrative, cross-sectoral and cross-functional developmental planning are paid lip service, while the practical gains that such ideas are meant to achieve remain elusive. Compartmentalised thinking is today one of the most formidable challenges confronting sustainable development.

On one level, it may be argued that the philosophy of devolution developed as a reaction to this very problem. The role that devolution is likely to play in finding a solution, however, is unclear for a number of reasons. To begin with, devolution is itself in an embryonic stage. Meanwhile, critical departments such as forests have not been devolved. In addition, the status of fiscal devolution and revenue generation remains unclear.

INDICATORS

Fully aware of the structural and administrative difficulties involved in implementation, the ASSD aims to address these issues in a more efficacious manner. As a first step, it will be important to highlight the exact nature of cross-sectoral linkages as well as their relationship to and impact on sustainable development. This will be done by developing indicators.

Indicators lie at the very heart of the ASSD process, allowing its strategic interventions to be operationalised, implemented and monitored. Without indicators, there is no accountability, no transparency and ultimately, no sustainability of interventions.

Area-specific indicators will be developed to establish baseline positions and set annual targets. Responsibility for meeting these targets will be assigned in an explicit cross-departmental manner and periodic progress reviews will be conducted. In light of these reviews, the zilla council will institute changes, extending resources and adapting existing processes and mechanisms where necessary.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY

The ASSD vision, its proposed interventions and the formulation of indicators will be dissemi-

nated on an ongoing basis. The limited efficacy of mainstream media in Abbottabad necessitates the use of innovative channels of communication, including opinion leaders, academia and elected representatives, as well as formal and informal social and cultural institutions such as the *hujra*, *panchayat* (body of local elders) and *jirga*. In addition, a condensed version of the ASSD will be produced in Urdu so that its vision for sustainable development is accessible to the widest possible audience.

PAST EXPERIENCE IN IMPLEMENTATION

Much experience has been accumulated over the years from numerous development interventions undertaken in the district by a host of entities including government agencies, development projects, donors, NGOs, the private sector and individual communities. While the lack of development in the district is a cause for widespread disaffection, there is also a high level of dissatisfaction with the results of initiatives undertaken so far. Key lessons learned from past experience are as follows:

- Governance issues are a recurring theme in development planning and are manifested in a number of ways: the lack of transparency, accountability and timely response; the short life span of programmes and the high turnover of barely acclimatised personnel, largely as a result of political interference; the absence of monitoring, oversight or assessment mechanisms; and capacity gaps that in some cases are critical.
- Under the traditional administrative psyche, civil society, elected entities and specialists are all viewed through the lens of administrative fiat. There is no room in this kind of thinking for the participation of local communities in decision making, project identification and implementation.
- Even where adequate investment is made in the implementation of projects, operation and maintenance funds are lacking.
- Project design invariably leaves much to be desired. The principal shortfall here is related to the absence of EIAs, with the

result that an already fragile ecosystem is subjected to further assault.

- Development projects are conceived and managed in a compartmentalised fashion. This ignorance of intra- and inter-sectoral linkages has marred the success of many interventions.
- Across the board, data gathering remains inadequate. Where statistics have been compiled, their veracity is in doubt. The absence of reliable data is also the result of serious shortcomings in the planning process.
- Gender issues have never been properly acknowledged, let alone addressed, as being relevant to every tier of government and to civil society as a whole. This is all the more shameful considering the unequivocal empirical evidence linking poverty alleviation to gender mainstreaming. Gender issues have been the focus of cosmetic measures to appease donors and satisfy certain requirements. Issues in this area remain poorly understood.
- The inextricable connection between the environment and development has not been recognised or understood, and thus no real headway has been made in integrated management or in the assessment of impacts.
- Across the country, rising poverty is a sign of the failure of development interventions. Abbottabad district is no exception, although explicit indicators are yet to be developed. The government's procrastination in establishing poverty parameters, and ad hoc measures taken under international pressure, further destabilise an already teetering administrative and planning component. There are of course political pitfalls inherent in the quantification of poverty but this should not mean that the exercise is never undertaken simply for the sake of political expediency.
- Institutional development at the local level has been nominal and has always been accorded low priority. The resulting capacity shortfalls cripple the functioning of various tiers.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The ASSD will be implemented through the existing institutional framework, keeping in mind the changes that are emerging under devolution. The existing framework comprises institutional arrangements and processes defined under various legal instruments. The operationalisation of the LGO created a representative district government made up of an elected zilla council as well as a nazim and naib nazim, both of whom are indirectly elected. The naib nazim also acts as convener of the zilla council, which brings together union representatives and provides special representation for selected groups, with 33% of its seats reserved for women. These offices are supported in routine implementation and oversight by devolved line departments under the supervision of the district coordination office (DCO).

The district administration works under the nazim, assisted and advised by grouped functional offices. These groups of offices have been created in a manner that brings together related sectors. The National Reconstruction Bureau,

- District coordination: coordination, human resource management and civil defence;
- Agriculture: agriculture (extension), livestock, on-farm water management, soil conservation, soil fertility, fisheries and farm forestry;
- Community development: community organisation, labour, social welfare, sports and culture, cooperatives and registration of civil society organisations;
- Education: literacy, boys' schools, girls' schools, technical education, colleges (other than professional), sports education and special education;
- Finance and planning: finance and budget, planning and development, accounts, enterprise and investment promotion;
- Health: public health, basic and rural health, child and women's health, population welfare, district and tehsil headquarters hospitals;
- Revenue: land revenue and estates, excise and taxation; and
- Works and services: spatial planning and development, district roads and buildings, energy and transport.

These institutional arrangements are illustrated in [Figure 5](#).

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As things stand, certain key issues and shortfalls in the institutional framework will need to be taken into consideration. In its current state of evolution, the system is staffed by area-based personnel belonging to provincial departments. These functionaries may be highly experienced, with deep familiarity of local issues related to their sectors, but it is unlikely that they will be able to apply their expertise in an independent,

the institutional home of the devolution plan, envisages the creation of 11 groups of offices. In Abbottabad, the following offices are currently in operation:

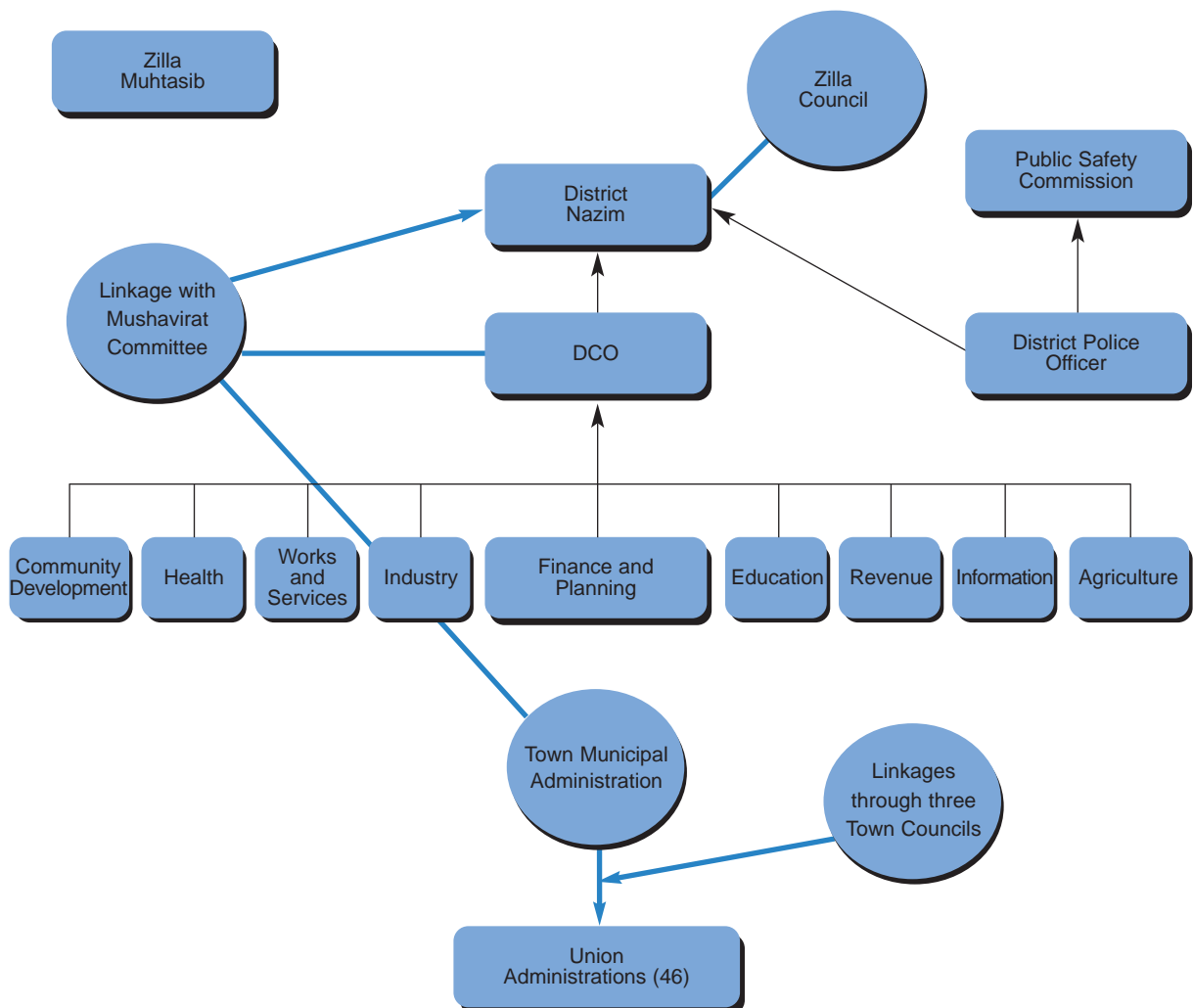
integrated manner. This should not be taken as an indictment but rather as an example of the serious capacity gaps that exist and that require immediate attention.

Where weaknesses in expertise existed prior to devolution, the situation now is all the more difficult. Officials will be required to tackle the challenge of working in new departments without the support of central offices and in an atmosphere where transparency and the quantification of performance are crucial features.

Beyond the clustering of mandates into groups, the new offices are arranged as vertical hierarchies with few horizontal linkages for cross-

sectoral coordination and integration (Figure 6). Such linkages will need to evolve to prevent a repetition of the compartmentalised functioning that characterised provincial departments. The district government itself provides an umbrella for the integration of sectoral policies at the local level, an arrangement that did not exist in a meaningful way before the implementation of devolution. Nevertheless, requisite capacity will have to be provided for local-level decision making in a cross-functional manner. Grouped office

FIGURE 5 STRUCTURE OF THE DISTRICT GOVERNMENT



Compiled by Khalid Saranjam Khan

programmes will need to be integrated in a multi-sectoral approach. Data systems also need to be integrated so that multi-sectoral issues can be highlighted.

The formulation of inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms is another area that requires attention. There is always the danger that the new grouped offices may continue to function in a compartmentalised fashion. Coordination between the three tiers of government will also remain weak in the absence of a credible mechanism.

Coordination mechanisms can be developed as part of the ASSD implementation process, and may take the form of inter-sectoral committees for policy and programme review and coordination. The offices of district coordination, and finance and planning can take the lead in providing multi-sector guidance in planning and policy formulation.

DISTRICT-LEVEL MECHANISMS AND PROCESSES

The devolution of local government has created a number of potential mechanisms that, if operationalised, will lead to better outcomes for the sustainable development interventions proposed in the ASSD. These mechanisms and processes will only perform optimally if they are operationalised in a systematic and consistent manner. The mere inclusion of various mechanisms in the statute books will achieve nothing in the absence of commitment and genuine support from all stakeholders.

DISTRICT MUSHAVIRAT COMMITTEE

This Committee brings together the nazims of the three town councils, the district nazim, naib nazim and DCO. The Committee is mandated to provide a strategic vision for the pursuit of sustainable development in the district. After approval by the zilla council, the ASSD will be formally adopted by the Committee, making the strategy a formal policy document. Subsequently, the Committee will put in place a set of processes, mechanisms

and systems to oversee planning, implementation and assessment. Periodic progress reviews will be undertaken and, where necessary, the ASSD vision will undergo reformulation. The Mushavirat Committee will also provide a platform for coordinating the policies and programmes of various tiers of local government.

DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

This is a technical body headed by the district nazim, with the district planning officer serving as secretary. Its members include the DCO and executive district officer (EDO) for finance and planning, as well as sectoral EDOs on a case-specific basis. The District Development Committee is vested with the authority to give the technical green light to projects in various sectors. According to current rules and procedures, it may approve projects with a maximum cost or outlay of Rs 40 million. Beyond this limit, the project in question will need to be approved by the provincial planning and development department.

A serious anomaly exists in this system. While encouraging and permitting real decision making to take place at the local level, thereby strengthening the move towards substantive decentralisation, the system operates under the assumption that adequate technical capacity already exists at the district level to appraise and approve projects. If this anomaly is not resolved, the District Development Committee will eventually have no option but to rely on the technical guidelines and parameters set by the provincial government, negating the entire purpose of district-level autonomy. District-specific criteria need to be evolved to guide the process of approval at the district level, keeping in mind issues that are relevant to the local context.

CITIZEN COMMUNITY BOARDS

The LGO contains one unique component—an administrative innovation that supports devolution by providing opportunities for civil society to actively participate in decision making. The formation of citizen community boards will allow ordinary citizens to access public-sector funds

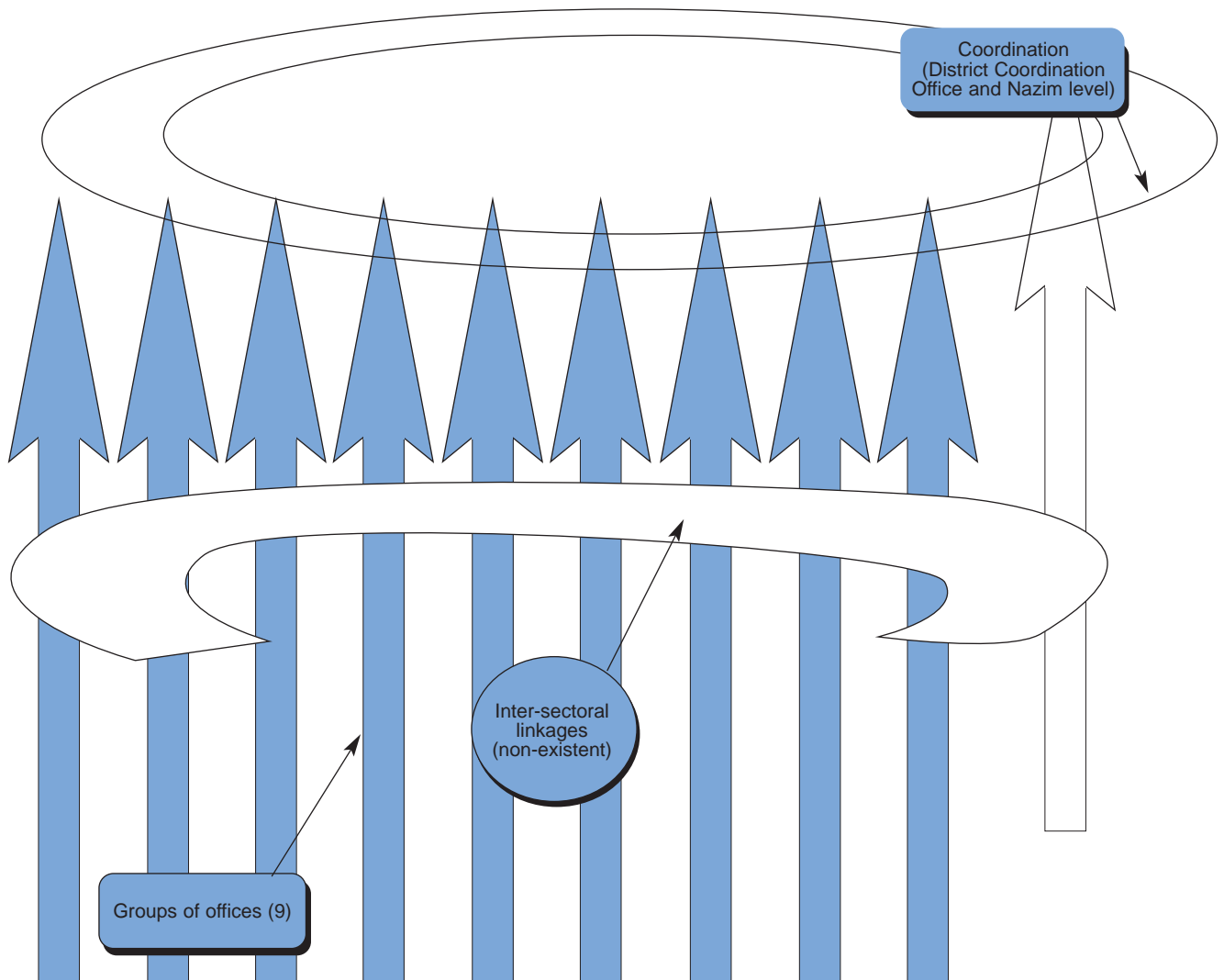
and implement development projects for their own communities. The LGO provides an elaborate framework for this mechanism and stipulates that 25% of local government development budgets will be exclusively earmarked for use by these community organisations. It prescribes procedures for the registration of citizen community boards and rules to enable these boards

to interact with local governments and access development funds.

PRIVATE-SECTOR PARTICIPATION

The private sector has not been extended sufficient recognition in the new system. A cause for optimism in this context may be found in Part A

FIGURE 6 INTER-SECTORAL LINKAGES



Compiled by Khalid Saranjam Khan

of the Second Schedule to the LGO, which provides for future legislation for private-sector participation in local government service delivery. The nature of the mechanism established will depend on the approach followed in the framing of these rules.

OTHER LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

The LGO envisages that, as the system matures and contingent issues arise, the district government will formulate necessary laws to cover these matters. This legislation is to come in the shape of by-laws, which provide the district government with the flexibility to put in place a local-level regulatory regime supportive of environmental conservation and sustainable development. By-laws may cover a range of subjects, from the licensing of trade to protecting natural resources (see Annex 1). One cause for concern in this regard is the lack of capacity at the district level to draft the necessary legislation.

HIGHER-TIER MECHANISMS AND PROCESSES

Despite the devolution of powers to the district level, higher tiers of government will continue to be relevant to the pursuit of sustainable development in Abbottabad. In this context, a number of higher-tier mechanisms and processes are of special significance.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

The Local Government Commission is the premier provincial institution responsible for regulating the functioning of local governments. Although it will need to undergo institutional development to be able to perform its role properly, it will assume significance by prescribing standards and norms for various sectoral functions. The standards for various institutional processes adopted by the grouped offices at the district level also fall under the authority of the Commission.

The Commission will play an important role in facilitating implementation of the ASSD, besides

paving the way for similar strategies to be developed for other districts. The Commission could also mobilise federal, provincial and international donor support for implementing ASSD recommendations, especially with regard to the LGO and the Government of Pakistan's international commitments under various treaties and conventions.

PROVINCIAL FINANCE COMMISSION

The PFC was created under Chapter XIIA of the LGO, added by way of an amendment through the NWFP Local Government (Second Amendment) Ordinance 2002. This chapter envisages the formation of an independent body to determine the amount of funds allocated to the district by the provincial government. The PFC award will need to look to the needs of the district, especially in the context of poverty alleviation, and the fulfilment of the country's international commitments and obligations. The district government will be able to present its case in this forum through the ASSD.

SARHAD PROVINCIAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY

The SPCS can serve as an umbrella influence and act as a coordinative entity for the implementation of ASSD proposals. This is particularly appropriate considering that in Pakistan the lower-tier strategy formulation process owes its very existence to the SPCS, a ground-breaking document published half a decade before the LGO was promulgated. The SPCS is expected to become all the more relevant following the planned reformulation of this document to accommodate the recent administrative changes. A reoriented SPCS can be expected to formalise more explicit coordinative and integrative mechanisms and processes between as many as 24 district-level strategies, with an exclusive mandate over key sub-sectors vital to provincial sustainable development concerns.

The SPCS will be of considerable utility in the case of non-devolved departments and those whose status remains unclear, serving as a reference point for development strategies at vari-

ous tiers as well as sector-specific strategic visions. Its involvement in the creation of objective district-level databases, and in the selection, adaptation, operationalisation and assessment of indicators, cannot be ruled out.

The district's performance in many areas will overlap with provincial and federal commitments to donors and international entities, including universal targets established or ratified under various regimes. The SPCS has an important role to play in the nexus between district-level progress and the country's international obligations.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The ASSD implementation process will be influenced by the federal government, particularly where the country's national, regional and international commitments intersect with matters that are operationally under the jurisdiction of the district. Coordination in a wide range of areas including compliance, resource availability, capacity support and establishing linkages will be undertaken under the aegis of a reformulated NCS, as recommended by the NCS-MTR, which explicates the need to bring the provisions of the NCS in tune with the sustainable development paradigm (Hanson et al 2000). The federal government has yet to take a decision regarding this recommendation.

The NCS-MTR recommendations and the recently published PRSP serve as a resource base for the district both for the selection of indicators and their operationalisation.

RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility for the achievement of sustainable development rests with a composite of stake-

holders and the success of the endeavour will depend on their level of commitment. The ASSD vision cannot be attained through a routine and cavalier orientation or by means of an individual or departmental approach. Nor will the strategic interventions proposed here benefit from the pursuit of a narrow political agenda characterised by quick-fix, pseudo-developmental interventions. Sustainable development can only take root if vital synergies are created through integrated efforts across functional and ideological divides. The effort will need to be devoid of personal agendas, nurtured instead by a genuine sense of ownership and guided by dynamic leadership. The primacy of the collective good over individual and group interests will need to be ensured.

DISTRICT GOVERNMENT AND ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

Primary responsibility for implementation rests with the district government, which owns

Primary responsibility for implementation rests with the district government, which owns the ASSD, has overseen its formulation and will adopt the document as a formal statement of purpose. The nazim is a principal stakeholder at the macro level, while in the micro context the naib nazim's involvement is critical.

the ASSD, has overseen its formulation and will adopt the document as a formal statement of purpose. The nazim is a principal stakeholder at the macro level, while in the micro context the naib nazim's involvement is critical, given the multiple roles of this office as convenor of the zilla council as well as chairperson of the ASSD Special Committee. The union nazims, in their capacity as members of the ASSD Special Committee, are equally important since they are responsible for guid-

ing the ASSD vision to fruition. Similarly, members of the zilla council play a key role in their capacity as union nazims.

Besides these officials, the three town councils and elected representatives at the town level are expected to play a role in implementation. Since these posts have been created relatively recently, their exact responsibilities in the short term are restricted to basic municipal functions. It is expected, however, that their role will be elaborated when the ASSD comes under review. This process may lead to the formulation of town-level strategies in the future.

DEVOLVED ENTITIES

Devolved offices under the administrative control of the district government will be responsible for implementing various sectoral ASSD visions. These offices will plan and reform their initiatives in line with the ASSD, under the leadership of their respective EDOs, with the DCO overseeing the entire process.

The finance and planning office will serve as the institutional home of the ASSD, providing leadership and developing a monitoring mechanism to gauge implementation. Monitoring will be linked to a performance-based budgeting system, supported by an annual reporting mechanism. The finance and planning office will be responsible for providing timely and accurate information to facilitate planning. This will lend credibility both to the process of implementation and the reported results of sectoral programmes, providing insights about successes achieved as well as areas or sectors that have proven intractable. These insights will in turn allow implementing offices to avoid the mistakes of the past. At the same time, this exercise will highlight genuine hurdles and significant shortfalls that could not have been predicted or were beyond local control. In consultation with the finance and planning office, TMAs will develop programmes aimed at implementation.

CIVIL SOCIETY

The active participation of civil society is critical to the efficient and timely operationalisation of the interventions and remedial initiatives proposed in this strategy. Ownership of the ASSD by recipient stakeholders is crucial, since civil society will play a leading role in providing impetus for implementation and in monitoring outcomes. Civil society participation will ensure that the new mechanisms and processes developed under the ASSD are practical and useful. Village councils, neighbourhood councils, citizen community boards and NGOs are a few of the avenues through which society, in a loosely organised form, can interact with local government structures.

NON-DEVOLVED ENTITIES

The provincial government will continue to exercise jurisdiction over important sectors including forests, watersheds, works and services, and minerals. The concerned departments, as well as the EPA, operate under the provincial hierarchy. Federal agencies such as WAPDA, the National Highway Authority and Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited will maintain a conspicuous presence in the district for the foreseeable future. These entities will be responsible for implementing schemes with significant impact on development outcomes at the local level. Managed appropriately, their involvement can contribute to the attainment of the ASSD vision. By the same token, improper programme design and implementation can slow the pace of local initiatives and even wreak havoc on the district's own initiatives. Having these agencies on board will therefore be critical.

The district government will be required to communicate its vision and priorities to non-devolved government agencies. In the absence of formal mechanisms, various stakeholders will need to rely on networking and building informal bridges. The district government will take the lead in advocacy

and sell the district's point of view through various forums. Legislators representing the district in the national and provincial assemblies will also be required to play their part in communicating the ASSD vision. This dialogue will ensure that non-devolved entities undertake integrated planning that does not sideline the district's own vision for sustainable development.

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The implementation of devolution and the operationalisation of lower-tier administrative entities has necessitated the creation of a variety of new institutions at the local level. Some of the entities are already functioning while others have yet to be set up. So far, the following entities and offices have been established:

- district nazim, elected head of the district government;
- zilla council, elected legislative body of the district;
- nine grouped offices, corresponding to various sectors;
- 46 union administrations;
- 46 union councils;
- three TMAs; and
- three town councils.

As the devolution plan unfolds, more institutional entities will be operationalised. These include the following:

- zilla mohtasib,
- citizen community boards,
- village councils, and
- neighbourhood councils

These institutions and offices will consolidate grassroots participation by providing an enabling framework for decision making and governance at the community level. The fact that these entities are mentioned in the LGO does not automatically mean that they will be established. Their operationalisation requires

enabling laws as well as support mechanisms such as personnel, systems, skills and resources. So far, few steps to support the necessary framework have been taken.

A number of enabling laws related to other sectors are also to be enacted under the LGO. Most of this legislation is yet to be framed. Even where laws have been enacted, they are vague, tentative, and not widely disseminated or understood. This is particularly discouraging, since laws provide the functional basis for local government. It is through this legislation that the scope and functions of local governments will be specified. For instance, public participation in budget making or project identification will only come about once specific Rules for the budget are issued. Legislation is therefore a key component of institutional development.

Rules and by-laws that take into account the requirements of the district can help pave the way for sustainable development. A principal consideration here will be to ensure that the institutions set up under the law are aligned with the district's development objectives, and that legislation provides for their proper functioning.

Once they are set up, the effectiveness of local institutions will depend on their capacities. Currently, capacity gaps exist on two levels. In a traditional sense, the district government lacks capacity in terms of equipment, skills and data, as well as institutional processes that would enable it to undertake its work effectively. At the same time, devolution has created the need for a whole new set of skills and capacities. Resource mobilisation and planning are now local functions, and specialised skills are needed to undertake this work. In addition to comprehensive capacity development, the public sector will also need to place a premium on skills.

Skills development will be tackled largely in the medium and long term, supplemented by a short-term component. The district government will take immediate steps to assess the capacity of its officers and personnel, draw up skills inventories and initiate programmes to address capacity gaps. This effort will be integrated with

institutional development. Over the medium term, skills development will continue in the public sector while attention will also be directed towards private-sector entities and NGOs. Enhancing the capacity of these actors should allow them to act as useful partners of the district government in the long term.

Devolution has brought in its wake a number of promising developments. Local institutions such as the zilla and town councils are mandated to formulate local policy. With fiscal autonomy devolved to some extent as well, resource allocation and planning can more closely mirror the real needs of the district. In this scenario, participatory institutions such as citizen community boards, village councils and neighbourhood councils will bridge the gap between the state and civil society.

To take full advantage of these developments, capacity building alone will not be sufficient. A reorientation of the public sector will need to be achieved, along with awareness raising and advocacy to ensure that the cor-

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rect choices are made. The regulatory framework of the local government will need to be strengthened, while the operationalisation of citizen community boards will require the creation of enabling institutional processes.

ADDITIONAL MECHANISMS: DISTRICT ROUNDTABLE

The District Roundtable was established in 1998 to bring together a variety of stakeholders in a forum where environmental and sustainable development issues could be debated and input provided for the ASSD formulation process. Steered by the now-defunct office of the deputy commissioner, the Roundtable was designed to work with district offices of the provincial government as well as civil society and private-sector players. When the devolution process got under way in 2001, this arrangement was reconceived.

With the district government and new local administrative tiers now functioning, the formal policy-making process is anchored in the zilla council, with the zilla nazim acting as district executive. These offices are responsible for articulating the district's interests and resolving a variety of development and policy issues.

Under the new set-up, the formulation of district-level policy is not a simple linear process. Various

groups within civil society will articulate their own interests through a variety of channels. In this scenario, dominant interest groups will no doubt be able to interact with district government departments, non-devolved provincial departments, as well as the district and provincial legislatures. As a result, there is always the risk that development policy becomes skewed in favour of dominant interests.

While devolution has created room for civil-society participation, there is no forum where such groups can interact regularly with district authorities to provide collective input for policy making. In the absence of such a forum, the district government will not be able to benefit

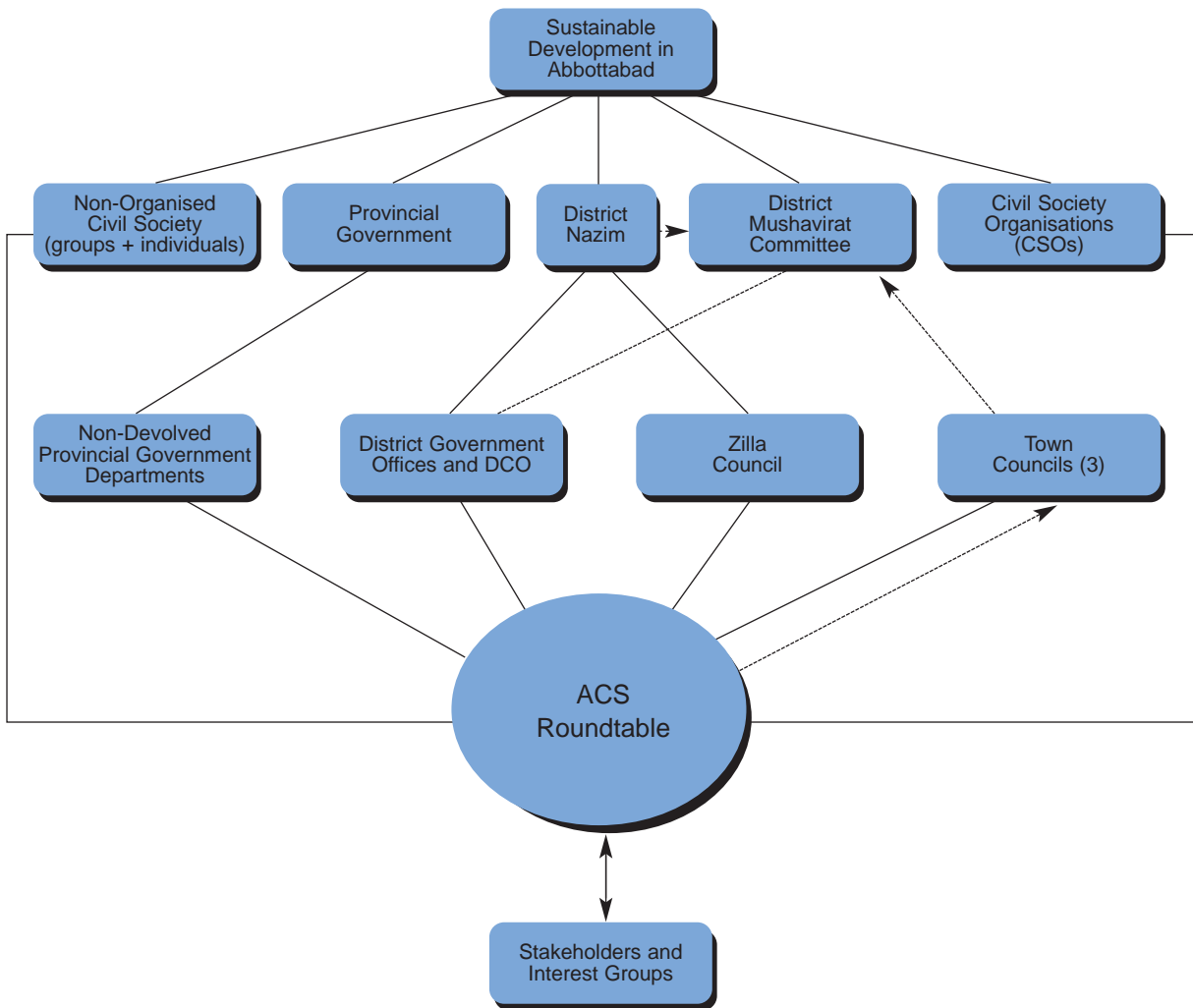
from the feedback of those members of civil society who are marginalised or not part of any formal entity, but who have an important role to play in sustainable development.

The Roundtable as it has been reconceived will bring together various informal groups and formal entities, thereby fostering a consensus-based policy environment. The interrelationships between various stakeholders, embodied in the Roundtable, is illustrated in Figure 7.

The Roundtable will debate sustainable development issues to arrive at consensual solutions. It will act as a think tank for environmental policy, an advocate for sustainable development and a forum for the articulation of civil society's interests. It will assist formal district and town authorities in policy formulation and decision making.

A key function of the Roundtable will be to commission independent studies on critical sustain-

FIGURE 7 THE DISTRICT ROUNDTABLE IN THE NEW SET-UP



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able development issues confronting the district, to crystallise recommendations, and forward these proposals to the concerned institutions and organisations. Sectoral and thematic groups can also be formed within the Roundtable to undertake specialised tasks.

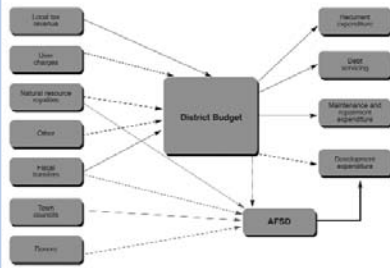
In addition to sector experts, members of the Roundtable will be drawn from public-sector organisations, non-devolved provincial departments, the provincial EPA, the zilla and town councils, the media, women's groups, academia, and civil society at large. Members from the zilla and town councils will serve to create a link between the Roundtable and local administrative bodies while at the same time ensuring local government ownership of the process. The non-partisan nature of the Roundtable will allow it to become a credible forum for all development players in the district.

The Roundtable will need to find a way to balance the interests of the local government with its own autonomy and credibility. To prevent the Roundtable from becoming another committee espousing the line of the district government, two mechanisms are proposed. First, an institutional membership component will be introduced, under which organisations and groups

with institutional status in the district will be able to nominate members from within their ranks to sit on the Roundtable. Institutional membership will be offered to a variety of organisations including representative bodies of the trade and industry sector, civil society organisations and academia.

The second mechanism is procedural. Members of the Roundtable will be vested with the power to call for a session, so that convening the Roundtable is not the exclusive prerogative of the district government. This will strengthen the autonomy of the Roundtable and allow it to take up issues whenever members feel it is appropriate.

The institutionalisation of the Roundtable will require resources and secretariat support, the latter to be provided initially by the finance and planning office. Systems will need to be developed to ensure the neutrality, continuity and sustainability of the Roundtable mechanism. Ultimately, the success of the Roundtable will hinge on the zilla and town councils, district government offices and zilla nazim. If they choose not to make full use of this forum or decline to take ownership of its functions, the Roundtable mechanism will be ineffective.



Resource Mobilisation

Judging from past experience, a major issue in the pursuit of sustainable development is the mobilisation of resources. At the moment, the district relies heavily on resource allocations from the provincial government. This dependence can be mitigated to some extent by generating funds through other existing and potential sources, including:

- fiscal transfers from the province as general-purpose grants;
- special-purpose grants from the province;
- conditional capital grants;
- savings made possible by introducing efficiency in public-sector programmes;
- district-level revenues through levies under Schedule II of the LGO (see Annex 1);
- new levies, especially those relating to the use and exploitation of natural resources;
- gains in revenue collection from decentralised levies; and
- user charges levied by decentralised offices.

Additional revenues may also become available by creating extra-fiscal instruments, developing partnerships with NGOs, inviting private-sector investment in key sectors, tapping provincial government pro-

grammes aimed at sustainable development, and capitalising on federal commitments under the NCS, PRSP, National Environment Action Plan, and Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility. The district government may also be able to access substantial funding through bilateral and multilateral donor obligations under various international agreements such as Agenda 21 and the UN-MDG. The NSSD paradigm and the WSSD summit have brought in their wake a number of realignments in donor policy. Funding windows that have become available as a result may be explored as well. The Global Environment Facility available under various multilateral environmental agreements is another potential opportunity.

LOCAL RESOURCE MOBILISATION

Local revenue mobilisation is one of the district government's major responsibilities. The ability to generate funds locally will provide fiscal space for the implementation of programmes aimed specifically at sustainable development. At the same time, streamlining current public-sector expenditure is imperative. Wasteful spending cannot be countenanced in a sustainable development vision. Along with the search for new avenues for revenue mobilisation, efficiency of resource use is a priority.

District government expenditure and revenues for 1999–2000 are shown in Table 1. During 2001–02, the first fiscal year after devolution, revenues and expenditures flowed through an interim financial system. The revenues of defunct local bodies were accounted for in local funds and managed at the local level, while transfers received from the province were operated through the province. With the introduction of a new Chapter XII in the LGO, these revenues have been merged and will be split between the three TMAs.

Revised estimates for the year 2001–02 show a high reliance on provincial transfers (Table 2). The figures are artificially low because in 2001–02 the salary budget was borne directly

TABLE 1 ABBOTTABAD DISTRICT EXPENDITURE AND REVENUES (1999-2000)*

Expenditure item	Amount	Total
Agriculture extension	3.9	
Education	536.7	
Civil defence	0.3	
Health	132.2	
Land Management	4.7	
Livestock	5.1	
Social Welfare	1.9	
Works	13.5	
Accounts	0.8	
Deputy commissioner office	2.0	
Fisheries	1.3	
Industries	1.0	
Transport (including Regional Transport Authority)	0.2	
Total expenditure		703.6
Revenue item		
Agriculture extension	2.6	
Education	4.1	
Export tax share from province	5.1	
Forests	2.5	
Fisheries	0.1	
Health	1.5	
Profit on accounts	0.5	
Motor vehicle registration tax	2.0	
Provincial motor vehicle tax	11.5	
Total revenue		29.9
Revenue gap		673.7

*Approximate values in million rupees.

Source: District Accounts Office 2000.

TABLE 2 ABBOTTABAD DISTRICT REVISED ESTIMATES (2001-02)*

Receipts	Budget estimates 2001-02	Revised Budget 2001-02	Expenditure
Recurrent Budget			
District government (non-salary)	86.694	103.638	103.638
District local fund	4.912	2.054	2.054
TMA	37.649	37.011	37.011
Sub-total A	129.255	142.703	142.703
Development Budget			
PSDP (District Functions)	29.860	29.860	23.869
KPP	80.584	111.477	56.452
SAP (new education)	7.050	7.050	5.283
ESR	0	8.958	4.712
President's programme	0	20.555	15.208
District local fund (ADP)	10.364	0	0
TMA local fund (ADP)	17.166	0.461	0.461
Sub-total B	145.024	178.361	105.985
Total (A+B)	274.279	321.064	248.688

* Figures in million rupees.

ADP = Annual Development Programme; ESR = Education Sector Reforms; KPP = Khushhal Pakistan Programme; PSDP = Public Sector Development Programme, GoNWFP; SAP = Social Action Programme; TMA = Tehsil municipal administration

Source: District Government Abbottabad 2001.

TABLE 3 REVENUES AT THE TEHSIL LEVEL*

Items	2000-01	2001-02
Transfers from province	12.233	15.315
Tax on immovable property	7.039	10.076
Bus/truck stand fee	6.141	6.329
Water rate	4.094	4.528
Rent on properties	4.162	4.674
Cattle fairs	4.370	5.927
Other	10.844	11.551
Total	48.883	58.400

* Figures in million rupees

Source: District Government Abbottabad 2001.

TABLE 4 EXPENDITURES AT THE TEHSIL LEVEL*

Items	2000-01	2001-02
Establishment (salaries)	15.758	17.499
Commodities and services	9.571	6.356
Purchase of durable goods	0.423	0.325
Repair of durable goods	0.711	0.447
Liabilities	10.312	7.876
Liabilities of the district council	000	0.558
Total	36.775	33.061

* Figures in million rupees

Source: District Government Abbottabad 2001.

by the Provincial Consolidated Fund without being transferred to the district. These figures are not included in budgetary estimates or revised estimates, but will be part of local budgets from 2002-03.

DISTRICT-LEVEL RESOURCE POSITION

The district government experiences a substantial resource gap and is heavily dependent on transfers from the province. Devolution has created a mismatch between the fiscal responsibilities of the district government and its financial capacity. While most expenditures have been devolved to the district level, revenues have not been decentralised to the same extent.

Baseline indicators for local revenues show low generation across the board. This situation may not persist in the long term, since most items listed in Table 1 were central or provincial revenues, and it can be argued that centralised collection has led to inefficiency. After devolution, collection efficiencies may occur, thereby increasing

income. Under the LGO, moreover, a number of revenue items may be collected by the district government. These are listed in Schedule V of the Ordinance. Education and health tax, for instance, will be new levies in this category.

The district government will need to adopt the processes laid out in the LGO and pursuant budget rules that are to be framed by the provincial government. The mechanisms prescribed in the rules should aim to introduce efficiency and transparency in revenue generation. Revenue base surveys are another mechanism which will need to be incorporated into local resource mobilisation efforts. Surveys will provide accurate estimates of revenue bases and help improve the efficiency of existing revenue items.

It is up to the PFC to determine Abbottabad district's share of provincial allocations. This arrangement, which will form the basis of formula-driven fiscal transfers, is likely to serve as a major source of revenue for the district government in the foreseeable future. The nature of the award will be important not only in terms of Abbottabad's share, but also in terms of the incentives and sanctions attached to it. In the short term, determination of the award is likely to be based simply on indicators of fiscal need. Comparative performance evaluations of various districts are not likely to be included in the allocation process. Although local government performance will not be tied in to allocations in the current fiscal transfer mechanism, the district government would nevertheless do well to adopt performance-oriented policies, a move that will yield significant benefits in the long term.

The fiscal transfer mechanism may not provide incentives for improved performance but allocations may be used by the province to further its own policy decisions. If SPCS commitments are brought to bear on the working of the PFC, creating incentives for optimal performance by district governments, then this leverage may well serve to further the cause of sustainable development across the province. Even if this does not happen in the short term, the potential exists

for this mechanism to be used to ensure sustainable development outcomes.

For the future, the PFC will need to develop methods to measure fiscal capacity and performance. This is also an area where the SPCS can work in synergy with the ASSD and other district-level sustainable development initiatives. Because the local government in Abbottabad relies heavily on provincial fiscal transfers, the province can use its policy leverage to affect outcomes at the district level. The extent to which this mechanism favours sustainable development initiatives remains to be seen.

TOWN-LEVEL RESOURCE POSITION

In comparative terms, the TMAs are better off than the district government. This is primarily because urban property tax has been assigned to the lower tier. What is even more significant is the intention outlined in the LGO to enlarge the base of this revenue item to larger areas. TMA-tier resources demonstrate healthy growth in revenues not only from increased transfers but also as a result of increasing taxes and charges. These trends are evident in budgets compiled for the tehsil level (Table 3). Expenditure between 2000 and 2002 at the tehsil level shows that outlays are largely consumed by salaries (Table 4). This is not in and of itself dangerous, since most service delivery is publicly managed. Liabilities, however, consume a large chunk of resources as well. Nevertheless, the budget for 2000–01 indicates a surplus of Rs 12.065 million, which increased to Rs 25.339 million in 2001–02. This suggests that sufficient resources are available at the TMA level to undertake improvements in service delivery and spatial planning, as long as these funds are managed prudently.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

The rate at which local revenues grow will be an important determinant of the degree to which sustainable development can be pursued. Growth in the Provincial Consolidated Fund has not been significant since the 1996 National Finance Commission Award. The target for eco-

nomical growth rose to 4% for 2002–03, which translates into a small increase in federal and provincial revenues. Local governments in Abbottabad will therefore need to focus their efforts on increasing revenues and achieving efficiency in expenditure. The following mechanisms will need to be given attention:

- Surveys should be carried out to chart the revenue base in various categories, in order to draw in additional funds and streamline collection.
- In the short term, the fiscal transfer mechanism should be used to achieve priority targets for the district, aiming for sustainable development outcomes. In the long run, this mechanism may be used to support the work of district offices focusing on ASSD implementation.
- A provincial grant to support natural resource management may be created from provincial allocations. The grant should prescribe eligibility criteria and require performance conformity with predetermined standards, thereby creating incentives for long-term investment in the relevant sectors.
- Local revenue efficiency should be achieved through transparency and by removing discretion in collection mechanisms. User-friendly collection procedures need to be put in place, designed to encourage taxpayers to scrupulously deposit what they owe.
- The present system of budget preparation needs to switch to performance-based budgeting. For this purpose, sectoral indicators should be prepared, and systems and databases created to monitor outcomes. These databases must also provide information on sectoral targets. Performance-based budgeting will engender responsibility, accountability and efficiency. To implement the system, the concerned personnel will need to acquire new skills on a priority basis.
- Transparency and reporting obligations should be introduced to ensure free access to information. This will enable citizens to participate in monitoring and help prevent inefficient or inappropriate spending.

ADDITIONAL REVENUE OPTIONS

ABBOTTABAD FUND FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

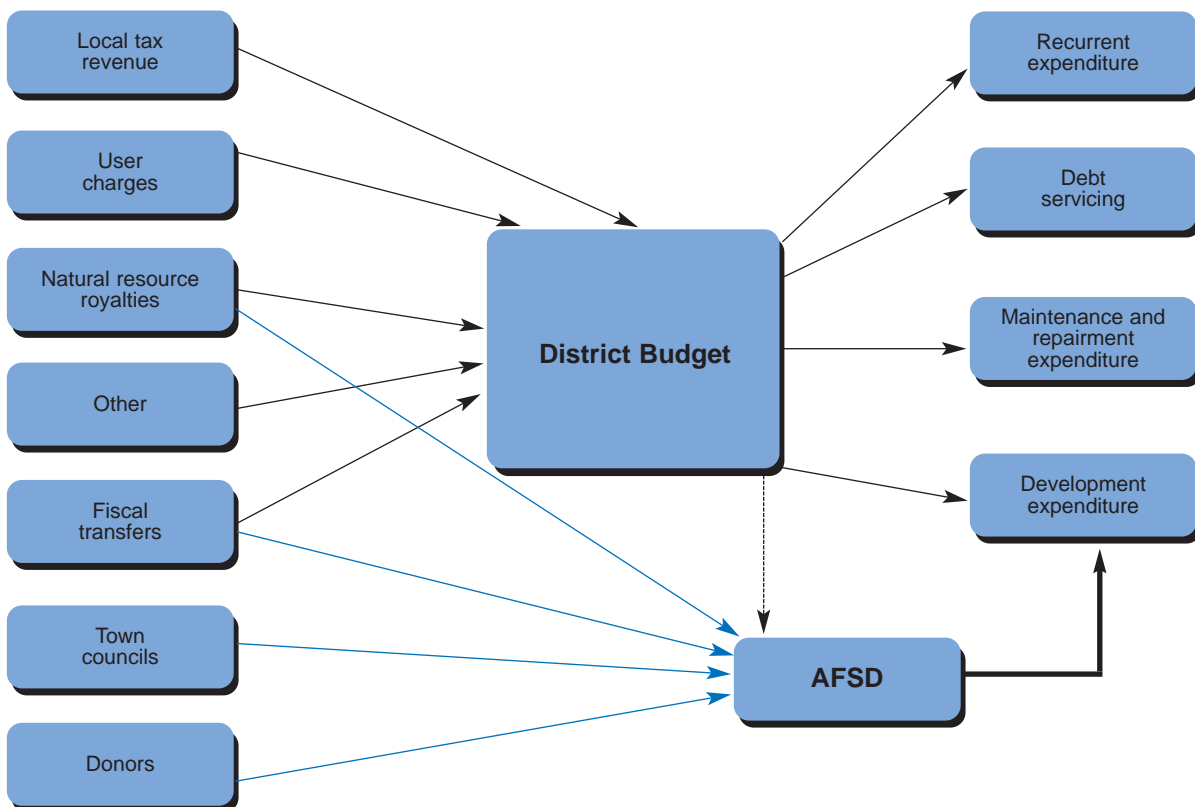
A number of factors create distortions in development investment. These include prevailing social and economic conditions both in the province and at the district level, the institutional regime as it exists and is evolving, disjunctures between a time-worn political development process and the young district governments, and capacity constraints within development players. Development efforts are likely to be skewed towards short-term objectives, focusing for instance on sectors such as infra-

structure without a pragmatic or well-defined link to long-term goals such as poverty alleviation. As a result, while some economic progress may take place, a backlash in the form of social disparities and natural resource degradation can also be expected. Under these circumstances, a decentralised fund managed at the district level can serve as a useful extra-fiscal instrument to promote sustainable development principles.

The ASSD proposes the establishment of an AFSD, which has the potential to ensure that economic development can occur in symbiosis with social equity and ecological improvement. This concept is derived from the LGO, which requires district governments to create appropriate financial mechanisms and strategies to fund integrated sustainable development. The idea is

FIGURE 8

THE ABBOTTABAD FUND FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE LOCAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENT



Compiled by Khalid Saranjam Khan

inspired by similar funds created and operating in other parts of the world. In the local context, the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act 1997 provides for the establishment of provincial sustainable development funds, and efforts in this direction are under way. The NWFP has taken the lead by establishing the NWFP Fund for Sustainable Development.

While district governments across the NWFP are already in the process of assuming fiscal responsibility, the AFSD will be the first sustainable development fund at the district level. Establishing the AFSD will have a number of advantages. Besides reforming the district government's budget allocations through dedicated funds aimed at infusing sustainability considerations into development programmes and projects, the AFSD will also attract resources from the NWFP Fund for Sustainable Development and similar funds at the national level. For example, the federal government has announced a policy commitment to establish a national fund, and similar funds are being set

up under various programmes, such as the National Environment Action Plan. The AFSD will be instrumental in attract funding from philanthropists and social sector development allocations set aside by the corporate sector. It will also be able to seek resources from international donors, under their global commitments to local-level sustainable development enshrined in a variety of agreements and declarations such as Local Agenda 21 and the WSSD. Local environmental taxes can be levied for capitalisation of the AFSD, along with income from similar provincial taxes. In addition, the district budget can contain legal stipulations allocating a certain percentage of revenues for the AFSD. The local fiscal

arrangements in which the AFSD may be capitalised are shown in [Figure 8](#).

The AFSD will be managed by an autonomous board comprising members from within and outside the government. For the sake of credibility, to ensure transparency and encourage contributions from outside agencies, the majority of the board will consist of individuals from the non-governmental sector. The board will be mandated to take decisions regarding grants for the purpose of supporting sustainable development projects and interventions in the district. Such grants will be approved through proposals submitted to the board according to a prescribed format.

Development priorities are often skewed towards short-term objectives, focusing for instance on sectors such as infrastructure without a pragmatic or well-defined link to long-term goals such as poverty alleviation. As a result, while some economic progress may take place, a backlash in the form of social disparities and natural resource degradation can also be expected.

DONORS

Donor finance opportunities can be mobilised through the provincial and federal governments. In the short term, building the capacity of district-level entities will be the top priority. These capacities will, in turn, become a long-term asset for mobilising funding. Avenues of donor funding which may be available include:

- Agenda 21-related commitments,
- the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's NSSD window,
- UN-MDG commitments,
- multilateral environmental agreement-related avenues,
- gender-related sources,

- poverty-related investment (such as the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility), and
- the World Bank Comprehensive Development Framework Extension.

PROVINCIAL RESOURCES

The following sources of provincial funding may also be explored:

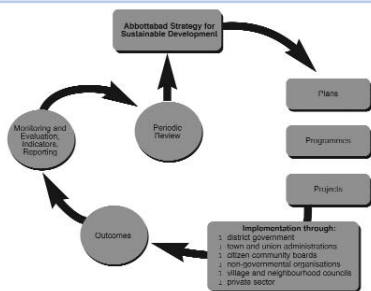
- SPCS contributions in identified core areas,
- the NWFP Fund for Sustainable Development,
- the Tameer-e-Sarhad Programme, and
- the PRSP programme.

FEDERAL RESOURCES

Federal sources of funding include:

- NCS core programmes and related funding windows,
- the Decentralisation Support Project, and
- the National Environment Action Plan.

The federal government has also announced its intention to establish a National Environment Fund. This extra-budgetary instrument will provide funds specifically for natural resource management and conservation. The Fund is at present in an embryonic stage but once it is properly functional it will provide financing for local-level activities. The district government can also hope to access support from this source.



Assessing Progress

To ensure that sustainable development takes root in the district, evaluation of ASSD outcomes is imperative. Actors identified in previous chapters have an important role to play not only in shaping the future path of this strategy but also in guiding development itself.

INDICATORS

The success or failure of the ASSD vision cannot be assessed without a systematic monitoring process. To this end, the district government will develop indicators to assess progress towards sustainability. These indicators will take into account key facets of each sector and will be designed to cover all major components of the sustainable development paradigm, moving beyond purely economic indicators which tend to ignore a variety of critical social and environmental realities. This exercise is to be led by the zilla nazim, DCO, and finance and planning office, making use of both local and international experience.

Implementation of the ASSD will begin with the preparation of a list of comprehensive indicators to provide an accurate picture of the state of development and natural resources in Abbottabad. In the first

phase, the list will include only those indicators for which reliable data can be collected periodically without a great deal of effort. The list will undergo a process of political validation within the district itself, to ensure commitment and ownership at the highest level.

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

The assessment process will require action at more than one level and participation from more than one stakeholder. The first level of monitoring will take place in each of the sectoral offices, for it is in their interest to assess the outcome of their programmes and measure the impact of their activities. At the second level, the three tiers of local government will be responsible for assessing the working of the grouped offices. To facilitate the process, internal control mechanisms will be established. These mechanisms will serve not only to assess the results of specific programmes but also to vouch for the evaluation process itself, ensuring that the means adopted conform to the principles of sustainable development.

Embedded in the idea of monitoring is the assumption that at some point political change and programme alterations may be required. Monitoring will be ineffective if it is conducted without the participation of political actors in the district. Following devolution, the hub of political activity at the local level lies within the zilla council and three town councils. These entities will need to hold their respective executive authorities accountable, with the law providing for the manner in which this accountability is to be conducted.

EDOs and related offices are responsible for acting according to priorities set by their respective councils, some of which translate into budgetary allocations. Here, performance-based budgeting will ensure that primary accountability is established. In other words, EDOs and related offices will only be able to seek resource allocations upon demonstrating commensurate performance. The councils, through monitoring committees, will perform a supervisory role. Provided with adequate capacity, these commit-

tees will play a pivotal role in steering the district in the right direction. Ultimately, the councils' role is to hold the nazim—and, by extension, the entire district administration—accountable. In fulfilling their responsibilities, councils will need to focus on issues pertaining to sustainable development outcomes rather than individual constituency interests.

In a parallel process, monitoring mechanisms will also be rooted in civil society. For this purpose, the Roundtable will provide an avenue for public participation. Public access to data and information will be improved by giving the Roundtable a role in monitoring development across the district.

DATA NEEDS

The provincial Bureau of Statistics is not mandated to collect primary data. Most development indicators currently available are based on secondary data compiled by the Bureau. Although these statistics cover a comprehensive range of sectors, reported figures that form the basis of these indicators are seldom if ever validated. For instance, a significant margin of error is reported in Social Action Programme evaluations for data from the Education Management Information System and Health Management Information System databases for the province. Similarly, other sectoral statistics are for the most part culled from departmental reports which were never validated.

In order to accurately monitor sustainable development, data needs will be defined. A systematic method of data collection through entities such as union administrations will be put in place, along with a system of validation employing authentic statistical methodology. This internal validation will ensure that the local government's need for evidence of outcomes is fulfilled appropriately. Systems established to conduct performance-based budgeting will also yield data for monitoring sustainable development. In addition, the Bureau of Statistics should be entrusted with the task of validating district-generated data, and mandated to collect primary data for some indicators.

FREQUENCY OF ASSESSMENT

Assessments will be carried out at frequent intervals, preferably to coincide with annual decision making, particularly the budget cycle. Reports will be generated before the budgetary process gets under way to provide information for decision makers. Other periodic reports may be generated on specific subjects as part of the implementation of the ASSD.

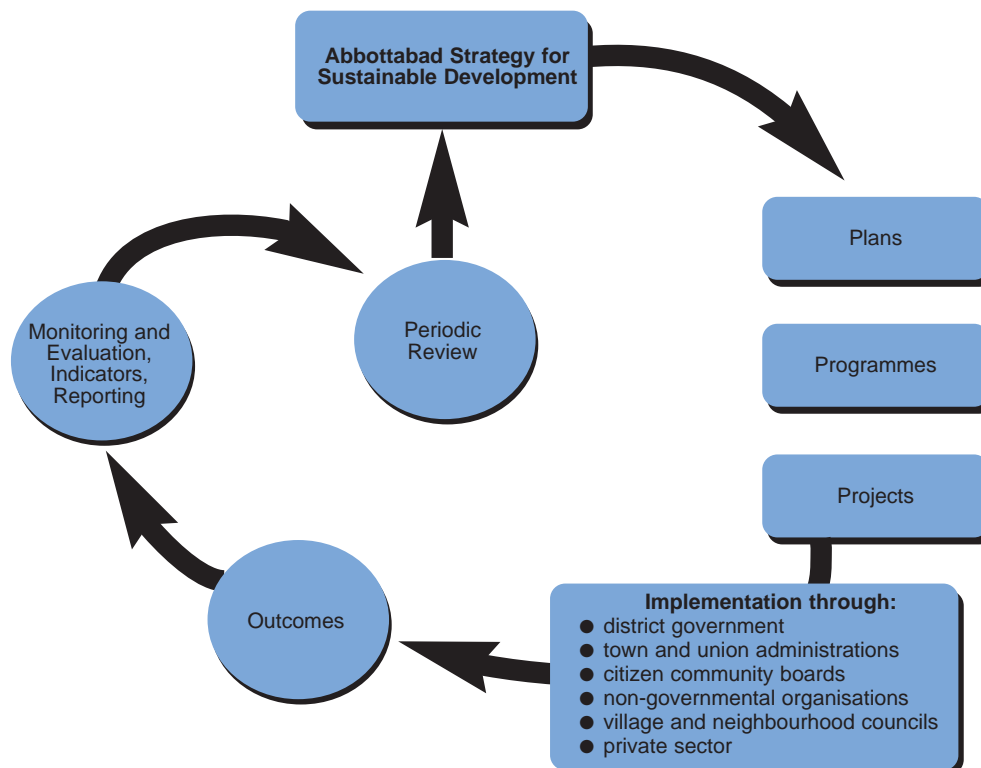
RESPONSIBILITY AND REPORTING

The district government will assign responsibility for reporting on the basis of assessments.

This reporting will be internal for the nazim and zilla council, as well external for the people of Abbottabad. All offices will be required to submit annual reports related to their sectoral mandates. By combining all sectoral reports and performing cross-sectoral syntheses, an annual 'state of sustainable development' report will be published. Along with reporting obligations, freedom of access to information will be guaranteed.

Within each tier of local government, various responsibilities and reporting obligations will be created. These will operate at the level of the EDO Finance and Planning, sectoral EDOs and office heads of the TMAs. Responsibility for coordination and steering the process will lie with the DCO.

FIGURE 9 STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

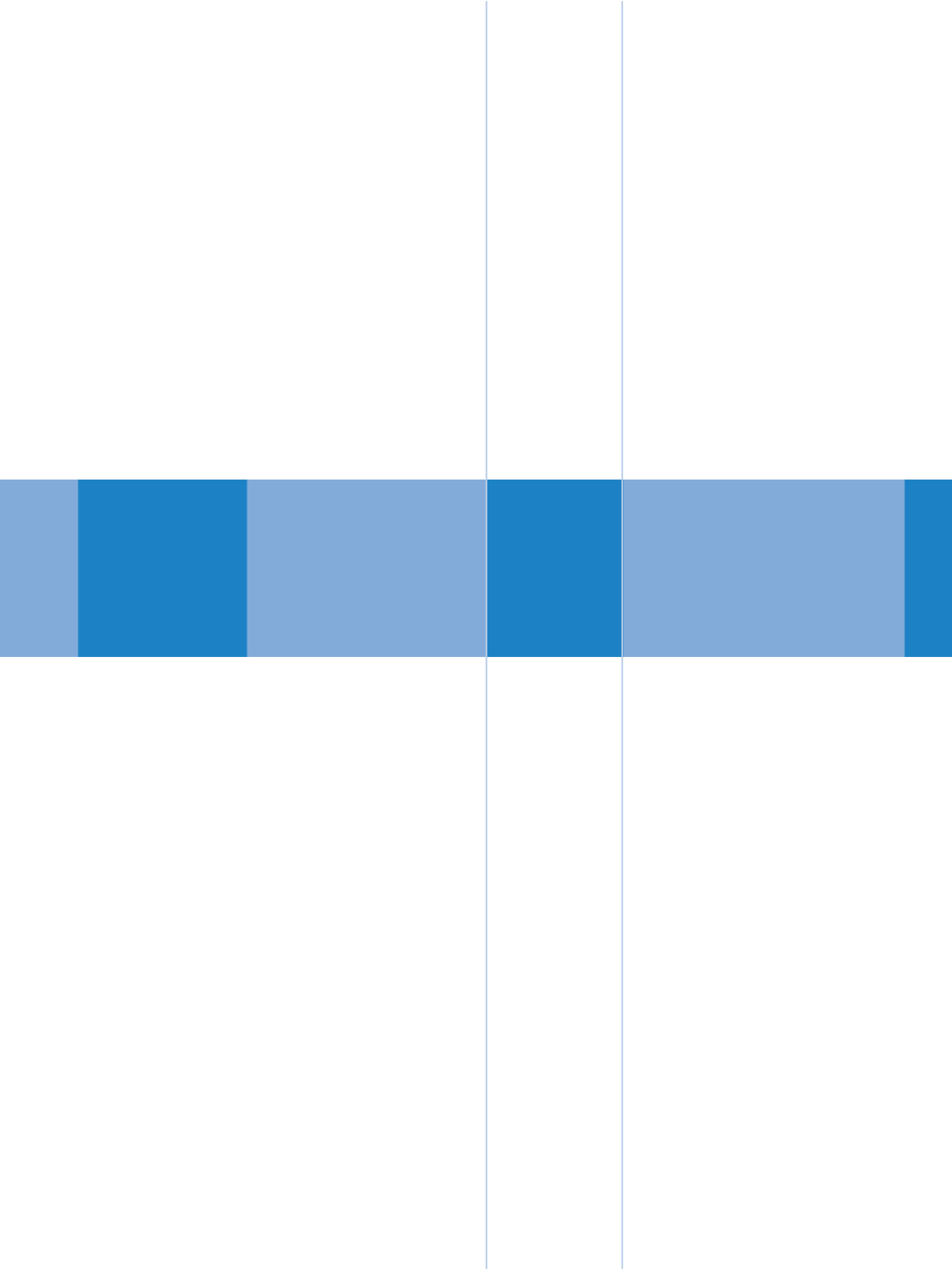


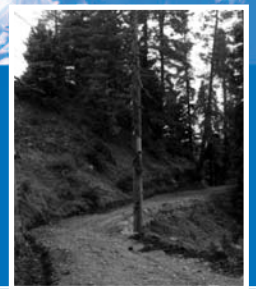
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TRANSLATING ASSESSMENTS INTO FUTURE TARGETS

The ASSD itself and the system of progress assessment through annual reporting can only be relevant to future planning processes if they reflect the aspirations of all stakeholders. For this purpose, progress assessments will be widely communicated to all stakeholders. This communi-

cation will be designed and undertaken with the involvement of elected representatives and civil society organisations as well as the finance and planning office, which will serve as the institutional home of the process. Based on the lessons learned from these documents, future priorities as they emerge will be taken up by specific programmes and projects under the umbrella of the Annual Development Programme, while ongoing programmes and civil society initiatives will be reoriented ([Figure 9](#)).





Annexes

- NWFP Local Government Ordinance 2001
- Bibliography
- Map of Abbottabad

NWFP LOCAL GOVERNMENT ORDINANCE 2001

LEGISLATION TO BE FRAMED UNDER THE ORDINANCE

Rules to be Framed by the Provincial Government

1. Local government (conduct of elections)
2. Local government (conduct of business of the local councils)
3. Local government (taxation)
4. Local government (servants)
5. Local government (budget and accounts)
6. Local government (contracts)
7. Local government (works)
8. Local government (development authorities)
9. Local government (regulation of site development schemes)
10. Local government (forestry excluding *guzara* forests, protected forests and watershed management)
11. Local government (monitoring)
12. Local government (provision of information and transparency)
13. Local government (internal audit)
14. Local government (employee bonuses and incentives)
15. Local government (public-private partnership)
16. Local government (conduct of inspections)
17. Local government (conduct of elected officials)
18. Any other rules deemed necessary for implementation of the Ordinance

By-Laws to be Framed by the District Government

1. Conduct of meetings
2. Registration of births, deaths and marriages
3. Zoning, master planning and buildings
4. Dangerous buildings and structures
5. Prevention of encroachment
6. Local government (elected officials' remuneration and allowances)
7. Local government (agricultural development)
8. Local government (community development)
9. Local government (citizen community boards)
10. Registration of sale and control of cattle and animals
11. Registration, management and regulation of orphanages, widows' homes, senior citizens' homes, homes for the mentally ill and women's shelters
12. Regulation of burial and cremation places
13. Slaughter of animals and maintenance of slaughterhouses
14. Prevention of adulteration of foodstuffs
15. Animal husbandry and milk supply
16. Prevention and abatement of nuisance
17. Dangerous and offensive trades and articles
18. Regulation of traffic
19. Organisation and regulation of fairs, shows, tournaments and other public gatherings
20. Prevention of begging, juvenile delinquency and other social evils
21. Licensing
22. Markets

23. Libraries
24. Parks and open places
25. Prevention of air, water, noise, and soil pollution
26. Forests and plantations
27. Local government property
28. Farm produce markets
29. Delegation of powers, duties and functions of farm produce market sub-committees
30. Encroachment on public roads, public streets and public places
31. Picketing, tethering animals, and parking carts or vehicles in the street
32. Throwing or placing refuse in a street, or in any place not specifically appointed for the purpose
33. Dyeing or tanning animal skins
34. Tampering with mains, pipelines, apparatus or appliances for water supply
35. Excavation of earth, stone or any other material
36. Disposing of animal carcasses
37. Use of sewer water for farming
38. Effluent or drains emptying into a street, public place or irrigation channel, or into a sewer or drain that has not been set apart for the purpose
39. Fixing bills, notices, placards, or other paper or means of advertisement against or upon any building or place other than the places designated by the local government
40. Setting up wooden shacks, plying handcarts for the sale of goods, and temporary or permanent shops or extensions thereof on footpaths or streets
41. Pollution of air, water or soil
42. Watering cattle or animals, and bathing or washing at or near a well or other public source of drinking water
43. Other matters the zilla council deems necessary or expedient

LEVIES AUTHORISED UNDER THE ORDINANCE

Zilla Council

1. Education tax
2. Health tax
3. Tax on vehicles other than motor vehicles
4. Any other tax authorised by the government
5. Local rate on lands subject to land revenue
6. Fees for schools, colleges and health facilities established or maintained by the district government
7. Fees for licences granted by the district government
8. Fees for specific services rendered by the district government
9. Collection charges for recovery of tax on behalf of the government
10. Tolls on new roads and bridges within the limits of a district, other than national and provincial roads and highways

Town Council

1. Local tax on services
2. Tax on the transfer of immovable property
3. Property tax on the annual rental value of buildings and land
4. Fee for advertisements (other than on radio and television) and billboards
5. Fee for fairs, agricultural shows, cattle fairs, industrial exhibitions, tournaments and other public events
6. Fee for approval of building plans and construction or reconstruction of buildings
7. Fee for licenses or permits and penalties or fines for violation of licensing rules

8. Charges for provision and maintenance of public utilities such as lighting, drainage, conservancy and water supply
9. Fee for cinemas, theatrical shows and other entertainment
10. Collection charges for the recovery of any tax on behalf of the government, district government, union administration or any statutory authority

Union Council

1. Fees for licensing of professions and vocations
2. Fee on the sale of animals in cattle markets
3. Market fees
4. Fees for certification of births, marriages and deaths
5. Charges for specific services rendered by the union council
6. Rate for the remuneration of village and neighbourhood guards
7. Rate for provision or maintenance of public utilities such as lighting, drainage, conservancy and water supply

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