PRESS RELEASE

**Civil Society and energy experts advocate for rationalising IGCEP to optimise renewables and replace fossil fuels**

Karachi, 05 November 2022: Participants at a learning and sharing session on IGCEP called for adopting clean energy in Pakistan’s energy mix, “in line with Pakistan’s international commitments and also as a response to the country’s struggles with the impacts of climate change.”

They were speaking at a Learning and Sharing Session on “Pakistan’s Power Sector Capacity Expansion Plan (IGCEP 2022-2031): Opportunities and Challenges” organised by The Knowledge Forum, a Karachi based think tank, here on Friday. The session sought to unfold the Indicative Generation Capacity Expansion Plan (IGCEP), which is a key document in Pakistan’s power sector planning. IGCEP is prepared annually by the National Transmission and Dispatch Company (NTDC), and presents a 10 year roadmap for expanding Pakistan’s power generation with the aim of meeting the future energy needs of the country. As per the law, IGCEP is annually updated and approved by NEPRA. Before approval, a public hearing is also held which is attended by stakeholders from the industry, government, and non government sectors. This year, the hearing took place in the third week of October and the plan is likely to be approved in the next few weeks.

The Learning and Sharing session was organised to promote an understanding of the complex structure and process of IGCEP and draw the attention of the civil society towards openings for sharing their voice and concerns so that the process could be made more democratic and representative.

Zain Mouvli, an energy expert from Alternative Law Collective, a Lahore-based organisation specialising on energy and environment, presented a detailed account of the process, politics and management of IGCEP. He highlighted the tilt towards hydro and coal projects in the plan that deviates the energy sector from the path to meeting Pakistan’s commitments under the Paris Agreement. He also outlined the role of the World Bank in creating conditions and pushing for terms for release of tranche under the PACE programme that led to a downward revision of Pakistan’s targets on renewable energy in Pakistan’s planned energy mix.

Member National Assembly Dr. Shahida Rehmani who is also member of the NA Standing Committee on Climate Change noted the contribution of Sindh in Pakistan’s energy mix. “Sindh is not only producing energy but gas explored in Sindh is supplied to other provinces. Energy policy needs to reflect the voices of all provinces.”

Senior economist Prof. Ejaz Qureshi said as far as Sindh is concerned, there is no need to build any dams on the Indus River. He called for addressing the dilapidated electricity distribution system that compromises the capacity of the energy sector.

Zulfiqar Halepoto, a civil society activist said civil society needs to appreciate the Sindh Government’s stance on IGCEP. “However, now that the party that governs the Sindh province also has a representation in the federal coalition government, the Sindh Government has an opportunity to influence the IGCEP in Sindh’s favour.”

Dr. Raza Ali Khan, Chairman, Department of Economics and Management Sciences

 at NED University questioned the energy policies of the country. “We are an energy surplus country, yet we are facing power outages.” He called for a participatory consultation model for framing of energy policy.

Mehboob Shaikh representing Sindh Vision highlighted the concerns of the local community on Thar coal. “Those leading the coal project have completely failed to answer important questions about its implications.

Zahid Farooq of Urban Resource Centre called for IGCEP public hearings to be organised in provincial capitals so that public participation in IGCEP hearings could be ensured.

Sarah Zaman, feminist activist and researcher highlighted the impact of energy crisis on women, children and older people.She noted the lack of representation of women in the energy sector. “Less than 6% of women are present in the overall energy sector. Women are missing in the entire energy discourse.”

Shariq Azhar, Senior Technical Officer of Energy department of Sindh government and Focal person on IGCEP stressed that energy sector be devolved as per the spirit of the constitution. “Energy policy should not be changed. It needs continuation even when there is a change in the government,” he concluded.

Rights activist Saeed Baloch expressed concern at the energy policy’s deviation from Pakistan’s commitments under the Paris Agreement. “Did we sign the Paris Agreement to generate more coal based energy?” He called for localising of transmission lines. “Renewables in the form of wind and solar energy plans must be pursued.”

Zulfiqar Shah, Member Sindh Human Rights Commission, while wrapping up the discussion called for a more representative consultation process in preparing critical policies that have a bearing on social and economic wellbeing of the public. MNA Dr Shahida Rehmani assured participants of her commitment to support demand for just energy in the legislature.

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