

Speech at the Donors Conference on Pakistan's Earthquake on 19.11.2005

**Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim**

**Honourable President of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf  
Honourable Secretary General, United Nations, Mr.Kofi Annan  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

**It is a great pleasure for me to welcome delegates, and luminaries representing countries, NGOs and the civil society on behalf of the Government and the people of Pakistan.**

**I also extend a very warm welcome to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. Your presence this morning, Excellency, symbolizes the UN's commitment to Pakistan as we move towards the reconstruction and rehabilitation phase.**

**We are greatly honoured by the presence of so many delegates in this historic conference to support reconstruction and rehabilitation of the affected areas. The broad participation of delegates from almost every continent demonstrates that concern for the earthquake affectees is truly global.**

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

**We meet today a little over a month after the cataclysmic earthquake that struck Pakistan on October 8**

leaving behind widespread devastation and enormous loss of life and property with extensive damage to economic assets, infrastructure and social service delivery. Towns and villages have been razed to the ground. Hundreds of schools, hospitals, government offices, roads and bridges have been destroyed. More than 73000 people have lost their lives. Over 120,000 are injured and nearly 3 million are without shelter. Families have lost their breadwinners; senior citizens have been left alone to fend for themselves; children have lost their mothers and fathers; and parents are now mourning lost and injured children. These grim statistics keep rising as many difficult mountainous and remote areas become accessible. All this happened in treacherous few minutes. What took 6 years to build; disappeared in 6 minutes. The misery did not end here. Hundreds of post-earthquake tremors multiplied the shock and trauma.

The administrative machinery that could help them survive in the disaster itself collapsed and perished. The destruction of infrastructure made communications and access impossible. The terrain made it more difficult. The onset of harsh winter in the Himalayas now threatens the lives of the survivors, already traumatized.

Faced with this unprecedented and formidable challenge, our response has been sharp and swift. We mounted our largest relief effort ever; guided by a clear objective to turn

this adversity into an opportunity for development with the following priorities:

- Moving survivors from rubble to tents and decent transitional shelters as quickly as possible.
- Setting up institutions and mechanisms to regulate and coordinate relief in the impacted areas and to deal with reconstruction phase.
- Gearing up medical and trauma treatment providing psychological, psychiatric, and counseling services for the injured.
- Arranging for transitional tent schools, hospitals, and public offices to restore social services, government structure and to help families to recover from the shock.
- Plan for permanent settlement of single parents, orphans and the disabled.
- Preparing "Transitioning from Tents to Communities Plan" entailing damage assessment, permanent shelter and housing programs, cash-for-work programs to help speed the move from tents to more permanent communities.
- Preparing reconstruction plan for the impacted areas on need basis, setting priorities, coordinating support, and its implementation in a transparent manner.
- Plan to restore the livelihoods of the survivors; to finance new economic activities for income generation; and to increase the capacity of local governments,

nongovernmental organizations and businesses to undertake the reconstruction effort.

- Emergency vocational training program for the local people as reconstruction generates demand for thousands of masons, woodworkers, supervisors and labourers.
- Estimating financial resources needed and identify gaps while devising a reporting system to ensure transparency in utilization of funds.
- Developing a joint action plan matrix detailing precisely who will do what, where and when, to avoid duplication of effort, ensure efficient use of resources and leave no person or community behind.
- Prepare model action plan for disaster preparedness and coordinating a coherent response to future disasters including reinforced preventive measures and capacity for emergency response.

While these actions were pursued by the government, equally significant has been the spontaneous outpouring of compassion and generosity by the people of Pakistan, both at home and abroad, on a scale never witnessed before. The galvanized nation united as one people to provide succor to their compatriots. The spirit of volunteerism is at its peak. They stepped forward and reflected our Nation's highest values of caring and sharing and our greatest hopes. From voluntary relief workers and organizations to jawans of the Army, each

stand to protect and nurture the victims of earthquake. We have not been alone in this response. We are overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of the world community and voluntary organizations. You have been a great support for us.

I take this opportunity to praise in the highest possible terms the work of the volunteers, men and women, the aid workers, the NGOs, the army, and the global civil society who worked tirelessly and selflessly to make a difference to those who suffered. We are also deeply grateful for generous support and initial assistance of the donors in providing the desperately needed relief to the earthquake victims.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Our strategy is delivering. We have managed the first six weeks well. Our institutional framework including Cabinet Committee for the Relief and Reconstruction and appointment of Federal Relief Commissioner at the very early stages helped in effective rescue and relief effort and coordination. We are now in a race against time. While the first wave of injuries and trauma have been taken care of, we recognize that the emergency relief assistance must continue for a period longer than expected. We are now set to ensure to protect survivors from severe winter, saving them from the risk of any epidemic through immunization and preventive care, and to maintain

**supplies of food provisions. We will not let anyone starve no matter what the cost, no matter what the logistics demand.**

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

**Today is not about saving lives, it is about building them as we prepare ourselves for medium to long-term reconstruction and rehabilitation program; taking care of all affectees of the earthquake including homeless, injured, orphans, the disabled, the amputees, the paraplegics and the quadriplegics. This conference is about making sure that the lives of the children, the women, and the families that have been affected by the earthquake can have a semblance of normalcy. It is about ensuring that those children have safe schools to attend, that women have proper medical care, and that the families have access to safe water and sanitation to make their lives healthier and happier instead of disease and misery. It is about empowering communities with control over the decision made for their uplift. It is about rebuilding a society that is living under the trauma of loosing their loved ones and their assets.**

**We realize that the challenge is enormous. The vast spread of the devastation includes over 85% rural and difficult terrain that makes the challenge even more pronounced. It is a marathon and not a 100 meters dash. It is a long term engagement and not one time transaction. It will require**

concerted and continuous efforts of us all and massive resources. We are determined to overcome this emergency and bring normalcy to the people affected by the earthquake. And we are looking forward building partnerships with the donors and sponsors to stay engaged through this reconstruction and rehabilitation process.

Towards this end, we have worked together with the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, bilateral partners, and the United Nations to produce consensus damage and needs assessment in a record time of four weeks. The preliminary cost associated with the recovery of the affected region is estimated to be US \$ 5.2 billion. It includes US \$ 1.7 billion for relief, early recovery, cash grants and restoration of livelihoods and US \$ 3.5 billion for rebuilding of social and physical infrastructure as well as restoration of economic sectors.

Major part of the reconstruction and recovery will be income generation through microfinance to help people restart their business and revive their livelihoods, , especially the women and the disabled. The livelihood support seeks to rejuvenate economic activity and create employment opportunities in the affected through reviving businesses, establishing small and medium enterprises, schemes for one village one product, handicrafts, and so on.

**We are also pushing the rehabilitation of environment and tourism up in the north; a tourist paradise and a major source of employment and income generation before the quake.**

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

**\$ 5.2 billion is a huge sum. We are prepared to do and are doing our share, and committing our energies and available public funds to rebuilding the lives of victims of this disaster. We are reordering our expenditure priorities so as to create space for the recovery. We will also be introducing sponsorship programs to encourage industrialists and corporate sector of Pakistan and overseas to contribute to the rehabilitation phase.**

**As you all know, Pakistan's remarkable economic turn around has been due to prudent fiscal and debt strategy and wide-ranging structural reforms implemented over the last six years. Our economic policies, dynamism of the private sector, and good governance are paying off. We will continue to follow this path of reform. In the last six years, despite several exogenous and endogenous shocks, we were not detracted from the path of macroeconomic stability and reforms. We shall not waver now, despite the magnitude of the challenge we face.**

**But the resources needed for reconstruction and rehabilitation are massive. Financing this cost all by ourselves is not possible without putting a major dent in our development**

plans meant to support the much needed infrastructure and derailing our economic reforms.

While we are committed to the twin objectives of providing relief and rebuilding the earthquake affected areas, we plan to sustain implementation of our poverty alleviation strategy and to meet the Millennium Development Goals that we have singed on to. Pakistan is a challenged country and needs not only to sustain but also to increase spending in key social sectors. And we want to do it without compromising macroeconomic stability we worked hard to achieve, and sustain the path of debt reduction, so we bequeath our next generation a stronger and a rising Pakistan.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The scale of the destruction in the earthquake affected areas is a reminder of the fragility of humankind in the face of nature. It calls for greater humility, respect and responsibility to deliver to the survivors the assistance they desperately need. While each country has the primary responsibility for taking measures for disaster management and reconstruction, it is essential to support self-help with mutual help and partnership as no country, in particular the developing countries, can cope with such challenges on a standalone basis. We are looking forward to your support to help rebuild affected communities and regions to mitigate the financial impact of the

catastrophe on the economy of Pakistan. Favourable market access to Pakistan by the developed world, in addition to direct financing of the affected areas, will be a major step forward in helping us to help ourselves at this critical hour of our history.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

We have set up Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority to undertake reconstruction work. To ensure that ERRA works within the parameters of the system in a transparent and accountable manner, we have made it subject to statutory audit, external audit and review by an oversight committee having members from the civil society. In addition, we have invited all major political parties to be part of a Parliamentary Committee to oversee the entire relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation process.

Transparency is one of the hallmarks of our government. These arrangements will ensure the efficacy and adequacy of all moneys received and spent for relief and reconstruction.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Today's conference marks a crucial step in the commitment of the international community to work together to assist rebuilding the devastated areas. The victims of the earthquake have put their trust in us and we must be able to

**deliver. The Joint Damages Assessment Report provides for future reconstruction and rehabilitation needs.**

**We need your assistance in rebuilding; brick by brick; day by day. It is a long journey. We are seeking long term partnership and multi-year commitment.**

**Winter has already set in threatening the lives of the survivors. There is a need to act; there is a need to act now. The time now is to reach out; to show; to give; to help; to share the sufferings; to lessen the pain of the traumatized people. The glaze and the emptiness in the eyes of the children have to be converted into hope, excitement, and reason to live.**

**Let us join hands to give home to the homeless; medical care to the sick; food to the hungry; and above all, put their life back on track. Let us give them a new life; new hope; a better future, and a better world. Let us give them their smiles back. Let us show them that we care. After all we are all part of the same race. This is what humanity is all about.**

**Let us resolve to do our best for rebuilding the devastated areas and rehabilitating the affected people; and give them a better tomorrow. We know that together we can do it.**

**Thank You**