

**Second Meeting of the Kitakyushu Initiative Network (Mayors' Segment)  
17 October 2003  
Weihai, People's Republic of China**

The Honourable Mr. Niamatullah Khan  
Nazim (Mayor), City District Government, Karachi (Pakistan)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here at the Mayor's Segment of the Second Meeting of the Kitakyushu Initiative Network.

Environmental protection entails a wide variety of issues, depending on the circumstances that exist in the particular region or country concerned. It poses a multitude of challenges, which are closely intertwined with the question of development. For some, the focus is on dealing with industrial pollution. For others, it is about keeping nature untouched and intact. The common thread running through all these is the vital question of how best we can go about making the work around us a safer and better place to live in.

This Meeting is of particular significance in the sense that it focuses on what seems to be one of the most pressing issues of the major cities of Asia and the Pacific, that is, environmental quality and human health in urban areas.

Karachi, one of the mega-cities of the world, is the largest, most energetic and polluted city in Pakistan. With a population of a few hundred thousand at the time of independence in 1947, the city is now spread over 3527 square kilometres with more than 14 million inhabitants.

Karachi, the capital of Sindh province, is also the commercial, financial and industrial centre of Pakistan. Sindh contributes about 70% to federal revenue, and Karachi generates a major part of it. The literacy rate—65%—in the city is considered to be the highest in the country.

The urban environmental problems in Karachi are at present very serious. Air pollution due to the emission of noxious gases and water pollution due to industrial effluents in Karachi are posing increasing serious challenges. However, we have now started taking steps in the right direction and we hope that the time to come will observe a better control of our local government towards solving these problems.

Let me briefly talk about how the City District Government of Karachi approaches the question of environmental safety in its resolve to fight the menace of urban pollution.

1. Since its inception in 2001, the City District Government Karachi has taken steps towards an environment friendly public transport in the city. As a first step CNG buses were introduced, which was a great success and at present about 100 such buses are plying on the city roads and still more transport companies are investing in this new trend introduced by our government.
2. We are in the final phase of initiating a rail-based mass transit system across the city, which will help in a significant decrease in the smoke pollution caused by thousands of public buses in the city.
3. An industrial effluent treatment plant has been set up in Korangi Industrial Area—the largest industrial zone in Karachi—that will start working by the end of this year. So far the industrial effluent discharge from the tanneries in this area was going untreated in the Arabian Sea through the Malir River. Another four similar projects are being planned in different industrial areas of Karachi.
4. A treatment plant in SITE—the largest industrial estate in Karachi—has been planned through an agreement with an Austrian firm to recycle the sewage water for industrial use.
5. In order to achieve the ISO 14000 standards for all the industrial areas in Karachi by the year 2005, the City District Government of Karachi has agreed to finance all the expenses through a special Export Development Fund. It may be mentioned that we have not accepted the loan

offered by ADB for that purpose because we believe we have the expertise required and we could achieve the target in a much lower cost what the consultants of ADB would have charged from us.

6. The newly announced Rs29 billion development package for Karachi contains a sum of Rs800,00,00 allocated for Solid Waste Management across the city, which at present is in a dilapidated condition.
7. The last two months have seen a massive plantation drive in the length and breadth of Karachi in which around 22,000 date trees are being planted.
8. More than 100 public parks have been revitalized in the last two years.
9. Karachi has seen the worst environmental disaster in history as the oil tanker Tasman Spirit ran ashore and an oil spill of around 14,000 metric ton was reported. The CDGK through its limited resources has played an important role along with the federal government and other organizations to fight this disaster. After a tiring and continuous effort of almost two months the beach has been cleared from the hazardous oily sand. However, it was in no way near from saving the marine life from death and extinction in the affected coastline.
10. I would also like to mention that a special section on environmental pollution and our responsibilities is being added in the adult literacy curriculum being prepared by the CDGK.

Finally, I would like to say that in this century, the greatest environmental progress would come about not through endless lawmaking or command-and-control regulations, but through technology and innovation.

In a nutshell, I would like to present the example of Japan. The people and government of this country have learned the hard way that economic growth and environmental conservation need to be pursued in tandem, that is, not one at the expense of the other. I have come across a number of Pakistanis who recall visiting Japan in the 1960s or 70s and breathing the then smog-filled air in big cities like Tokyo and Osaka. The Minamata disease, caused by industrial effluents, became a highly contentious social issue involving many years of litigation. Japan's robust industrial production activities were taking their toll on the environment. Throughout the 1970s and 80s, vigorous efforts were undertaken to institute strict emission and effluents controls and to develop anti-pollution technologies, and the Japanese succeeded in largely overcoming the problem of pollution.

To clean the air, and to address climate change, we need to recognize that economic growth and environmental protection go hand in hand. Affluent societies are the ones that demand, and can therefore afford, the most environmental protection. Prosperity is what allows us to commit more and more resources to environmental protection. And in the coming decades, the world needs to develop and deploy billions of dollars of technologies that generate energy in cleaner ways. And we need strong economic growth to make that possible.

Thank you.