

The Long March

A Peoples Long March against dams on the Indus River, organized by the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum, earned widespread support and solidarity from the fishing and peasant community of Sindh

The Sindh Peoples Long March was a massive public action that involved a 16-day walk of over 200 km from a small fishing village in the Indus River Delta region and culminated at the Governor House, Sindh, in Karachi. The long march, which started on 10 October 2018 and ended on 25 October 2018, was organized by Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) and got widespread support and solidarity from the fishing and peasant community of Sindh, civil society organizations (CSOs) and the media.

The Long March demanded that the federal government and Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCP) cancel the construction of any dam on the Indus River as the rampant construction of dams and barrages on the river had led to sea erosion and saline intrusion which was destroying coastal cities and districts.

forming the Indus delta. The tail-end farmers and other communities of Sindh were facing tremendous difficulties due to the unavailability of water.

The Long March manifesto aimed to: oppose all dams on the Indus River, including the Kalabagh and Basha dams; restore the natural flow of the Indus River; help the Indus River reach its final destination; and prevent future dams and diversions on the Indus River.

The Indus River, also locally called Sindhu, is one of the longest rivers in Asia. Originating in the Tibetan Plateau, the final destination of the river is the River Indus Delta in district Thatta of Sindh, the southern province of Pakistan. It is the longest river and the national river of Pakistan. The river has historically been important to many cultures of the region. The Indus River came into the knowledge of the West early in the Classical Period, when King Darius of Persia sent his Greek subject Scylax of Caryanda to explore the river, circa 515 BC. The Indus is one of the few rivers in the world to exhibit a tidal bore.

The Indus River Delta forms where the Indus River flows into the Arabian Sea, in the Southern Sindh province of Pakistan. The delta covers an area of about 41,440 sq km (16,000 sq miles), and is approximately 210 km (130 mi) across where it meets the sea.

Since the 1940s, the delta has received less water as a result of large-scale irrigation works capturing large amounts of the Indus water before it reaches the delta. The result has been catastrophic for both the environment and the local population.

Experts, along with the provincial government of Sindh, agree on the fact that a freshwater flow of 30 million acre-foot (MAF) is needed for the survival of

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The PFF wanted to make the authorities realize that Sindh, being in the lower riparian area, had suffered the most following the destruction of the Indus River and the Indus Delta due to stoppage of freshwater flow that had been majorly caused by dams and barrages built previously. Moreover, all international and national laws prohibit construction of any mega-dams on the Indus River system without the consent of lower riparian communities.

Rejecting the Kalabagh dam completely, the Long March highlighted that dams on the Indus River were destroying Sindh villages and cities

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Sindh Peoples Long March 2018 against all dams on River Indus in Pakistan. The natural flow of water and fertile sediments from the Indus River into the delta has been impeded due to the construction of dams and barrages along the river

the Indus River Delta. Above all, 10 MAF of freshwater flow was agreed upon by the Pakistan state in an infamous accord known as the Water Apportionment Accord of 1991. But the accord had also remained null and void up until now. According to the Institute of Oceanography, there is a 1.3 mm sea level rise annually, and 3,500,000 acres of land of the Indus River Delta have been destroyed by sea intrusion.

Before the development of an irrigation system on the Indus River, the entire flow passed through Sindh's plains to the Arabian Sea, culminating into 17 branches called creeks and forming the seventh largest delta of the world. An annual flow of over 180 MAF, carrying a silt load of about 440 mn tonnes, passes through the Indus into the Arabian Sea.

Until the 1980s, mangrove forests of the delta covered an area of 600,000 ha (1,500,000 acres) and could be found along the entire 240-km coastline. But the mangrove area has since reduced to 86,000 ha.

The natural flow of water and fertile sediments from the Indus River into the delta had been impeded due to the construction of dams and barrages along the river. The reduction of freshwater due to the dams also increases salinity, making the waters of the delta unsuitable for the freshwater species. In case of the Indus dolphin, the damming of the river has isolated

the delta dolphin population from those dolphins upstream. The Indus delta has shrunk by 92 per cent since 1833. In light of these threats, the Indus Delta was designated a Ramsar site in 2002.

A few months back, a pro-dam campaign was launched. Some influential leaders are collecting donations for the construction of the Basha Dam on the Indus River and also talk approvingly about the construction of the controversial Kala Bagh Dam.

Previously, three barrages on the Indus – the Guddu barrage, the Sukkur Barrage and the Kotri barrage – along with the Kala Bagh Barrage, the Chasma Barrage and the Taunsa Barrage had been built on the Indus River. The Tarbela Dam is also on the Indus River.

Such rampant construction of dams and barrages on the river has caused widespread sea erosion and saline intrusion, which, in turn, has destroyed coastal cities and districts. It is to stop this continuing destruction that the PFF and CSOs have banded together to petition the Federal Government and the Supreme Court of Pakistan to put an end to such ill-conceived “development” projects.

For more

<http://pff.org.pk/>
Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF)

<https://dc.icsf.net/en/component/dnews/article/detail/12455-Pakistan--A-200.html>
A 200 kilometer journey on foot against Dams on River Indus, Sindh Peoples Long March, October 10-25, 2018

<https://dc.icsf.net/en/component/dnews/article/detail/10494-Pakistan--Indus.html>
Indus River Canyon declared second Marine Protected Area of Pakistan

<https://dc.icsf.net/en/component/dnews/article/detail/12265-Pakistan--Disru.html>
Disruptive marine weather lowers catch for small-scale fishermen

<https://www.icsf.net/images/what%20is%20new%20page/Inland%20Fisheries%20policy%20note%20by%20ICSF.pdf>

Governance of water and freshwater fish production systems in India: Is there need for a national policy to protect fishers and fishworkers?: Draft for Comments - by ICSF

Looking Ahead

Implementation of the FAO SSF Guidelines, through appropriate legislation, would go a long way to help shore up the livelihoods of the small-scale fisherfolk of Pakistan

The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), at its Thirty-first Session in June 2014, formally adopted the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines).

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), a specialized agency of the United Nations, granted a project in December 2015 to a consortium comprising the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), the International

The participants of the national workshop included: women and men leaders of inland, marine and coastal fisheries; fishworkers and fishing communities from across the entire country; representatives of federal and provincial agencies, particularly those dealing with fisheries, environment, labour, trade and human development; representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs) and NGOs, scientific organizations, and the representatives of FAO, IFAD, ILO and others in Pakistan.

At the outset, the participants paid tribute to the late Tahira Ali Shah, the PFF's leader who lost her life in March 2015 during one of the major campaigns of PFF. Her struggle for the uplift of the marginalized fishing and peasant communities of Pakistan was acknowledged at the occasion.

Jamil Junejo, Manager, Programmes of the PFF, welcomed all the participants of the workshop. Muhammad Ali Shah, Chairperson, PFF and WFFP, gave a detailed and technical presentation on the SSF Guidelines. He said the major role of the guidelines was to move towards responsible fisheries. "Until and unless this objective is achieved, we cannot save the fisheries and protect the lives of the fisher people," he said. He also presented the history and salient features of the SSF Guidelines.

Human-rights laws

The opening session discussed implementation of the guiding principles of the SSF Guidelines, human-rights laws and the constitution of Pakistan. Mir Hasil Khan Bizanjo, the Federal Minister for Port and Shipping, was the key speaker. "Small-scale fishermen suffer from starvation while the mafia

(The workshop) was the first in a series in Pakistan as part of the efforts to mobilize support for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) and Centro Internazionale Crocevia (CIC) to promote awareness about the SSF Guidelines and to mobilize support for their implementation across countries of the Global South.

The National Workshop on Capacity-building for the Implementation of the SSF Guidelines, held in Karachi, was the first in a series in Pakistan as part of the efforts to mobilize support for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

The workshop was organized by the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum in collaboration with WFFP at Hotel Regent Plaza, Karachi during 24-25 August 2016.

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is depleting the marine resources badly,” said the federal minister. He further added that the use of the destructive nets is a major threat to small-scale fishing and must be banned. Sindh and Baluchistan governments should take notice of it, he suggested.

The Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Sindh, Muhammad Ali Malkani, said that until and unless there is an effective endorsement of the SSF Guidelines from all stakeholders, implementation will be a challenge. He announced that the Sindh government would soon establish a Fisheries Advisory Council for which he seeks guidance of the fishing communities.

Haji Shafi Muhammad Jamote, member of the Sindh Assembly, said that the human and industrial waste in the canal waters and the sea was affecting the common citizens and marine resources. He said overfishing was a big issue and suggested that industrialists be discouraged from fishing and the small-scale bona fide fishermen be encouraged.

Nasar Hayat, Assistant Representative, Head of Programme, FAO Pakistan, said that every legislation is made for the benefit of the small-scale fishers and they should be made part of it. Under the SSF Guidelines, access to resources is the basis for poverty alleviation in the world and these Guidelines were made under such a programme. If people have sustainable access to resources, they will have food security and their poverty would also reduce. Pakistan was part of the process of the SSF Guidelines in a significant way during the consultation phase. Pakistan has a big role in the development of the SSF Guidelines and now it is the responsibility of the government to implement it in their legislation. He assured the technical assistance of FAO, if required at any level.

Aly Ercelan, senior researcher, said that national policy on food security is under the consideration of the federal government as well as in the provinces. The SSF Guidelines should be seriously taken into

account. At the federal level, a draft of the policy is not enough. Natural resources should be used in a way that they are not wasted and the policy should follow the SSF Guidelines.

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Social Development, Employment and Decent Work for Responsible/Sustainable Fisheries

Caroline Bates, Officer-in-Charge, ILO, said oceans are resources for fish and sources of livelihood. In many countries, fishing is the only way of eking out a livelihood. So, decent working conditions for the fishing community are essential. She said that providing decent working conditions to the fishing community was part of ratification and implementation of the ILO conventions. However, Pakistan has not yet ratified the Work in Fishing Convention, 200 (No. 188).

Saeed Baloch, Secretary General, PFF, said under the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, ILO discusses improvement of working conditions of the workers. However, fishermen have not been considered. The social development of fishworkers, including basic amenities of living, has not been provided for. Female workers should get equal wages and must not face harassment. He said the sustainable fisheries policy in Pakistan

GUL HASSAN



The National Workshop on the SSF Guidelines was held in Karachi, Pakistan, as part of the efforts to mobilize support for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines

Box

- PFF has always played a major role in the abolition of illegal occupation of Rangers on the inland water bodies on the coastal belt of Sindh. However, this still needs to be implemented in its true sense for which PFF has been consistently advocating. As the feudal lords and various other influential people exploit the fishing in inland waters, there is a need to gain support from legislation to make the inland waters immune from private contractors who exploit the poor fishermen.
- Fishing communities remain aloof from developmental work. Several water bodies in Punjab are auctioned off.
- Providing basic facilities of life to fishermen has been a long-standing issue. No benefit has been provided by the government to the poor fishermen. Rights-based social movements, NGOs and the work of civil society for the uplift of poor fishermen remain neglected by the state authorities.
- The sea belongs to the small-scale poor fishermen who deserve a good standard of life. In order to meet European Union (EU) requirements, whole fisheries were revamped without considering the adverse impacts on small-scale fisher peoples.
- Around 1.5 mn people live along the coastal areas of Pakistan and while they contribute to the nation's gross domestic product, they suffer the most. Marine resources are at the bottom of the federal development agenda.

should also focus on these matters in the light of the SSF Guidelines.

Khawer Parvez Awan, Director Inland Fisheries, Sindh, said until all stakeholders, including fishermen, boatowners and the government, work together, decent work would not become practical. He said the Sindh government fully supports the SSF Guidelines.

Zulfiqar Shah, Co-director, Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research, said that work of fishermen is no more a decent work in the conditions they are currently working in. After the 18th amendment of the Constitution, labour issues in Pakistan are to be sorted out by the labour department. He said that PFF model is effective. He urged FAO and ILO to push the Pakistan government towards the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

Tenure rights to land and water bodies, livelihoods and responsible/ sustainable fisheries in light of national and international laws, especially the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of National Food Security

Representatives from the following governmental and civil society organizations participated in the discussion: fishing community persons; the Fisheries Departments

of Baluchistan, Sindh and Punjab provinces; Marine Fisheries, WWF-Pakistan; IUCN and the Labour Adviser to the Chief Minister, Balochistan.

The current status of actions under relevant laws remains inadequate, missing or adverse as compared to those required to acknowledge and promote livelihoods of peasants, in general, and fishers, in particular, when compared to the Tenure Guidelines of Land, Fisheries and Forests. Fishers are even more insecurely placed than land-based peasants, though perhaps the latter are often more harshly treated by landowners and the state than are fishers. The SSF Guidelines could and should be used but they have not resulted in a Food Security Policy that is serious about eradicating hunger and malnutrition. Agrarian reforms that include redistribution of access to water and land have not been seriously reconsidered since the 1970s. In the face of current threats to tenure, compensation for voluntary displacement remains a distant hope for fishers—of which two examples are most odious: the continuing land and water grabs of the Defence Housing Authority, and forced dispossession of fishers by new housing and industrial schemes on the Sindh Coast such as the Zulfikarabad city scheme and the Special Economic Zones.

Natural and Man-made disasters and Climate change

Experts on environmental governance, representatives from the Meteorological Department, the National Institute of Oceanography, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority and others participated in the discussion. It was noted that climate change was not a sudden occurrence. Anthropogenic activities have increased carbon discharge or emissions. Developed countries are creating a fund that would give US\$1 bn annually to the developing countries for the purpose of mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Natural disasters would be of short duration but they would be intense. As per the research

conducted by IUCN, which was also endorsed by the Senate of Pakistan, sea intrusion will adversely affect the coast of Sindh by 2030 and 2060. It was suggested that the

- The adverse impacts of climate change on fisheries must be taken into consideration while devising the policies related to the fishing profession.
- Degradation of mangrove forests on the coast of Sindh is underway. Only 15 per cent of the plants are healthy, out of the total of 80,000 acres.
- The frequency of cyclones, floods and other disaster has increased on the coast of Sindh. As a result, the poor populations are subject to displacement.
- The Sindh coast, mainly because of natural disasters and sea water intrusion, has been affected along with the local population. There is a rise of 1.7 mm in sea level annually. There are 17 major creeks in the Indus Delta on the left bank and the right bank, starting from the Korangi creek from Karachi to the Pakistan-India border.
- According to revenue department data, 132,000 acres of land have come under water in the Indus delta. The tidal link, instead of discharging the saline water of Sindh into the sea, is flowing in the reverse direction, and sea water is moving upwards through the river gateway.

Protecting life and livelihoods: SSF Guidelines for legislation, policies and research for fisheries and fishing communities

Muhammad Ali Shah said the SSF Guidelines are an instrument of FAO. Around 200 mn fishermen in the world depend on fisheries, of which 90 per cent of are small-scale fishermen. Their future is endangered. Now, the time has come for responsible fisheries. FAO has realized it and the issue of food security would be addressed through the SSF Guidelines. The goal cannot be achieved without the participation of fisher communities. The fisheries

authorities of many countries have endorsed the SSF Guidelines.

A responsible fishery is not only the responsibility of the government, he said, but also of all other stakeholders. Participatory policies should be formed and the SSF Guidelines present an example of participatory guidelines. He sought a national commission on the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. He endorsed the Advisory Council suggested by the provincial minister. The Director General of Fisheries of all the four provinces must be part of it. Representatives of the fisheries sector and environmentalists must be part of it. The SSF Guidelines are meant for the whole country. Consultation meetings for Baluchistan and Sindh would soon be called.

Way Forward

The participants of the workshop unanimously agreed on the formation of a committee for the implementation and legislation on the SSF Guidelines. The committee would communicate with the participants of the workshop and the legislators, in order to enact a law for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines under the local circumstances. The committee would write letters to the concerned people in this regard and the process of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines would be carried forward. †

For more



[sites.google.com/site/ssfguidelines/
pakistan](https://sites.google.com/site/ssfguidelines/pakistan)

**Pakistan: Implementation of the
Voluntary Guidelines for Securing
Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries
in the context of Food Security
and Poverty Eradication
(SSF Guidelines)**