

**Proposed tax amnesty scheme discussed at FPCCI meeting**

Engr Daroo Khan Achakzai, President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) called a meeting of stakeholders to discuss the proposals for New Tax Amnesty Scheme 2019 at Federation House, Karachi, Regional office Lahore and Capital Office Islamabad via video link. The meeting was attended by S. M. Muneer, former President FPCCI, Iftikhar Ali Malik, Sr Vice President SAARC-CCI & Former President FPCCI, Dr Mirza Ikhtair Baig, Sr Vice President FPCCI, all Vice Presidents of FPCCI and the representatives of different chambers and associations.

While welcoming the participants of meeting, Engr Daroo Khan Achakzai informed the house about the outcomes of last amnesty schemes and focused on the need of new amnesty scheme for the documentation of economy and enhancement of tax revenue. He also highlighted his discussion with the Prime Minister of Pakistan who showed his desire to launch another amnesty scheme and advised President FPCCI to formulate recommendations in consultation with stakeholders with the aim to document the economy by declaring of foreign and domestic assets.

In his remarks, Iftikhar Ali Malik emphasized to create awareness about converting the black money into white money, to increase the confidence of tax payer, incentives for the SMEs, exports warehouses, agriculture sector, and removal of piracy, mis-declaration and smuggling. S. M. Muneer underlined the need of revival of last amnesty scheme with some necessary amendments announced in April 2018 for three months. Dr Mirza Ikhtair Baig, Sr. Vice President FPCCI also stressed on the same tax rates of last amnesty scheme 2018 and continuation of Foreign Exchange Reforms Act which allowed opening of account, transactions and remittance facility in foreign currency.

During the meeting, the stakeholders suggested that the new scheme should be based on same rules, regulation and tax rates 2 percent, 3 percent and 5 percent announced in last amnesty scheme in 2018. The stakeholders also stressed on the strict monitoring of tax collection system, measures of discretionary power to conduct audit of tax filers, removal of harassment and ease of documentation. They argued that the tax collection system in Pakistan is very complicated which needs to be reviewed as per global requirement. Moreover, the tax amnesty scheme should also boost industrialization and create new investment in other than real estate sector of economy and improve cost/ease of doing business.

The house also advocated imposing of taxes on agriculture and other sectors which are currently not under tax net instead of putting extra burden on minuscule number of existing tax payers. They also suggested announcing incentives for filer/ tax payers and announced clean chit if tax payers pay 2 percent or 5 percent additional tax and this scheme should be for three to five years.

The meeting decided that a committee will be formed consisting of experts which will be headed by President FPCCI for the finalization of draft of new amnesty scheme.-PR

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