

Minister warns of worst water crisis by 2025

FAISALABAD: State Minister for Climate Change Zartaj Gul Wazir on Monday said that climate change had emerged the biggest challenge than terrorism as it was playing havoc with the lives of billions of people.

She was chairing a symposium on battling climate change and water crisis arranged by the Institute of Soil and Environmental Sciences, University of Agriculture Faisalabad, at New Senate Hall. She said that per capita water availability was more than 5,000 cubic meter at the time of the inception of the country, which had now declined to less than 1,000 cubic meter.

She warned of the worst water crisis by 2025 if tangible steps were not taken to address the issue. She said that the government was taking all possible measures to address the issue. The minister said that the government had initiated the Clean and Green Pakistan project under which 10 billion saplings would be planted for making environment clean and beautified. She quoted the example of Greece, which had produced many intellectuals and philosophers. The country was full of greenery that sharpened their views, she added.

She told the participants that the government had closed brick kilns for a specific time to control smog. A strict action was being taken against the factories emitting pollution, she added. She said that they had launched a crackdown on wastage of hospitals as it caused serious health hazards. She grilled India over the violation of the Indus Water Treaty. She added that the past governments could not plead the issue at the international level. She said that the heavy populous countries were facing the worst climate change effects. Every person had to plant a tree to save the world from the devastation of climate changes, she added.

She viewed that the mafias involved in deforestation would be dealt with iron hands. She lauded the role of the UAF for scientifically working on the issues with the help of scientists and hoped that they would help address the issues of climate change and water scarcity at the national and international levels. She said that the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor would work as a road towards development and prosperity.

Director Institute of Soil and Environmental Sciences Dr Javed Akhtar said that the quality of groundwater water was deteriorating with each passing month due to heavy pumping, and industrial effluent, causing outbreak of various diseases in the country.

Chair Climate Change Centre for Advanced Studies in Agriculture and Food Security Dr Ashfaq Chattha said that the climate change was responsible for new diseases and reduction in agriculture sector. He said that we had to take the tangible measures and praised the government for a valuable contribution in this regard.

Earlier, the minister called on UAF Vice-Chancellor Dr Zafar Iqbal Randhawa in his chamber. Dr Zafar Iqbal said that trees were essential part of healthy environment for a better life. He said that we had to turn the areas especially at the banks of canal lush green.

He said that one of the major socioeconomic challenges was the mismanagement of water resources. He said that there was no life without water as it was a key for irrigation, food security, economic growth, energy production, industries and human health. He said that water was being pumped out from tube-wells that were responsible for lowering down the groundwater level. Perveen Sarwar, wife of Governor Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar, also attended the meeting.

Our Correspondent