

Subject: Replication of VOs country-wide

Venue: **Office of the Adviser to Prime Minister and Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Islamabad.**

Participants:

- Mr. Anwar Aziz, Minister of Local Government and Rural Development.
- Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Adviser to the Prime Minister.
- Mr. Sajjad Ali Jilani, Joint Secretary, Ministry LG&RD.
- Mr. Samin Jan Babar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of LG & RD.
- Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan, GM AKRSP.

Mr. Sartaj Aziz informed me that the cabinet under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister had approved the proposal to set up VOs throughout the country as a tier of the local government structure christened Village Development Council (VDC). The summary and the cabinet are annexed.

The Chief Minister Punjab observed that a revolution was being ushered in through this proposal. Mr. Qasim Shah supported the proposal citing the Gilgit example where it has been a success. The only cabinet member who opposed it was the Minister for Planning who considered it not practicable and instead advocated setting up of model villages with investment of Rs.1.5 million per such village. Mr. Sartaj Aziz vehemently countered the argument and dubbed the proposal for setting up of model village totally unfeasible and waste of resources.

Mr. Sartaj Aziz asked for my help in drafting the necessary amendments to the existing law for giving a legal shape to VDC and also hinted at my heading an organization in the Federal Government to implement the proposal. The terms and conditions would be negotiated to my satisfaction. On my polite refusal as Gilgit work was still unfinished, he suggested the setting up of an autonomous board under my chairmanship with members from Federal and Provincial Governments, including himself as a member, to lay the policy guidelines and monitor progress of implementation of the proposal. His idea is to use National Centre for Rural Development as the apex organization for recruitment and training of the four provincial coordinators and 88 district programme officers. Each provincial coordinator would develop NCRD type facilities for recruitment and training of DPO staff. An existing rural development centre in a province could be revamped to undertake the functions. He agreed to offer terms and conditions to the staff not dissimilar to AKRSP pattern. He wanted me to identify Federal and Provincial Coordinators.

I gave Mr. Sartaj Aziz the proposed amendments/additions to the existing law, which he fully agreed with and passed it on to the Ministry for incorporation. A copy is at annexure II. He also liked the draft rules but suggested to the Ministry to send it to provinces after the law had been amended. The draft rules are at annexure III.

The provincial governments have yet to agree to what Mr. Sartaj Aziz has in mind in terms of setting up of autonomous structures both at the provincial and district levels and the Ministry of Rural Development has to find the money. It has 270 million now and has been promised 1,000 million in the next financial year. It could manage to get 2,000 million thereafter every year. The Chitral District PC-I may prove a good model for the Ministry, which could expect a 20 million plus outlay for each of the 88 districts. Mr. Sartaj Aziz is very confident of getting funds from the World Bank.