

Chairman SRB's Welcome Address

CM SRB welcomes the attendees of the Conference, Dr. Ishrat Hussain, Mr. Yousuf, Mr. Ramzan Bhatti, there are so many names, there is a long list of all those who supported us and are sitting here, Ladies and Gentlemen, The story of Sindh Revenue Board is the actually the story of Sindh Sales Tax on services is basically the story of political commitment and ownership at the highest level, use of state of art technology, proper human resource and the support of stakeholders, the media and the civil society and any possibility where you have proper mix of all these ingredients will surely result in a 100% success. Well we must know that Pakistan is a federal state, the provinces were here before Pakistan came into being, and the fact that 1940 resolution was passed by the Muslims of India which was subsequently supported by the resolutions in the Provincial assemblies and the Sindh assembly was the first assembly to opt for Pakistan and the constitution clearly defines the limits of the federation and the provinces. Somewhat in Pakistan the dictatorial regimes snatched the rights of the provinces in the name of the security of the state controlled all the resources so long as that whatever was with the provinces at the time of independence of the country which includes the sales tax on goods and services were taken in the name of security. In this process of focusing more on security we shifted our emphasis and priorities from human resource to hardware with the result that the schools which were providing a good education to the poor and the middle class with the result the investment to these was gradually reduced and the shift from soft investment into the hard investment be it either military hardware or civil side you will find that more priority was given to building the schools was given but not provision of proper teachers for these schools. There are so many schools, so many hospitals and so many water supply schemes which were constructed but the follow-up plan to provide human resource and support is lacking and which we as a nation need to reverse if we want to succeed.

The human resource has to be our priority and not the hardware and the fact that the SRB has succeeded is basically because we put more focus on human resources, employed the better human resource, employed the better technology you succeed, and that if you have political support at the top level and luckily we had that in Sindh, we have had support from Syed Qaim Ali Shah the Chief Minister of Sindh who supported us. If you have autonomy and good governance, we have collected 19 billion but still if you have autonomy and have good governance than you surpass all these problems and on top of that if you have political support at the highest level that gives you additional boost.

Now on sales tax on services you it is a provincial subject in the constitution, when in 2000 the powers were delegated to federal government to collect these on the excuse that the provinces do not have the capacity to collect the taxes. Whenever you talk to anyone in Islamabad they say the provinces do not have the capacity to do anything, so they cannot have higher education institutions, higher health institutions and so on but within a short period of 10 months the Sindh Revenue Board has shown to the people that if you provide support, if you have a proper supporting mechanism, than these provinces which had earlier no capacity to collect sales tax on

provinces can perform better, can give a better result, so if whatever we have in the SRB we are ready to share with our friends who have come from Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta and Peshawar and whoever would like to get any legal or technical support we would be ready to provide not only to the Provinces but also to the Federation also because we have travelled and come a long way in the past 10 months that maybe in some areas we can provide some support and help to the Federation also.

I just don't want to take more time, I know Dr. Sahib is here and would like the proceeding to start, but I would like thank you all the stakeholders because whatever has been possible would not have been possible without the cooperation of all the stake holders and salute them. We also salute the dedicated and committed workforce of SRB who have been working very late to give better results and unless we differentiate between the winning horses and the loosing horses you cannot improve your organization and also if you reduce the diet of the winning horse he will come to the level of an average horse. So you have to support them and that is one of the policies of the Sindh Revenue Board to support those workers who have been giving their extra time to us, who have been very dedicated and committed.

Taking this opportunity I would also like to thank Imtiaz for his support we understand that the start of this journey was only possible with the partnership with PRAL, we continue cherish this partnership, we will continue to work with them closely, the degree of partnership with PRAL may vary from year to year but we will continue to work with them.

I will before closing my welcome address I will try to seek the support particularly of the media and the civil society that unless we have a rule of law in the country and that also applies to taxation regime, so if you have a law which requires a given sector to pay, then responsibility for all the tax payers in that category it is required that all of them need to pay but there is still a small section of people who still feel they are above law and do not feel like paying their taxes, like builders they feel they are not part of service and they are above law and do not need to pay and since the last 10 months most of them have been not paying their taxes. We feel it is not just the government but also the role of civil society too; it is also the role media too to help us to ensure the enforcement of rule of law.

Taking advantage of this moment, I am also thankful to Gillani Sahib of Transparency International for supporting us. The good thing about SRB is that it is a very transparent organization; there is not even a single instance where anybody could have said they found something wrong, or that any person in SRB was involved in corruption or anything like that.

We have just begun our journey; we have already developed an online tax collection system which we have already shown to our Chief Minister that not only sales tax on services but all taxes, all provincial taxes can be collected through online computer based application. There is resistance but with your support, with media we have told them that we will provide them this facility without any additional cost, we have a platform and you just get advantage of this, we

have the support of the Chief Minister and hopefully we will bring the situation where every provincial tax will be collected through an online application, that too is going to be very soon, we are ready for it. Thank you Sir

In the end I must say that the members of SRB, basically the two pioneer members that is Akhtar Jamil Sahib and Mumtaz Sahib they had a very important role in shaping this organization have played a very important role, thank you Sirs for your support, then an additional support came to us. It is a very interesting story, how we got the support from the sources which we could not even imagine, when nature supports you it creates a way out, that brings additional help to you, God says you don't know if I want to support you, it is beyond your imagination from where I will support you. We got Mushtaque Kazimi Sahib and with his support, who is the master of sales tax in the Sindh Revenue Board, he has mastery over law and the sales tax regime that it is a gift from God, and then Imtiaz Barakzai, he joined us, and it is great.

The technical team, the IT team, we have Saleh Shah he is the boy, within the government you have people who can make miracles, and he is one of the boy who has made a miracle in SRB, we support you. There are so many, Iqbal is there, Rubab is there, Faiq is there, this lady Samreen here who has joined as Chief Audit is there. The man who supported us, Shahid thank you, he supported us when we were sitting in one room, just two people sitting, me and Akhtar Jamil Sahib in Finance, he is the one who has made our website there, a very proactive website. Thank you.

The media has been very supporting for us, we salute them for this support, the civil society, the assembly members so it is a just a start of journey, it is a process, we will learn more, with today Conference there will be a lot of new things for us here and from that we will pick things that we can implement and improve ourselves and the next time we meet we are in a better state. Thank you ladies and gentlemen.

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