



# Learning to Live on Planet Earth

National Conference on Education for Sustainable Development

March 20 - 21, 2007 at Avari Towers, Karachi

## Education for Sustainable Development and Private Sector

### Introduction

For development to be sustainable, social, economic and ecological costs must be taken into account. That said, there is a wide chasm between theory and practice. Until recently, the guiding principle for business in Pakistan has been the profit motive. This has been especially true for the private sector. Fortunately, this trend has begun to change due to increased awareness of the negative social, economic and environmental impacts of supply and production processes such as resource degradation, pollution, gaping income disparities and social disintegration, to name a few. As a result, the business sector has begun to demonstrate increasing social and environmental responsibility and initiated Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes. Furthermore, studies carried out by development organizations have demonstrated that damage to the environment inevitably leads to huge economic losses to business worldwide. One such example is the decline in fish and shrimp production along the Sindh coast due largely to mangrove deforestation that has dealt a severe financial blow to the fisheries industry.

Conceptually, CSR programmes have their limitation in that they tend to concentrate on charitable work such as building schools and hospitals. This approach has been under severe scrutiny by business analysts, environmentalists and social scientists who insist that the CSR portfolio needs to be broadened to include cleaner and sustainable supply and production processes. In Pakistan, the private sector is also cognizant of the need to cater to the social and environmental aspects of development. The Pakistan Business Council for Sustainable Development is an outcome of this new mindset. Although this is a step in the right direction, there is a long way to go before the business sector becomes truly sustainable.

The workshop seeks to galvanize the private sector to play a proactive role in promoting sustainable development as part of their CSR agenda through ESD. It also aims to encourage the private sector to support business schools to incorporate ESD in their curriculum by offering employment opportunities in the field.

### Facilitator

Saima Pervaiz Baig has a Masters in Environmental Management from the School of Forestry, Yale University. Before proceeding to Yale, Baig worked on projects related to poverty and environment, water resource management, coastal ecosystem development and gender under IUCN Pakistan's (IUCNP) Sindh Programme. Baig has also developed environmental and socio-economic strategies for West Africa, North Africa and the Central Asia regions of the World Conservation Union (IUCN). Having rejoined IUCNP, she is currently looking after the Business and Biodiversity and the Environmental Economics programmes.

### Participants

Faculty of business schools, entrepreneurs, CEOs of private sector corporations and IUCN members and stakeholders.

