

Indus Forever

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Indus for All Programme, WWF - Pakistan

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Indus Forever is the quarterly newsletter of the Indus for All Programme; the first five-year (2007-2012) implementation phase of a 50-year vision of the Indus Ecoregion Conservation Programme. Funded by the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Pakistan, the Programme is being implemented by WWF- Pakistan in close collaboration with the Government of Sindh. The Programme aims to conserve rich biological diversity of the Indus Ecoregion through livelihoods improvement of the local communities. The newsletter aims to keep the stakeholders of the Programme, other concerned organisations and individuals updated about the activities, progress and future endeavours of the Programme.

Poverty-Environment Nexus

Speaking on the occasion of the Launch ceremony of the Indus for All Programme, the Director General, WWF - Pakistan, Mr. Ali Hassan Habib said that during his recent visit to Keti Bunder an interesting fact was revealed to him: "some 60 years ago, Keti Bunder was so prosperous that the Town Council of the area used to provide loans to Karachi Town Council".

It is indeed shocking to learn that the degradation of natural resources in an area can affect human lives to such an extent that almost the entire population can change from a prosperous to an underprivileged community. While still rich in resources such as fisheries, more than half of Keti Bunder's residents live in abject poverty with average household incomes of Rs. 2000-3000 per month.

The rapid degradation of natural resources and the resulting negative impacts on the lives of the communities of the inland and creek areas in Keti Bunder is mainly due to the decline in the flow of the Indus River into the delta. With the reduction in freshwater flow, the sea has crept in and agricultural lands have either been swept away or spoiled by water logging and salinity. Red rice which, was once cultivated in surplus and fetched high average unit price in exports has altogether vanished. Pressure on fisheries resources has resulted in over exploitation of fish and shrimps and reduction in income of the local fisherfolks.

Resource degradation and poverty in Keti Bunder are, therefore, intricately connected. This linkage indicates to mankind that an imbalance in the natural ecosystem can adversely affect the lives of human beings.

Situated in the Indus Delta, Keti Bunder is among Indus for All Programme's four priority sites. The area represents a coastal ecosystem and harbours some of the densest patches of Mangrove forests in the country.



Programme Highlights

Indus for All Programme Launched

Having completed its 9-month inception (July – March 2007) and begun implementation activities, the Indus for All Programme held its launch on 29 August 2007 in Karachi. The formal initiation of the Programme and the website of Indus Eco-region Programme (www.foreverindus.org) was carried out by the chief guest, Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, Chief Secretary Sindh. Those attending included Programme beneficiaries and other stakeholders from Thatta, Sanghar and Nawabshah communities.



Chief Secretary Sindh delivering his speech during the launch ceremony

Referring to the Keti Bunder exposure visit for media and stakeholders held the day prior to the launch, Mr. Ali Hassan Habib, Director General, WWF-Pakistan, informed the audience that the newly established windmill energy units and hut that would serve as a school for a village of 20 households confirmed that Programme interventions, no matter how small in scale, can bring about change. He also underlined the need for equitable sharing of benefits from Pakistan's current economic progress.

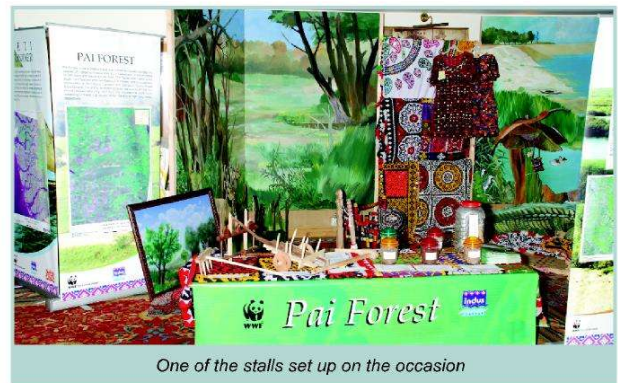
Dr. Ghulam Akbar, Director, Indus for All Programme, emphasized the valuable contribution of stakeholders and partners from line departments, civil society organizations, academia and local communities. He acknowledged the generous support of the Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE) to the Indus for All Programme. Dr. Akbar's presentation highlighted the Programme's unique 3M approach that integrates interventions and translates them into effective plans at provincial and national levels.

Mr. Ghulam Sarwar Khoro, Additional Chief Secretary (Dev.), P&D Department, Government of Sindh, pointed out that the Sindh Vision 2030 and the Programme were complementary in the areas of poverty alleviation, forest management, environmental education and awareness, water management and introduction of alternate energy technologies. With regard to the latter, he appreciated the establishment of wind turbine units in the remote coastal areas of Keti Bunder.

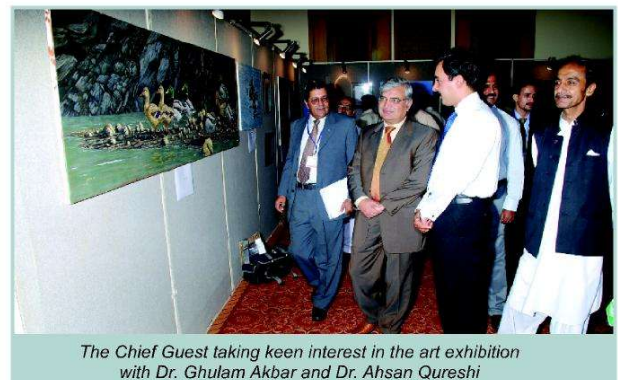
In the keynote address, the Chief Secretary Sindh assured on behalf of the Government of Sindh full support to the Indus for All Programme and ensured that he will not support any project that is detrimental to the environment. He also took the opportunity to express gratitude to the RNE for its substantial financial support for Programme implementation.

Mr. Fred Smiet, First Secretary, RNE, explained that RNE's objective in funding the Programme was to address the poverty-environment nexus. While acknowledging RNE's biodiversity conservation objectives, the most important aspect he said was to mitigate threats to livelihoods from such factors as salinity, sea intrusion, and decline in fisheries. He hoped that Pakistan's experience would soon be replicated globally.

Participants were presented with extensive information materials and were delighted by renowned Wildlife artist Dr. Ahsan Qureshi's art exhibition as well as installations portraying the rich culture, natural resources and livelihoods at all four Programme sites.



One of the stalls set up on the occasion



The Chief Guest taking keen interest in the art exhibition with Dr. Ghulam Akbar and Dr. Ahsan Qureshi

Indus Ecoregion Programme Develops and Launches its Website

Developed through the Information Technology Department of WWF - P, the website of the Indus Ecoregion (www.foreverindus.org) was formally launched during the launching ceremony of the Indus for All Programme on 29 August 2007. The website is divided in two main parts, the Indus Ecoregion and the Indus for All Programme. Its concept is that it should go beyond any project and also include links to other web applications such as decision support systems of the Indus Ecoregion.

The website also provides a good platform for people who are interested in registering themselves in the "Friends of Indus Forum" and interacting with other like-minded people to advocate for conservation and livelihoods development within the Indus Ecoregion.



Home page of the Indus Ecoregion's website

Second Vegetation Survey in the Programme Sites

The Programme's second vegetation survey was carried out from 23 July to 9 August 2007. During the survey various plant species not recorded in the previous survey were also documented. As per the latest records 78, 71, 55, and 43 plant species have been listed in Chotiari Wetlands Complex, Keenjhar Lake, Keti Bunder and Pai Forest sites, respectively.



Experts conducting vegetation survey under Indus for All Programme

A total of 94 species belonging to 76 genera and 37 families have been found in Keti Bunder area. Keenjhar Lake is the richest of all the four sites having 210 plant species belonging to 147 genera and 49 families. 105 plant species were found in Pai Forest belonging to over 80 genera and 34 families whereas 193 species were recorded in Chotiari Wetlands Complex belonging to 55 families and 128 genera.

Indus for All Programme Sponsors Children from Thatta for National Children Mountain Conservation Meet (NMC) 2007

The Indus for All Programme sponsored three school children from Thatta District to participate in the National Children Mountain Conservation Meet (NMC) 2007. The event was organised by Adventure Foundation Pakistan in Kaghan Valley between 1-10 July 2007.

The Keenjhar Lake and Keti Bunder site offices collaborated in identifying the school children and facilitating them in their trip. The collective efforts of the Indus for All Programme team paid off as the children were able to prove their potential for learning mountain conservation principles and applying them, which earned them a lot of applause.

Besides having the unique experience of nature camping and meeting children from all parts of the country, the event proved to be an effective source for the children to demonstrate and enhance their orienteering skills and interact with the natural environment.

The Policy Monitor

The Sub-committee of the Indus Ecoregion Steering Committee (IESC) Holds its First Meeting

The first meeting of the Sub-committee of the IESC was held on 21 August 2007 in the Committee Room of the Forest & Wildlife Department, Government of Sindh. Mr. Mahboob Alam Ansari, Secretary Forest & Wildlife Department, Government of Sindh chaired the meeting. Dr. Ghulam Akbar, Director, the Indus for All Programme gave a detailed presentation on the Programme's thematic and operational plans. The committee members deliberated on the programme's five-year logframe and took the following key decisions:

- The Indus for All Programme will carry out a comparative analysis of the Sindh Vision 2030 and the Indus Ecoregion

Programme documents to explore synergies between both the initiatives and share the findings with IESC members to set a course of action;

- The Indus for All Programme will send a request to the Sindh Fisheries Department for allocation of space at Keenjhar Lake for the establishment of a Conservation Information Centre;
- The relevant government departments will revise the Institutional Action Plans for the Indus Ecoregion developed in 2004;
- The Indus for All Programme will conduct a feasibility study for establishing a boat repairing workshop as part of the package of the interventions for rehabilitation of Keti Bunder after the recent cyclone;
- The Indus for All Programme will invite UNDP-SGP to give a presentation at the next Sub-committee meeting on their areas of work and financial resources.

The Poverty-Environment Watch

Understanding the Poverty-Environment Nexus

What is the poverty-environment nexus? The concept itself applies to poor communities living in fragile ecosystems. Specifically, the concept describes mutually reinforcing linkages that are postulated to exist between impoverishment, population growth and environmental degradation.

First, a reduction in real income causes activities that are damaging to environmental asset(s) to intensify and expand to other ecologically fragile areas. This is the poverty-environment (PE) linkage in the nexus. Second, if the environmental asset is exhausted, productive factors may be damaged and incomes may fall as a consequence. This would be the case, for example, if grasslands are over-utilised, livestock suffers and real income declines. We may refer to this as the environment-poverty (EP) linkage. Third, as population rises, farm sizes decrease and productivity falls. This is in part due to the process of intensification in which there are shorter fallow periods and, consequently, lower yields. This is the population-environment (POP-E) linkage. It should be noted that nexus linkages are not unidirectional as is illustrated by the PE and EP causalities.

Further, government policies and practices, the nature of public and social institutions, illiteracy, the carrying capacity of the resource base, resource distribution between the poor and the non-poor, property rights, and established resource use practices and laws of the land can all become compounding factors, in addition to the three basic linkages described above. Often population growth is itself a response to impoverishment. In such cases, the household family planning decision is a function of children as labour inputs, children as old age insurance, and increased fertility to counter the high infant mortality trend. The geographic concentration of poor communities on fragile ecosystems is an empirically observed phenomenon.

Glimpses from the Programme Implementation Units

In the aftermath of the recent heavy rainfall in the southern parts of Sindh Province, many coastal communities of district Thatta, including those residing in areas around Keenjhar Lake suffered from many diseases. The PIU team visited the nearby areas and found many children, women and elderly suffering from a number of serious illnesses in Daulatpur, a small village near Keenjhar Lake. In view of this situation, the PIU team of Keenjhar organized a Free Medical camp on 17 July 2007. A team of qualified medical professionals provided medical aid to 50 individuals including men, women and children.



A large number of local people attending the Medical Camp organized by PIU Keenjhar Lake

Indus for All Programme Facilitates the Concluding Ceremony of the Indus Walk

Indus for All Programme, through its site offices in District Thatta i.e. Keenjhar Lake and Keti Bunder, organized the concluding ceremony of the Indus Walk. The walk was organized by Pani Pakistan, a consortium of organizations advocating for the betterment of the water situation in Pakistan. The walk started from Skardu in Northern Areas of Pakistan, continuing along the River Indus and concluded in Keti Bunder, a small coastal town in District Thatta. Forty-eight young Water Champions selected from as many districts of Pakistan took part in the event. They witnessed the mighty Indus flowing down the mountains, producing hydroelectricity, irrigating the plains and finally falling into the Arabian Sea.

As part of its commitment to promote conservation initiatives in the lower Indus Basin where the Indus Ecoregion lies, the Indus for All Programme facilitated a visit for the participants to a creek in the coastal areas. The participants observed that a number of factors including the upstream water reservoirs have limited the flow of Indus River into the delta.

The Programme also arranged a two-day stay for the

participants in Thatta and organised a concluding ceremony at Keenjhar Lake. The ceremony was attended by the representatives of local and national NGOs and CBOs including Global Welfare & Development Organization, Health And Nutrition Development Society (HANDS), Sindh Agriculture & Forestry Workers' Coordinating Organization (SAFWCO), Keenjhar Fishermen Welfare Society, Pakistan Fisher-folk Forum, Delta Development Organization, WHDT, Strengthening Participatory Organization and Keenjhar Development Organization.

Visit of DG Livestock & Fisheries and Director Fisheries Sindh to PIU Thatta

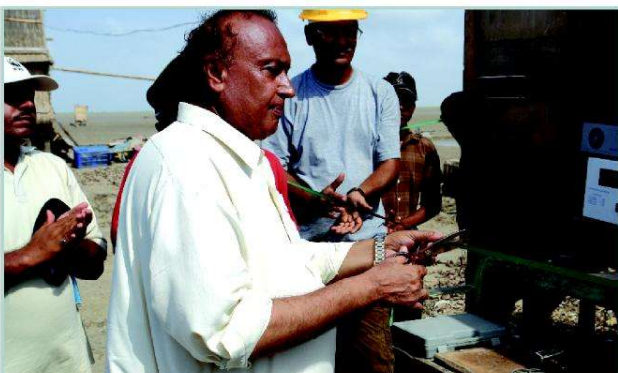


DG Livestock & Fisheries and other officials holding a meeting with the management of PIU Keenjhar Lake during their visit to the office

The Director General Livestock & Fisheries and the Director Fisheries Sindh visited PIU Keenjhar Lake along with other officials on 24 August 2007. The delegation was briefed by the site team about the objectives and various initiatives of the Programme. The officials identified means of promoting local handicrafts for improving the livelihoods in the Keenjhar Lake area and assured their support in this regard.

Wind Energy Units Installed in Keti Bunder

As part of promoting alternate energy sources in the target areas, the Programme has installed two wind energy units



Mr. A. B. Kalhoro, the DG Coastal Development Authority inaugurating the wind energy unit in Keti Bunder

(500 Watts each), one each in two villages of the taluka i.e.,

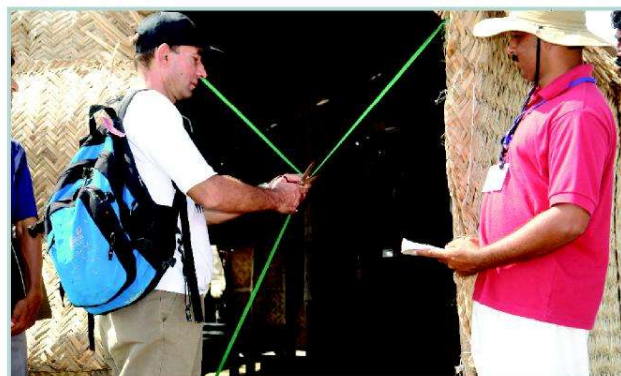
Tippa, Hajamro Creek and Meeru Dabloo in Keti Bunder. On 28 August 2007, a delegation of around 30 people comprising of representatives from various stakeholder groups were taken to the Keti Bunder area for an exposure visit. During the visit, Mr. A. B. Kalhoro, the Director General, Sindh Coastal Development Authority inaugurated the windmills.

Community-based School at Hajamro Creek, Keti Bunder

The PIU Keti Bunder has helped establish a community-based school in a remote village of Keti Bunder. Hajamro Mahol Dost Committee (HMDC), a local CBO has established the school in collaboration with the Indus for All Programme, WWF-Pakistan at Hajamro Creek. Mr. Ali Hassan Habib, the Director General, WWF-Pakistan formally inaugurated the school on 28 August 2007.

The PIU Keti Bunder has facilitated the local communities to establish the thatched premises of the school, while furniture has also been provided by the Programme. So far, 25 children have been enrolled. The EDO (Education) Thatta has been requested for provision of syllabus and the registration of the school.

The school has been established with a view to provide basic education to children of the village which has 20 households. The Programme's collaboration in this regard will help the Keti Bunder team to work closely with the community for future endeavours.



Mr. Ali Hassan Habib formally inaugurating the community-based school at Hajamro creek, Keti Bunder

District Coordination and Advisory Committees (DCCs) Notified and First Meeting Held in District Nawabshah

As part of the Programme's commitment to involve the district/local governments in site level interventions and demonstrate the highest level of transparency, the Indus for All Programme has established District Coordination and Advisory Committees (DCCs) in the three target districts, i.e. Thatta, Sanghar and Nawabshah, which have been notified by the District Coordination Officers (DCOs) of the respective districts.

The purpose of the committees is to develop a networking mechanism between government, civil society organizations, intellectuals, public representatives and academia to foster collaborative management of the priority areas. DCCs are headed by the respective District Coordination Officers with members from government offices, academia and civil society.



Members of the DCC, Nawabshah after the meeting

The first meeting of DCC Nawabshah was held on 11 September 2007. The DCO Nawabshah, Mr. Abdul Razaque Qureshi chaired the meeting. After the formal presentations by the Indus for All Programme staff, the members discussed various issues related to Pai Forest. The availability of water for the forest was the main point of concern. After the meeting, some of the members visited Pai Forest where they were briefed by Mr. Muhammad Sadiq Mughal, Divisional Forest Officer, about the problems and challenges faced by the management.

Livestock Vaccination and Treatment Camp at PIU Nawabshah

The role of livestock is highly important in the lives of the rural communities. The communities in the Programme areas are unable to take good care of their animals' health due to lack of vaccination facilities and high cost of treatment.



Livestock Vaccination Camp at Nawabshah

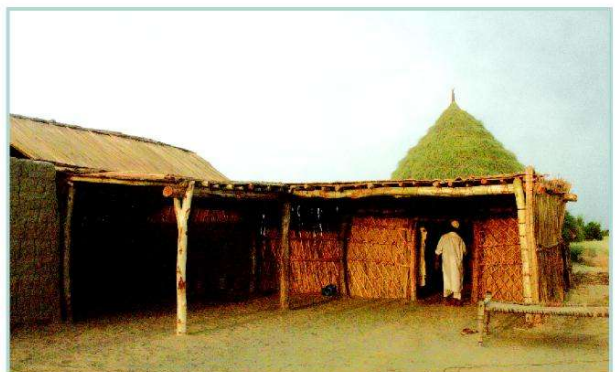
In the light of the consultative meetings with veterinary doctors, government officials, representatives of CBOs and village activists, Indus for All Programme's Pai Forest office organized a two-day Vaccination and Treatment Camp for livestock. The PIU team arranged vaccines and other required material with support of the Executive District Officer (Agriculture) and the District Officer-Livestock. Four doctors and 12 Livestock Assistants were deputed in teams for covering 17 villages around Pai forest. An awareness campaign for the camp was initiated through local FM radio and by distributing leaflets. A total of 7,762 animals were vaccinated which included 1,357 cows, 2,779 buffalos, and 3,626 goats.

The camp was inaugurated by Nazim UC Marvi, Mr. Ranno Khan Jalbani. At the end of the camp, Appreciation Certificates and honorarium for the vets and livestock assistants were distributed by EDO Agriculture, Dr. Karim Bux Leghari.

Livestock Vaccination Camp at Chotiari

The PIU Chotiari Wetlands Complex, in collaboration with Sustainable Development Foundation (a local NGO), organized a Mobile Livestock Vaccination Camp in the area on 31 July 2007. The activity aimed to take preventive measures against seasonal diseases of livestock reported in the area. A total of 1,916 animals, including 116 buffalos, 1,061 cows, 60 sheep, and 679 goats were vaccinated.

Establishment of Field Office at Chotiari



The newly established field office at Chotiari

In order to facilitate an effective and efficient implementation of the Programmes' interventions at the Chotiari Wetlands Complex, the PIU Chotiari has established a field office near the reservoir. Built with the active support and participation of the local community of Village Bakaar, the office was inaugurated by Mr. Ali Hassan Habib, DG WWF – P, on 31 August 2007. The design of the office structure resembles that of a local cone-shaped straw-cottage.

The Programme plans to improve the structure and equip the field office with required resources to develop it as a Conservation Information Centre.

PIU Chotiari Hosts Annual Meeting of WWF – P’s Departmental Heads

The PIU Chotiari Wetlands Complex hosted the Annual Meeting of the Departmental Heads of WWF - P held from 30 August to 01 September 2007. The meeting was followed by a field visit to the north-western flanks of the reservoir. The locations are well-known as crocodile hotspots and provide a habitat to a variety of bird species. The PIU team briefed the departmental heads about the site, the status of the natural resources and the socio-economic situation of the area.



Departmental Heads of WWF-Pakistan having a boat visit to a remote village at Chotiari

HR News

- Mr. Ali Muhammad Khan Dehlavi, Programme Economist, Indus for All Programme attended a 3- day course “ Introduction to WWF ” organised by WWF International at its headquarters in Gland, Switzerland.
- Mr. Mumtaz Ali Mangi, the NRM Officer, Pai Forest, attended a training course on “Understanding Camera and lens: Exploring effective avenues for Nature Photography”. The 5-day training course was organized by Pakistan Wetlands Programme (PWP) in Islamabad. The training was designed to fulfil the needs of professionals working in nature conservation.
- Ms Nida Shams has joined the Indus for All Programme as Graphic Designer on 16 July 2007.

Other News

PWP Launches a New Web Portal

Following an intensive period of research and development, the Pakistan Wetlands Programme (PWP), working in conjunction with a well reputed Pakistani information technology institution, has developed a web portal – www.pakwetnet.com on wetland ecology and its dynamics, as applicable to the PWP’s mission. The website has been developed using the latest cutting-edge technology.

Pak Wet Net has been designed for students of universities at national and regional levels not only to have access to information on wetlands but also to facilitate knowledge exchanges, experience sharing and learning among conservation planners, researchers, policy makers, practitioners, communicators and the general public.

The portal has many features including interactive chats, forums, discussion rooms and other innovative features which will make learning about wetlands and understanding their dynamics fun, educational and easily accessible.

All these features are extremely user-friendly and can be accessed by anyone with rudimentary web-based knowledge. Two aspects that will particularly be found to be of great interest and benefit to all users will be the live chat rooms and online discussion forums. Among these sections are five live chat rooms which will provide a chatting platform to those conversant with different levels of Wetlands and Environmental understanding. The chat rooms are supplemented by a discussion forum where any one specific topic can be discussed, analysed and debated. Any current topic of concern is considered fair game for the Forum.

In addition, a gallery of downloadable photos representing vibrant pictures of the wetlands flora and fauna is also included along with the individuals involved in the wetlands conservation and the locations.

Mariyum Augranzeb, Coordinator National Awareness Raising Programme, Pakistan Wetlands Programme

Marine Turtle Conservation at Sandspit/Hawkesbay, Karachi Coast

Ocean Park Conservation Foundation (OPCF) Hong Kong has approved a one-year project on Conservation of Marine Turtles at Sandspit / Hawkesbay, Karachi Coast. The objective of the project is to conduct surveys to monitor turtle population; measure their migration patterns and foraging areas; organize community workshops and educational programmes with different target groups including beach cleaning activities to

Other News

provide a safe refuge to nesting turtles. The project started in September 2007 with a total support of HK \$55,000 (PKR 4,29,000 approx.).

Fishermen Community Workshops Under Cetacean Conservation Project

Two Fisher Community Awareness Workshops were organized at the Wetland Centre, Sandspit, Karachi on 31 July 2007 and at Gwadar on 4 September 2007 under CCP. The purpose of the workshops was to create awareness among the fishermen communities about cetaceans of Pakistan.



Workshop for fishermen community under Cetacean Conservation Project at Karachi

The objectives of the workshop included stakeholders' discussions and knowledge sharing on cetaceans with the fishermen of different coastal areas of Pakistan. The workshop provided a good opportunity to share knowledge on species' conservation, their status and the threats that these animals are facing. Measures needed to safeguard the endangered species were also discussed.

Syed Ali Hasnain, Project Manager, WWF - Pakistan

CSOs in Sindh Form a Coalition

A coalition of fifteen civil society organizations called "Dharti", has been established to address the environmental issues arising out of development projects in Sindh province. The principal aims of the coalition are to focus on development initiatives that will pose a risk to environment thereby threatening present and future generations. The coalition, through diverse expertise of its member organizations, will propose and promote alternative sustainable paths that will ensure environmental health while ensuring economic growth and national development. WWF - P has been nominated as one of the two Chairs while Shehri, a local NGO as the Secretary of the coalition.

Syed Ghulam Qadir Shah, Manager Conservation-Sindh WWF - Pakistan

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Keenjhar Lake
House # B/112,
Hashimabad Society Makli,
District Thatta, Sindh.
Tel: 0298-772318, 772319, 610426

Keti Bunder
Keti Bunder Town, P.O. Keti Bunder
via P.O. Mirpur Sakro,
District Thatta, Sindh.
Tel: 0298-607685, 620291

Pai Forest
House # A-3, M.U.C.E.T Employees
Co-operative Housing Society,
District Nawabshah, Sindh.
Tel: 0244-366364, Fax: 0244-282496

"Poverty is the ultimate form of pollution in a world out of balance with people's needs and its own future."

Bella Abzug