

## **Seminar held to create awareness of food security**

RAWALPINDI: A three-day international conference on 'Asia-Pacific Policy Dialogue on Water, Energy and Food Security for Poverty Alleviation in Dryland Regions' commenced at Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University (PMAS-AAUR) here Wednesday.

PMAS-AAUR in collaboration with UNESCO with the support of Japan Funds-in-Trust and Malaysia Funds-in-Trust organised the conference aimed at providing opportunity to policymakers, scientists, academicians and other experts for exploring new dimensions to increase water, food security and alleviate poverty.

Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Sheikh Aftab Ahmad was the chief guest at the inaugural session of the conference while Japan's Ambassador Takashi Kurai and High Commissioner of Malaysia Dr Hasrul Sani Bin Mujtabar were in attendance.

Over 200 participants from Pakistan and other countries were also present.

The minister, addressing the participants, said that the government has put water, energy and food security on the top development agenda in its vision 2025 because these sectors are considered to be the lifeline of any economy and most vital instrument for socio-economic development of the country.

He said the government is paying special attention on hydro-electric projects like Diamer-Bhasha Dam and others to make the country self-sufficient in the energy sector.

"The changing climatic conditions, especially the natural disasters, resource base degradation, poverty, low education levels and high disparities in food access are major challenges for food security in Pakistan," said Ahmad.

He urged the participants to discuss the thematic areas and propose policy guidelines and strategies for effective use of resources to ensure water, energy and food security.

He hoped that this conference will help in facilitating the integration of the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals into the national development plans of Pakistan and other countries of Asia Pacific Region.

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