
SEMINAR REPORT ON PRE-BUDGET 2016-17

On June 21, 2016 Planning & Development and Finance department Gilgit-Baltistan jointly organized a pre-budget seminar at PDCN Gilgit. The Purpose the pre-budget seminar was to formulate public friendly budget for the year 2016-17. Honorable Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Hafiz Hafeez ur Rehman graced the seminar with his presence as Chief Guest. Speaker GBLA, Deputy Speaker GBLA, Minister Education, Minister Works, Health Minister, Minister LG&RD, Finance Minister, Minister Tourism and Youth Affairs, Opposition Leader, members of GBLA Fida Khan and Kacho Imtiaz were present in the seminar.

OPENING REMARKS BY CHIEF SECRETARY

After the recitation of Holy Versus, Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan Tahir Hussain on welcome note and opening remarks elaborated the goals and objectives of pre-budget seminar. He said that this type of seminar hasn't been held before and he requested all the stake holders to give suggestions to formulate budget which suits best for the people living in GB.

SALIENT FEATURES OF BUDGET 2016-17

Secretary Finance Gilgit-Baltistan in his presentation informed the participants on key aspects of the budget 2016-17 as:

- Revenue receipts of the financial year 2015-16 have not been included in the budget of 2016-17 which will be utilized in the next year.
- In the upcoming budget priorities of the government, and suggestions from chief Minister, members GBLA and cabinet were included keeping in mind the financial discipline and better service delivery to provide improved services.
- Uniformity in district-wise budget distribution with respect to the requirement is also made in the upcoming budget.
- Revenue target for the year 2016-17 is 12.11% higher from the previous target.
- The proposed budget for the year 2016-17 is 15.35% greater than the budget estimate of the year 2015-16.
- Budget for Governor and CM secretariats was decreased to 2.68% and 4.2% respectively.
- Non-development budget for education department have been increased to 11.114%.
- Proposed increase in health and welfare sector is 11.473%.
- In public works proposed increase is 157%.
- 52.79% increase for the procurement of medicine has been proposed in the budget.

WALK THROUGH DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

Secretary Planning and Development, presented ADP formation strategy and pointed out the target schemes for the next year including the departments which provided services to the people. He informed that:

- GBRSP, which was defunct due to non-availability of budget, has now been furnished with allocation of 350 million rupees.

- A dedicated unit for GB will be made whose job will be to secure local interest in CPEC.
- As support for Sustainable Development Goals, a dedicated technical unit will be designated to monitor the defined indicators of development and progress.
- An initiative has been taken in collaboration with UNICEF to establish a central information database to collect and centralize the information from different departments on the subject.
- Consideration has been given to take preventive measures on threats of glacial lake outburst and floods due to Global Warming.
- Home agricultural products of the area are to gain focus in the budget.
- Internship Programs for the graduates and Phase-III of loan scheme for the youth will be initiated.
- With regard to development of tourism in the area, the need to provide better services to the tourists and advertisement of local spots will be a part of upcoming budget therefore an increase of 5% in the budget is proposed.
- In education sector, there will be greater focus on girls' education and that scholarships in the upcoming budget therefore an increase of 21% budget is proposed.
- Public Works will have 30% share of budget and its focus will be on bridges and connecting roads, similarly Power sector 22% and Health 6%.
- Targeted schemes have increased to 299 from 70 of previous year.
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DISCUSSION

During Q&A session, Kacho Imtiaz raised the concern that GBRSP includes too many sectors, would they be effectively managed? And that there are fewer opportunities for employment, and the budget doesn't address this issue. Secretary P&D replied that our priority was to prevent GBRSP from defaulting but we will revisit the policy. He further added, 600 million rupees have been released for youth loan scheme which will benefit in creating jobs for the masses.

Member GBLA Captain Sikandar suggested that there are various tourist spots which need adequate advertisement and development. Secretary P&D asked for a list of those tourist spots and assured that those will be considered on.

Deputy Speaker Jafarullah Khan suggested that there should be a designated budget for Gilgit City as it is capital city. And that there should be schemes for women beside government jobs. Secretary P&D replied that this point has been included in schemes.

General Secretary GB Editor Forum Imtiaz Ali Taj said there are not enough measures on monitoring and accountability of government projects. Secretary P&D replied that we have been monitoring the projects in Diamer and Gilgit and I have never seen such a devoted team like P&D GB.

CLOSING REMARKS BY CHIEF MINISTER

On closing remarks, CM Hafeez Ur Rehman said that there never had been such an effort to congregate members and secretaries in the past. But that it has now changed as members are now more aware of happenings as compared to past when it was presented in the assembly without prior discussion. Furthermore he said that the provincial budget consists of 95% grant budget which is the main hindrance in the road to prosperity as without producing our own revenue we would not get anywhere. He

showed resolve to spend more on populace rather than spending the budget exclusively on government servants' betterment. As government servants are a major part of population in GB, the added allowances of 2.5 billion for government servants in the budget prevents is a burden on masses. He feared that if it goes on there will be nothing left for the people.

He further said that main targets of the budget will be betterment of health, education, and infrastructure and that they are being increased in the upcoming budget. A 200% increase in medical supplies for hospitals will be a part of budget.

He pledged that the resources will be used more effectively. And that the new budget will bring big changes in the region. He also talked about bettering the state of governance and empowering local administration to achieve its targets. He asked for meaningful suggestions from the opposition and other members in order to further improve the budget.

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