

Inclusion of the Local Councils Association of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (LCA-KP) in the revised KP Local Government Act to support both the LGE&RDD (Govt) and Elected Councillors in an Institutionalized Manner

Background:

The Local Councils Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (LCA-KP) would like to further present its ideas on the inclusion of LCA-KP in the revised legal framework of Local Government in the province. LCA KP, being the representative body of more than 42,000 elected councillors in the province, could serve as a bridge between the government and the elected councillors of the local governments, and indirectly the citizens at the grassroots level. An Institutionalized cooperation framework between the LCA and the government is the best practice around the globe because such association further the development, reforms and innovation agenda of the very government in power as well as the councillors (elected at grassroots level) interests being brought forward for the common agenda of sustainable development. As a matter of fact, the government, and more specifically, the Local Government Elections and Rural Development Department (LGE&RDD) cannot talk to 42,000 people elected to the local councils, however, they could communicate both ways to the representatives of the elected councillors, which is their elected LCA in KP.

To tackle the challenge of improved governance in the context of local governance is a collaborative mission of the government, the political leadership as well as the local representatives in districts, tehsils and village and neighbourhood councils. In near future this challenge could further compound given the merger of erstwhile Fata with KP.

The LCA KP, being a main stakeholder in the local governance, is in utmost efforts to be a partner of the government generally, and particularly LGE&RDD for the common good of the citizens of this province. The collective aim is to further improve governance, transparency, accountability, and communication as well as feedback mechanism put in place for the larger public interest of the province in the context of local governance.

At present, the LCA KP is registered under The Societies Registration Act, 1860, rendering it less privilege and leverage to support the councils and the government in an institutionalized manner to help and support each other in a cooperation agenda for the development of the province.

Therefore, in a bid to appeal the incumbent government to support the LCA KP being mainstreamed and recognized as a true representative body of the councillors, it is suggested that the existence of the LCA and its role and responsibilities may please be included in the new legal framework (revised LG Act) so that the cooperation,

coordination and communication between the government and the representative body (LCA) of the councillors in the province could be institutionalized.

LCA's Role Introduction:

The Local Councils Association of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is established as a representative body of all tiers and all local governments in the province to provide a mechanism to share knowledge and good practices, reach consensus, represent members' needs and strategize on common issues in a systematic manner. The key functions are as follows:

- Increase the voices and effective participation of councilors and citizens in local government planning, development and decision-making within the framework of participatory democracy and in an associative spirit;
- Strengthen the functioning and capacity of local governments, and facilitate cooperation among all tiers for effective service delivery and developments by all levels of governments;
- Encourage and facilitate joint actions to solve common issues and to promote the development of communities and the people;
- Establish and maintain good relations and ongoing liaison with Provincial and Federal Governments in the shared interests of all levels of government and the citizens;
- Provide a united and influential voice in the representation of local governments' interests on policies, legislation, plans, development programs and other measures affecting them;
- Provide forums and other mechanisms for the sharing and exchange of expertise, knowledge, best practices and other resources locally, nationally and internationally; and
- Establish and maintain linkages and collaborative relations with regional and international local government associations, agencies, institutions and other organizations to achieve the above objectives.

Based on the LCA constitution as well as best practices from around the globe, the legislation the government is drafting or planning to introduce, should have the following aspects:

Policy:

- LCA will be consulted and actively engaged in drafting all policies for consideration and adoption by the provincial assembly that will have an impact on the LG system in the province, including representation in PFC and Local Government Commission
- LCA will be consulted for the formulation and review of the various policies and procedures the government would like to put in place for LG's conduct and operation.

Representation:

- LCA will represent all elected members of LG system in the province.
- LCA will be mandated to provide with information on LG in the province to the government and it will be considered as the official and majority opinion of the elected LG members.

Coordination and Communication:

- LCA will attend all LG related meetings and present LG opinion in these meetings.
- LCA will support with fostering collaboration between LG members and the government.
- LCA will share key discussions and decisions with its members through formal and informal communications channels.
- LCA will assist government to achieve the overall purpose of LG by supporting monitoring the performance of LG at all levels and coordinate necessary remedial measures.

Capacity Building:

- While working in close coordination with Local Governance School (LGS), all capacity building measures for LG members will be channelled through LCA.
- Provincial government will actively support LCA to organise standalone capacity building programmes for LG members.

Financial and Administrative Sustainably:

- Government will provide a necessary annual direct financial support through its annual regular budget to allow LCA to perform its functions.
- Financial grants will be provided through regular budget to LCA to organise capacity building measures for its members and support with other special programmes.
- Government will provide sufficient and suitable office space for LCA at LGEE&RDD Office in Hayatabad, Peshawar. Additional Office spaces at divisional or district levels will be provided in the future, as need arise.