**Vision Pakistan2047**

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Martin Luther King declared, “I have a dream”, not “I have a plan”. This illustrates the superiority of a vision over policy or plan in bringing about transformative change.

‘I have a dream’ expresses the essence of visionary leadership, which not only serves as a source of inspiration, emotional connection but also provides a sense of destination and meaningful context for the people to undertake sacrifices in realizing the vision.

Vision matters. First, transformation involves losses and uncertainties for interest groups. No matter how adverse your current situation is, it is known and familiar. Transformation requires letting go of your current status, taking a leap of faith into an uncertain future in the hope that your gains are greater than your sacrifices. A vision is a guiding path through the fog of uncertainty, reassuring the people that their sacrifices are worthwhile.

Second, transformation requires a connection with people’s emotions. Emotions fuel people’s commitment to transformation, while intellect or logic follow suit. Convincing, motivating, and emotionally engaging people is the first step in achieving national buy-in for the transformation, and this can be achieved through a vision.

The power of vision of Gen Park Chung-Hee in leading South Korea into an industrialized economy on the model of post ‘Meiji Modernization’ Japan, led to South Korea’s GDP per capita increasing from $146 to over $29,700 in two generations. Whether the Declaration of Independence of the US, Vision2030 of Saudi Arabia or The Crazy Ones campaign by Apple, the central role of a vision in charting the path to a new prosperous future cannot be overstated.

Pakistan is going through a painful economic and socially divisive period due to misguided policies of the last thirty years. We are struggling to generate jobs or wealth, which is leading to the flight of both financial and human capital from the country. This has created a sea of discontent and contributed to our political and social instability. Therefore, our outdated economic model needs a transformation.

Our economic transformation is being implemented through the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) under a combined military, political and civil service leadership. The SIFC has a wide policy mandate to mobilize all government departments for economic revival through investments and exports. It has a number of successes, such as attracting investment in the Reko Diq project and changes to foreign currency earning regulations to facilitate tech exports.

However, the SIFC’s actions are misunderstood and often resisted by the public as well as interest groups. These misunderstandings stem from a disconnect between policy actions and the context of the economic transformation in which the SIFC is operating. Take for instance, the decision to deport illegal Afghan immigrants, which is an unpopular and highly criticized move. While painful and considered a violation of human rights, these are essential steps for economic revival by stopping the leakage of an estimated $15 million per day of foreign exchange through smuggling to Afghanistan. The buy-in for such harsh, unpopular but necessary steps is absent because there is no sense of destination or vision associated with the actions of the SIFC.

As Friedrich Nietzsche stated, “he who has a Why to live for, can bear almost any How”. Therefore, the SIFC needs to go beyond policy fixes and instead start with ‘why’ sacrifices are necessary for a prosperous economy and a thriving society – this why is the vision of transformation. Once our citizens embrace the vision, they will be unified in their support of ‘how’ such a vision is realized.

The SIFC must lead on policy action but also in formulating the country’s economic vision. The vision acts as a bridge to walk over from our past to a prosperous future or link our everyday struggles with aspirations for a better future for ourselves and our families. The vision will forge the nation’s commitment to action.

The Saudi Vision2030 is a superb example of a cohesive vision directing the Saudi nation towards an empowered future, starting from a vision statement for a ‘vibrant society’, a ‘thriving economy’, and an ‘ambitious nation’. The implementation of Vision2030 is primarily through the Public Investment Fund (PIF), which brings together all aspects of private and public-sector capabilities to deliver transformation projects.

The SIFC has the potential to be Pakistan’s ‘PIF’ but is missing an equally grand vision of transformation for Pakistan, that can be Pakistan2047.

A powerful and emotive vision will magnify the actions of the SIFC and ensure longevity and sustainability of reforms, as in the case of South Korea and Saudi Arabia. Without a vision or a ‘dream’, the SIFC risks being another plan. Pakistanis are well-aware and sceptical of our history of five-year plans, which fizzled out without sustainable impact or economic transformation. A Pakistan2047 vision plus SIFC will be the bridge between the current reality of economic stagnation and our citizens’ dream of economic prosperity.

A plan without a vision does not have the power to change reality. Visionary leaders have demonstrated that transformation can be achieved. However, it takes a clear, compelling and powerful vision calling for self-sacrifice, collaboration to take risks and change behavior in order to change our future. Our leaders must formulate this vision of Pakistan2047 for steering the country towards a prosperous and self-reliant future.

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