

Environment conducive to foreign investment

Millat Party to introduce 'Model Madrassas', women's empowerment programme

BY RAJA RIAZ

LAHORE — Millat Party Central Secretary Co-ordination Umar Masood has said Pakistan needs immediate foreign direct investment for the economic uplift and prosperity of the common man.

"The present environment is highly conducive for the foreign investment and there are tremendous investors who want to invest in Pakistan. In this regard all appropriate measures should be adopted to ensure and attain the confidence of the foreign investors," Masood noted.

He was talking to *The Nation* Sunday at a special sitting.

He was of the view that foreign investment in the country was subject to facilities to the investors and for this purpose it was imperative for us to introduce one window operation and create investors' friendly environment in the country.

"The board of investment should be revamped. President Pervez Musharraf has taken bold steps to bring in foreign investment and now Chairman of the Investment Board should arrange the follow up actions. Our Embassies in the respective countries should play a proactive in making the President Musharraf's trip successful. Performance audit should be introduced for the relevant officials so that the implementation of the projects could be achieved" he emphasised.

Umar Masood further said that the investors' confidence should be strengthened and sanctity of the signed contracts be ensured so that investors could invest in Pakistan without any hindrance.

He observed that Pakistan had abundance of resources but unfortunately proper projects had not been introduced and thus the masses were suffering badly.

Masood was of the view that

continuity of the reform programme, introduced by President Musharraf, was the need of the hour.

"Participatory management concept in the provinces and project implementation should be commenced in this regard. It is also important to take the stakeholders into confidence so that project implementation could be ensured and plundering of the national wealth could be abandoned" said Millat Party leader.

He added the Millat Party believed in practical service for the countrymen instead of politics of mere words and in this connection he had been working hard on poverty alleviation projects in Pakistan. He said that he had introduced Pakistan Education for Poor in Rural Areas (PEPRA). In this regard his company had contacted the donor countries for a comprehensive programme to introduce technical, IT and skilled education in Madrassas (religious schools) which were the only hope for poor in rural areas. He added that the Madrassas were contributing a lot for the poor in rural areas where their children not only get religious education but clothing, meals and shelter as well. "We want these children to be 'Productive Citizens' for the country. The government should link these Madrassas to the 'Primary Education' and we will introduce modern education programmes as 'Model Madrassas'. This public-private co-operation will produce not only religious scholars but productive citizens, for the homeland" he added.

He further said that he had launched another programme for women empowerment and DIFID was funding this programme. This programme will not only provide shelter to abused women and children but shall empower women of their rights. To a question he said that it was crucial for economic uplift to achieve complete confidence and harmony between the provinces.

"All confidence building meas-

ures should be adopted in this regard. Inter-provinces bodies should be established for regular interaction so that all differences could be resolved and the projects could not be a victim to political rivalry. These bodies should be made compulsory to meet on biweekly basis to ensure harmony amongst the provinces," he observed.

Answering another query Umar Masood said that future wars will be fought for water. "So we should introduce new techniques to increase the reservoir capacity. Umar Masood while answering another query said that the progress of institutional reforms taking place in the Irrigation sector of the country is a must for the economic boost of the farming community.

He further said that the Agriculture is the backbone of Pakistan's Economy and, we must take all possible measures towards its development. He said that he was working hard to introduce the solar energy and windmill technology in the country.

Umar Masood further said that these technologies would help a great deal in the development of agriculture and will lower the costs of utilities of agriculture sector. He said that his goal was to help the growers and farmers of Pakistan so that they could get maximum returns of their investments and at a very low cost.

He said that he was committed to the cause of the prosperity of the Pakistani people. Answering another question Umar Masood said that the Millat Party had emerged as the third force in a very short span of time. He asserted that we must rise above minor differences and work together for the betterment of the entire nation.

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