**Pakistan at Davos: World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2020**

Haya Fatima Sehgal January 25, 2020

The hashtag #[PakistanatDavos2020](https://dailytimes.com.pk/545833/pakistan-pavilion-at-davos/) trended at the top at number one in Pakistan. PM Imran Khan has attended the World Economic Forum 2020 (WEF). The official speech that followed with an interview session with BorgeBrende, President of the World Economic Forum (WEF) was received exceedingly wellas murmured by the crowd of Global leaders presentas the PM of Pakistan, Imran Khan took centrestage on the most prestigious global forums. The official theme of the WEF this year was Stakeholders for a Cohesive and Sustainable World; and it was with great pleasure that we had the PM of Pakistan represent the country. It must be taken into note that in 50 years of WEF he is the only leader from Pakistanto be given this honor and privilege to have a sole plenary and as predicted by WEF management itself, it was a full house.

The unexpected announcement that PM Imran Khan was going to attend the WEF20, came as a surprise for many. Although there were hints that it would happen, one never knows for sure until it actually does in general for any government delegations, especially at conferences such as these. The reasons given have been several, be it security, unavailability or pressing matters of the state that need care; all of these are to be understood respectfully so. Here, our new government had taken strict measures to curb expenditure on its own International travel.

The previous year was a disappointment to the Pakistani delegation that PM Imran Khan who had just formed the new government at the time, had politely but firmly refused to attend. PM Imran khan has been a popular addition to wherever he has been and his recent stance has been well grounded measures. The reasons given on last year’s absence from the top forum were valid and acceptable. However, one year down it was going to look a bit strange with Pakistan being absent on what is decidedly so the largest and most exclusive gathering of global leaders.

The Pakistani delegations which were not inside the main Congress Centre had privately sponsored and belted out well prepared with some interesting discussion to share with global leaders who attended. The informal setting with lunches and dinners were hosted apart from the topics with moderated panels and some great footage that went live. The topics included CSR, Education, Gender Parity and Inclusion. Inviting guest speakers such as Aisha Nawaz Chaudhary and Tania Aidrus from PTI to speak, future stakeholders and implementation reports will now be key after much discussion. This year the Dawood Hercules Corporation was a partner at WEF, a very high honor for any group. The Dawood Hercules Corporation has always steadily supported the other Pakistani delegations by attendance consistently at events and gatherings.

As members of the PTI government gathered inside the main hall of the Congress Centre,each conducted several relevantmeetings. The topics to bring forward were digital revolution in Pakistan and financial economic stability as well as forming future bi-lateral relations. Recent news releases included a meeting with the American President, Donald J. Trump, aninvitation from Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany for a visit, as well as adiscussion with Facebook CEO, Sheryl Sandberg, amongst other high profile meetings.

PM Khan’s note to the businessmen on austerity on expenditure by his government in comparison to others is now something that they can lay to rest as they seem to have put in safe guards of control and scrutiny

The official address by PM Khan in the Congress Centre provided the key note for Pakistan that is much needed. Our global presence has been hurt in the past not only by non-attendance by previous governments and failure to build strong International relations but also the quality ofpeople attending as a group. The past as one can put it is now over, this government that once stood only at a crossroads only a year ago has surpassed that point. It has arrived, and now, must plan ahead for the future.

PM Khan in his address was concise, and even more to the point than in the past; he even handled the odd generic off center questions placed. His stance of not wanting to get involved with wars which had nothing do with our own country was honest and directly put. In other panels he specified a few details on the Ehsaas program that his government was rolling out; which was a tiered approach, not only to start out at the nethermost level with direct economic empowerment with the endowment of food and monetary compensation but also addressing gender economic empowerment and inclusion giving different levels of support through various opportunities and policies with a multi-dimensional approach within the structure of the program. In one of the events he ended on a beautiful note, saying he was an optimist and was hopeful for a prosperous Pakistan.

As the media lined up on the main street of Davos, it was heard asking guests the simplistic question, what makes the World Economic Forum special? Simply answered by one global leader, the Forums Annual meeting or any of the regional meetings are and have been simply exclusive events. Matters discussed not only on the open panels but also those relations forged at meetings have led to high level matters of state as well as future business opportunities on a huge scale.

As this government as the PM said was going to exerciseausterity, and wisely so in comparison to the previous ones we have seen their presence has been where it has mattered and now with the attendance at the WEF Annual Meeting it has the established Pakistani presence in the top business forum of the world with the prestige that was given to the PM this year. PM Imran Khan and his people have chosen their fronts well. Although he did quote the figures of expenditure of the travel, he has the right to exercise this and it must have been taken into accountas well as strategically advised as to where to spend thetax-payersmoney.

PM Khan’s note to the businessmen on austerity on expenditure by his government in comparison to others is now something that they can lay to rest as they seem to have put in safe guards of control and scrutiny. A primary focus should now be adjusting the perception of Pakistanis as a rising nation abroad consistently. It would be pertinent to get that straight onto their own global agenda as the repetitive adage of paraphrasing careful expenditure is a mature approach and yes, once sounded great but is now going to get old if our presence is not being felt at the right forums.

That set aside,is what he must do now is set into motionan active strategic accelerated growth plan not only for the present but also the future and think of the global perception of the country on a broader and larger scale, and most of all put the prosperity and stability of Pakistan above and beyond anything else.

*The writer is known for her articles on topics which have a Socio-Cultural impact*