



PIDE Webinar Series

I. Cities for humanity and development

Background

Pakistan has some of the largest cities in the world with currently Karachi having over 15 million inhabitants, Lahore having about 12 million people, and about 20 cities in total having populations of above a million. The rapid urbanization that the country has seen has also brought about its share of issues with the current urban landscape dominated by a shortage of urban space; automobiles induced congestion and uncontrolled urban sprawling due to policy emphasis on single-use family housing units.

To increase awareness and create a dialogue on issues that affect the country's cities, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) recently organized a series of webinars entitled 'Cities for Humanity & Development'. The webinars brought together international experts, urban planners, and other related professionals in discussing the issues that are faced by both cities in general and more specifically by cities in Pakistan.

Questions:

How can effective and inclusive cities be planned?

How city development determines economic and social welfare?

How to control urban sprawl?

How to manage inclusive cities for all?

What is the relationship between automobiles and city planning?



Nadeem Ul Haque

Vice Chancellor
PIDE



Anthony Venables

Professor of Economics
Monash University



John Thwaites

Professional Fellow
University of Oxford

The first webinar of the series titled 'COVID-19 and the Future of Cities' was organized jointly by PIDE, Monash University's Center for Development Economics & Sustainability (CDES), and Monash Sustainable Development Institute (MSDI). The webinar panelists included Vice-Chancellor PIDE, Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, Oxford University Economist, Anthony Venables, and Professorial Fellow Monash University, John Thwaites.

Given the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, the panelists discussed how cities which have been important drivers of economic growth in both developing and developed economies may be seen problematic given the dangers of close-proximity densely populated urban living during a pandemic. The panelists agreed that even though the COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented conditions, yet once the situation normalizes, cities are still going to be main drivers of economic growth due to the infrastructure and the high productivity zones that they provide. On the issue of how the pandemic has affected cities in developing countries where often social distancing is difficult, Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque stated that policymaking including urban policy has been largely determined by foreign donor consultants in Pakistan, who have often benefited at the expense of local researchers and policymakers.

The local capacity gap has been further highlighted during the current pandemic. While donor consultants have a part to play, their involvement should not come at the expense of local practitioners and researchers being sidelined. Well thought-out urban planning that keeps local realities in mind can only come about through involvement of locally informed policymakers.

Walk & Cycle, Public Transport, Private Transport and Taxi & Others

