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# Annual Report 2015

TheNetwork for Consumer Protection

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**TheNetwork**  
for Consumer Protection

## Preface

During 2015 in a major policy shift, TheNetwork started pro-actively engaging the higher judiciary and effective parliamentarians to protect the people's right to life and health.

This shift has spurred its ongoing policy advocacy with the key policy makers. For strengthening the official health actors vis-e-vis non health actors, TheNetwork has gone into litigation. Similarly, to protect the health of the people tangible advancements has been made in the Parliament in the form of resolution and taking the legislation at an advanced stage of presentation.

For reforming the regressive tax system, TheNetwork has been able to secure another resolution in the Parliament that can culminate in to getting a roadmap from the government to undo the regressive system and developing a progressive system.

During this year TheNetwork has also retrieved its work on policy advocacy for the clean drinking water by commencing testing of water from filtration plants.

The international and national network on the forums on tobacco control, consumer protection, NCDs, micronutrient deficiencies, child rights, right to information and taxation helped TheNetwork further consolidate its position as a leader with a knack at ensuring corporate ethics for the welfare of the people.

I hope that in 2016, we will be able to further strengthen our policy advocacy and will capture any opportunity that arises for the protection of consumers in Pakistan.

Nadeem Iqbal

Executive Coordinator/CEO

## Advocacy for the Promulgation of Draft IDD's Control Act at National Level

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The Network's campaign "Advocacy for the Promulgation of Draft IDD's Control Act at National Level" focused on active mobilization and sensitization with different stakeholders including parliamentarians, politicians, policy makers, health care professional, media groups and religious leaders. The draft IDD's control act has already been shared with the cabinet division, but it has yet to be approved by the national assembly. A brief of major achievements during the project follows below;

### Political Mapping

As part of political mapping exercise, TN identified 100 key players from policy makers, including members of Standing Committees on Health, Cabinet and planning and development, of major political parties i.e., Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN), Mutahida Qumi Movement (MQM) & Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F).

Primarily the focus of this activity was to elicit key players' support in implementing Universal Salt Iodization law. TN identified key players based on their political power to influence policy decisions/ vote for it/ justify the initiative or implement the salt iodization legislation. During the project timeframe, TN sensitized all the members of National Assembly by initially sending letters and IEC material, then 30 key players (MNA's and Senators) were sensitized through one-to-one meetings followed by further dissemination of IEC material including policy briefs and posters. After each of these meetings, TN evaluated the response of the key player based on the set evaluation criteria and further categorized the individual either as potential supporter or opponent.

Initially 500 letters were sent to various parliamentarians (MNAs and Senators) specially targeting the members of standing committees on health, planning and development and cabinet division. After the consultation 20,000 brochures, 1,500 Posters and 2,000 policy briefs were disseminated to MNAs and senators from various standing committees. The material was also sent to partners from (MI, GAIN, WFP, etc)

One-to-one meetings were held with a total of 50 parliamentarians namely Ms Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Ms Maiza Hameed, Muhammad Uzair Malik, Dr Karim Khawaja, Ms Aasiya Nasir, Dr Ramesh Kumar and Qahar Wadan etc. 21 of them participated in the session organized for the parliamentarians to orientate them on USI law.

### Media Campaign

To sensitize journalists and encourage them, to promote Universal Salt Iodization law through their writings in newspapers or TV and radio programs, a media orientation was held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015 at Islamabad Hotel. 30 participants from leading print and electronic media organizations such as Dawn, The News, Business Recorder, Express Tribune etc and various TV channels (PTV world, Geo, Dawn News) and radio stations (FM-100) were present with Sarwar Munir Rao (former Director News PTV), Tausiq Haider (Media Celebrity) were the resource persons educating media persons how to build in iodine messages in the journalists and media work.

A picket was organized in front of National Press Club on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2015 to commemorate World Consumer Rights Day. The issue of Universal salt iodization legislation was raised to express the importance of iodine for a healthy diet. Extensive radio (FM-100) and TV channel (ATV, Waseeb, Geo, Khyber, news one, PTV Khabarnama, PTV world) gave coverage to the event. Many celebrities such as Tauseeq Haider, known anchor person Khalid Omar Butt, and leading Sufi singer Arieab Azhar attended the event and endorsed the iodine messages. In addition to the news coverage through earned media, paid media was also used to highlight the importance of umbrella legislation for iodized salt. Two newspaper supplements were published in the largely circulated The News on March 21 and 27. Furthermore a TV Talk show featuring parliamentarians supporting law for Universal Salt Iodisation was produced and telecast on widely watched PTV Home. A TV morning show hosted by Shehzad Bangash on awareness for a healthy and balanced diet was aired on PTV world with participation from TheNetwork and a technical expert.

To further spruce up the IPC, IEC and Mass Media activities, 200,000 text messages (SMS) promoting the importance of legislation on universal salt iodization were sent to mobile users in ICT especially focusing parliamentarians, policy makers and all relevant stake holders on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. The campaign was implemented through Zong's Corporate Social Responsibility program.

### **Legal Road map for Universal Salt Iodization**

A legal road map was evolved taking in to account the post-devolution legal framework, existing provincial laws and relevant regulatory food framework and the food standards. Out of this a Policy brief was evolved in consultation with partners. This policy brief outlining need for umbrella legislation at federal level was widely disseminated. A total of 2,000 policy briefs were printed and disseminated to relevant stake holders, parliamentarians, civil society organization and partner organizations.

### **Consultation session with Parliamentarians on Universal Salt Iodization**

A large consultation with parliamentarians was arranged at Marriott Hotel Islamabad on 17<sup>th</sup> March to bring together the parliamentarians for endorsing USI law. 21 parliamentarians attended the event. The positive aspect was the participation presence from all provinces and all parties (PPP, PML-N, MQM, JUI-F). All partners on USI were also present at this event to answer any queries raised by the parliamentarians. This event was extremely successful due to the high participation and the acknowledgement by the parliamentarians to take this issue to the parliament.

# Policy Advocacy for Comprehensive Ban on Tobacco Advertising, Promotion & Sponsorship (TAPS) in Pakistan

## World No Tobacco Day

TheNetwork for Consumer Protection (TN) brought in a unique way to celebrate the WNTD 2015 by organizing a musical-event outside the National Press Club Islamabad, and a stage set with skeletons which were shown as former tobacco smoke victims carrying tobacco control messages for the public to wake up and quit smoking before it got too late and they too become victims of tobacco.

## Press Council of Pakistan

TheNetwork for Consumer Protection won a judgment against Newsweek Pakistan for publishing an article that both implicitly and explicitly promoted tobacco use and negated all tobacco control messages. Immediately after the publication of the article in the Newsweek, TN filed a petition against Newsweek for publishing the tobacco promoting article and actively pursued this case in the press council for over three years.

## Report on TI Tactics

TheNetwork's launched of 'Smoky Truth', the first-ever unique report on tobacco industry's tactics in Pakistan in August 2015. It was endorsed by prominent tobacco control advocates Dr Judith Mackay (World Lung Foundation), Major General Dr S.M Shahab Naqvi Executive Director (Armed Forces Institute of Cardiology), Professor Dr. Javed Akram Vice Chancellor (Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences), Professor Abdul Gaffar Billo (Pediatrician, The Agha Khan University Hospital) , Mr. Abdul



Sattar Edhi (Founder of Edhi Foundation) , Mr. Fazl-e-Haq Abbasi ( President supreme court bar association, Islamabad) and Prof Dr Mukhtar Ahmed (chairman Higher Education Commission).

The report was very well received in national and also international circles and it helps in refocusing and understanding that tobacco control is not just an awareness and ethical issue but it is more of a regulatory issue requiring proper legislation and implementation.

### Policy advocacy & political mapping

The Purpose of this activity was to elicit to identify key supporters for the enactment of Tobacco Control Law.. TN identified key players based on their political power to influence this law. During the project timeframe,

TheNetwork team also approached members of National Assemble (MNA), Senators and other stakeholders and discussed the Ban on TAPS Bill. The purpose of this meeting was to sensitize and to table the bill. TheNetwork team also engaged with Mr. Muhammad Aslam Waseem, Additional Director Legislation, Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary services, a wing of the Parliament. After each of these meetings, TN evaluated the response of the key player based on the set evaluation criteria and further categorized the individual either as potential supporter or opponent.

### Developing Tobacco Control Friendly Code of Ethics in Earned Media

Understanding that the tobacco industry has been using print media to promote its strategies, TheNetwork team reviewed different codes of print and electronic media to incorporate tobacco control in them, as to curb the dissemination of tobacco messages by usage of these Medias. Alliances were formed with PCP with regular meetings and correspondence with the Chairman, Press Council of Pakistan (PCP) in August 2014. The following clause **“No news story will be construed against the spirit of any law or promoting commercial interests for example that of tobacco industry”** was proposed by the TheNetwork which were later incorporated in the PCP draft of the code of ethics and forwarded to the ministry of Law for legislation. The idea of TN was also so strengthen PCP which could further help us in our campaign for a comprehensive tobacco control law.

## Newsletter

A quarterly newsletter “Watch on Tobacco” was developed. TN published seven volumes of the newsletter. Thirty five hundred copies in total of all the newsletters were dispatched by post to various parliamentarians, government officials and media persons. The newsletters were also uploaded on our website and also promoted on our facebook and twitter accounts. The idea behind the newsletters was to highlight TN’s tobacco control activities and efforts nationally and globally. The newsletter consisted of health and educational material, leading civil society’s activities, international developments, latest developments in Pakistan’s, legal/political scenario related to tobacco control, tobacco industry’s tactics, and burning national and international issues.

## Right to Information

### **Letters to districts for Right to Information**

After the 18<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment 2010, a new article 19A right to information was introduced, which empowers every citizen to seek any information and make federal government accountable. In extension of Article 19A a new law named Right to Information (RTI) was formed in two provinces Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

*Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-smokers Health Ordinance, 2002* prohibits advertisement of tobacco and tobacco products in any form. Under the above stated RTI laws, TheNetwork for Consumer Protection (TN) wrote letters to 55 District Coordination Officers (DCOs) of both the provinces of Punjab and KP, seeking information about tobacco advertising campaigns and promotional activities being held by tobacco industry. In total replies were received from 48 districts, in which only two districts of Punjab responded that they had granted permissions for tobacco sponsored activities in their areas. Further complaints have been filed to Information Commission against those districts who have failed to provide requested information within the stipulated time and are currently under process.

### **TheNetwork moves court over 85pc pictorial health warning on cigarette packs**

TheNetwork launched a proactive campaign when the government faced immense pressure from the tobacco industry to reverse its historic

decision to adopt new 85% Graphic Health Warnings on cigarette packs from 40%. TheNetwork team through its resources managed to get the original copies of the letters the industry wrote to the FBR chairman, ministers of finance and commerce calling upon them to use their influence on the ministry of health to undo their decision. TN also wrote a numbers of letters addressed to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Health, Finance& commerce ministers condemning the tobacco industry's pressure tactics on the health ministry to take back its decision after reports in media, that the ministry of Health was withdrawing its decision.

After reports in media that the Ministry of National Health Services Regulation & Coordination (NHSRC) may withdraw its landmark decision of raising the size of pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs from 40pc to 85pc (number of SROs were also issued in this regard), TheNetwork for Consumer Protection filed a petition in the Islamabad High Court (IHC) praying the court to stop the government from backing out from its previous decision. The news report published in a section of media that the decision to roll back pictorial health warning raise to 85% was taken during a meeting held at MNHSRC on July 24. Health Minister Saira Afzal Tarar chaired the meeting which was also attended by senior officials of the PM Office, Cabinet Division and FBR prompted TheNetwork to file petition against any such development.

The media report also revealed that the influential officials of the FBR, PM office and Cabinet Division prevailed on the health minister and her colleagues and 'convinced' them to withdraw the SROs about new enhanced PHW on cigarette pack.

In its petition TheNetwork, joined by Society for Alternative Media And Research (SAMAR), has sought judicial intervention against any action by the NHSRC Ministry such as issuing of new notification or withdrawing the previous one , that can cause delay the enforcement of new PHWs.

The petitioners have prayed the court to direct the respondents (Secretary Ministry of National Health Services, Finance Secretary and the FBR Chairman) to enforce the SROs which are protecting the fundamental rights of public at large without any further delay. Pakistan Tobacco Company (PTC) has filed an application to become a party to this case and have argued upon their constitutional Right to Trade.

## Tax Justice Campaign Pakistan

### Background and Introduction of the project

Every government in the world has certain responsibilities regarding its citizens. Providing human rights to its citizens is the foremost. This should be clear from the very start that human rights not only encompass social and political rights, but also economic and social rights. The minimum requirements for the fulfillment of economic and social rights include the provision of available food stuff for the population, essential primary health care, basic shelter, housing and the most basic forms of education.

In Pakistan richest 10% have accumulated colossal assets in the last three decades without paying due income tax. Exemptions of billions of rupees have been given to the rich and mighty through executive orders (SROs), whereby incidence of indirect taxes on the poor have increased.

They have been forced to pay 17% sales tax on many items of daily use. The rich in Pakistan are either outside the tax net or do not pay personal taxes in accordance with their actual ability to pay. As a result, the poor's are overburdened with indirect taxes and withholding income tax as well as 17% sales tax on most of the items consumed by them and excessive withholdings at source even where income is below the threshold limit of Rs 400,000, the tax ceiling, rising level of poverty is due to many attributes and one direct link between growing poverty in Pakistan and income inequalities is due to distortion in tax base. The situation is of grave concern not only owing to inequitable balance between indirect and direct taxes but also due to the regressive taxes.

All the above factors, resulting together in low tax base and poor collection of taxes from corporate sector, have led to the availability of funds for provision of even essential services , which is reflected through a meager percentage of GDP is allocated to meet the budgetary requirement for sectors such as health and social development.

### Project Focus:

The project focus was to ensure that the public sector raises/generates sufficient revenues through equitable and progressive taxation to deliver essential services to all citizens including the poorest and most vulnerable, leading to poverty reduction.

1. There are a number of Exemptions and SRO's which are Issued by the GOP from time to time, replacement of SRO from bureaucratic practice to democracy practice (SRO;s should be passed from Parliament).
2. Broadening tax base by raising awareness through electronic media and policy advocacy implicating the consequences of regressive taxation in Pakistan. It was focused on chambers of commerce and selected NGOs to engage them for raising voice for citizen's rights including economic and social rights.
3. Ensuring systematic enhancement in sectors percentage budgetary allocation of available GDP for education, health and social development, focused was brought facts and figures and to use them intrinsically to mobilize the key players through advocacy, dialogues and discussions to the lowest level of governance that is to the district level.

### Major activities carried out during the project

#### Pre Budget Policy Dialog on “Equitable Tax Regime in Pakistan”

Pre Budget Policy Dialog was organized by TheNetwork for Consumer Protection at Serena Hotel Islamabad. The event commenced with a renowned tax expert Dr. Ikram ul Haq who shared a study on “Abolishing pro-rich tax regime for ensuring people's right for life”. The main crux of the study was to highlight how regressive tax system has been unfair to the poor. Suggestions to rectify this important issue by reforming it followed after. The discussants were Dr. Asad Zaman vice chancellor PIDE and Mr. Abdullah Yousaf Ex Chairman FBR. The Pre Budget Policy Dialog was attended by members of chamber of commerce and industries, FBR officials, professionals from civil society organizations & academia. A total of 25 participants were enlightened on the subject including 5 females.

### **One Day Training on Tax Advocacy (Sialkot, Faisalabad, Sheikhpura and Gujranwala)**

The trainings focused on involving people in the process of deciding what to tax, whom to tax, how to tax and to give them an orientation on how ideally taxes should be collected and spent. Professionals from civil society organizations working in the areas of women empowerment, human rights, child labor, education and health in the relevant districts attended the training sessions.

#### **Research Studies**

The consultants were hired by TheNetwork to conduct the below mentioned research studies.

1. “Abolishing pro-rich tax regime exemptions/SRO for ensuring people’s right for life” by Dr. Ikram ul Haq
2. “Pakistan’s Tax System and Inflation Tax” by Saqib Sherani.

### **Seminar & Walk on Making Pakistan Tax Fair**

The Seminar focused on the serious challenges which Pakistan is facing currently to deliver essential services to poor communities. Low GDP ratio to tax is the main issue as more than 23% population is living below poverty line, 50% population is food insecure and 2 .5 billion children are out of school. The grim figures show clearly that the need of the hour is to pay tax fairly to contribute in country’s development where as the government should spend it to provide essential services in a transparent manner. A seminar and walk on Making Pakistan Tax Fair was organized by Tax Justice Coalition Pakistan to create awareness for the promotion of tax culture in country. A total of 84 participants attended the Seminar & Walk on Making Pakistan Tax Fair including 15 females.

#### **IEC Material**

The research based IEC material for the Tax Justice Project was designed and printed, the IEC material included; Brochure, flyers, policy brief, note pads & folders.

Please find below link having soft copy of printed IEC Material.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxVg5kuUgPCFRWdpMjAwcVQ0OGs/view?usp=sharing>

## Consultative meetings and interviews

Consultative meetings and interviews were conducted at different cities with the stakeholders i.e. Politicians, Presidents of Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Businessmen and Presidents / Chairman of Trade Unions. The interviews conducted can be viewed on the below mentioned link of our project's social media page.

<https://www.facebook.com/TaxJusticeCampaignPakistan>

## Tax Justice Summit (PC Bhurban)

A National Tax Summit was organized by TheNetwork for Consumer Protection under 7th all Pakistan Chambers president conference. RCCI & 35 Chambers of Commerce & Industries across Pakistan collaborated with Tax Justice Coalition Pakistan and Oxfam. This summit was widely attended by business leaders and stakeholders to deliberate and formulate recommendations for fair taxation system in Pakistan based on principles of equitable and progressive taxation. The members from Chambers discussed freely and frankly the elements of unfairness in taxation and its implications on society and public revenue. There is a wider consensus that prevailing tax policy and structure is one of the reason of rising inequality in the society because inadequate domestic resources mobilization is a major constraint to invest in essential public services and social development to reduce the gap between affluent and poor.

A total of 45 participants attended Tax Justice Summit including 6 females.

After a healthy discussion calls were made for re visiting Pakistan's tax rules to make the tax system equitable and fair. Subsequently a joint communiqué has been agreed after a thorough deliberation in which Chambers endorse the mission of 'Making Pakistan Tax Fair' by submitting a series of doable recommendations to the newly constituted Tax reform commission of Pakistan for its consideration for the upcoming finance bill of 2015-2016.

This joint communiqué endorses the Four Principles on which the reforms in Tax system of Pakistan should be based on:

1. Tax policy of Pakistan should be based on equitable and progressive taxation principles with an objective of broadening the direct tax base by developing a mechanism in which tax payers are motivated to pay tax, they are valued and see their role in economic growth and poverty reduction.

2. Issuance of SROs is largely seen as ways and means for rewarding (most of the time) individuals and/or a group for monetary benefits which largely are at the expense to the national exchequer. It would be just to empower the nationally elected parliament of Pakistan by vesting in them the power of issuance of SROs on rational and logical bases. In this regard as a first step, the pro rich exemptions should be analyzed and resultantly coming up with a list of prioritized exemptions that needs to be done away with and subsequent development of strategy for gradual abolishment of all other SROs.
3. The Chambers fully support an idea of a fairer taxation policy in Pakistan. We believe that it will be a powerful mechanism to eliminate poverty, hence recommend reducing undue burden of indirect taxation on low/middle income groups and using the additional revenues generated through direct progressive taxation on essential public services such as universal education and health.
4. More than 50% of population in Pakistan is living on less than \$ 2 a day. The high percentage of sales tax affects low income groups. Though this is an important source of revenue for government, therefore we recommend for bringing down the sales tax rate and broadening the tax base to offset the revenue losses.

### Social Media Campaign

Facebook and Twitter pages of “Tax Justice Campaign Pakistan” were created to add to the debate that was already being generated through our studies on tax regimes and the project activities. There were over 774 likes on facebook, and 217 active followers on twitter. Daily tax news covered by the National print media, expression of opinion through line art and event updates are uploaded regularly.

### Tax Watch online News Letter

Tax Watch an online News Letter was compiled monthly. To disseminate the online news letter TN established a database (emails) of more than 800 stakeholders including members of chamber of commerce and industries, business bodies, consumer international, government/FBR officials, professionals from civil society organizations & academia.

### Song Launch “Bhola Kia Kary”

On the eve of the announcement of Fiscal Budget for 2015-16, while demanding abolition of the government’s increasing reliance on indirect taxes TN, launched a theme song by noted singer **Jawwad Ahmed ‘Bhola kia Karay, Wo Jiay Ya Maray’**. The main theme of the song was to

highlight inequitable tax regime in Pakistan and burden of indirect taxes (GST, VAT) on the poor class of the country. The Song launching ceremony was held at National Press Club Islamabad.

### **Press Conferences (Sialkot and Gujranwala) “Sparing the Rich Hurting the Poor”**

Prior to Fiscal Budget for 2015-16, to highlight government’s reliance on indirect taxes and revenue losses of pro rich exemptions and poor facilities of health, education and employment and other social development TN, conducted press conferences at Sialkot and Gujranwala Press Clubs, in which findings of the research studies on pro rich exemptions and indirect taxes fueling inflation were shared with the media. Through these events a charter of demand was presented to the government to reduce indirect taxes especially GST, abolishment of pro rich regime of tax exemptions and increase spending on health, education and social development. The event was attended by professionals from civil society organizations, business community, labour unions & journalists.

### **One Day Training on Tax Advocacy (Islamabad)**

The training basically focused on grass root level advocacy at district level to create awareness among community members from depressed areas of south Punjab. Volunteers from district Muzaffargarh and Liyya working in their respective areas in the field of human rights, health and education attended the training session.

### **Identification & contact with key stakeholders**

In order to build tax justice campaign’s momentum, TN first identified more than 100 key stakeholders from more than 10 categories such as trade unions, business associations, Anjuman e Tajran, Chamber of commerce, Labour unions, women chamber of commerce, Domestic and Home based workers unions, labour worker, political parties and politicians, TN launched a drive to contact them through emails, calls and personal visits.

### **Interviews of Key Stakeholders**

More than 35 interviews were conducted at different cities such as Lahore, Sialkot, Gujranwala and Sheikhpura with the stakeholders i.e. Politicians, Presidents of Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Businessmen and Presidents / Chairman of Trade Unions, business associations, Anjuman e Tajran. Labour unions, women chamber of commerce, Domestic and Home based workers union, labour workers and political parties.

### **Consultative meetings**

Consultative meetings with 75 influentials were conducted at different cities such as Lahore, Sialkot, Gujranwala and Sheikhpura with the stakeholders. The meetings were conducted to develop coalition with stakeholders and shared project objective to gain their support at national as well as provincial level.

### **Dissemination of IEC Material**

Findings of research studies and other material were disseminated through various events such as press conferences, meetings, interviews and trainings organized by TN in order to aware the public and sensitize policy makers.

### **Print Media Advertisement “An Appeal to the Parliament”**

On the occasion of fiscal budget being presented in parliament, an appeal was advertised in leading news paper “The News” to remind the honorable parliamentarians of the promise they made to the people of Pakistan to reduce indirect taxes and the resolutions passed by both houses of the parliament.

## Green Action Fund

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### Organic Farming and the Need for its Revival in Pakistan

Organic agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. So organic agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved. In Pakistan there is a dire need for capacity-building activities to empower organic smallholders in developing resilient farming systems, value chains are needed to promote conventional organic farming techniques.

Pakistan's food security centered policy to grow more food resulting in the excessive use of pesticide at the cost of food safety. The yearly use of pesticide has increased to over 61,229 tons. But the federal and provincial laws ensuring safe food are not well integrated – Plant Protection department registers pesticide import; Environment Protection Agency tells how to use them; Standard Authority determines the standards; and provincial food authorities implement them.

After devolution, many of federal government's powers related to food and environment safety and regulation have been transferred to provincial government. The provincial governments are coming up with food regulatory bodies. While there are some regulations restricting contamination of water by Pesticide residues, there is almost none if pesticides remain on or in food after they are applied to food crops. Pakistan Agriculture Research Council found harmful remains of pesticides in 87.5 per cent of the fruits, while 28 per cent of the samples exceeded the Maximum Acceptable Concentrate (MAC) for any single pesticide.

There have been some academic studies on the issue but there is none from consumer perspective as outlined in the "CI Campaigning Guide: Safer, More Sustainable Food for All". The study will help develop the theme in Pakistani context and will also provide advocacy content for law/policy makers and consumers.

## Objectives

1. Sensitization of law/policy makers on the need to revamp food safety regulations to prevent contamination of food by pesticide
2. Generating demand among consumers for safer food

Generally in Pakistan, pesticide contamination of food is seen as an alien theme. If at all it is discussed then it is in the context of increasing the food export to Europe to earn foreign exchange and to follow their standards. The proposed intervention aims at developing the theme of safer food in the context of HHP in Pakistan. This literature and follow up a targeted advocacy campaign will have longer impact in influencing the existing policies with relation to food and pesticide regulations. This will result in improving the existing safe food standards and bringing in hazardous pesticide use in upcoming regulations both at federal and provincial level. The consumers and community based organizations at grassroots will be fully involved in this activity (social) media and IEC material.

## Major activities and achievements

1. A research study was carried out and published analyzing existing safe food regulatory framework and the future course of action with recommendations. A total of 500 copies were published and disseminated to the relevant institutions and civil society organizations. Soft copies were also emailed and disseminated through social media.
2. An advocacy seminar with experts from different government institutions, civil society organizations and universities was arranged. The main aim was to sensitize policy makers so that they can start seeing the food policies of the country from the perspective of the provision of safe food to the Pakistanis rather than only focusing at the export oriented food. They will also be asking questions what the government is doing on the issues and will help improve policies and regulations. Universities (Environment and Agriculture departments) and other research intuitions were targeted to influence their research on pesticides use from consumer perspective as outlined in the CI guideline.
3. Brochures promoting organic farming and safe food were developed and published and disseminated in different malls and main shopping areas of the capital Islamabad.
4. Letters to the federal and provincial law makers highlighting need for better pesticide regulations were written. The main aim was to sensitize them on the issue so that they can raise questions in their respective Provincial Assemblies and National Assembly.

## Ensuring Access to Safe Drinking Water

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The Network (TN) has recently launched a campaign to ensure provision of safe drinking water, supplied through filtration plants, to the people of Islamabad and Rawalpindi under Small Grants and Ambassador's Fund Program (SGAFP).

Objective of the project is creating understanding and consensus among the concerned players about the nature of the issue and the measures that need to be taken for its effective resolution. Raising awareness and building advocacy for the early promulgation of the legislative framework that will ascertain consumers' access to safe drinking water by relevant authorities.

### Major achievements

TN with the collaboration of WASA and CDA has conducted water quality tests of the filtration plants installed in the twin cities. A total of 44 filtration plants were tested in Rawalpindi and subsequently 36 filtration plants were tested for water quality in Islamabad. A comprehensive microbiological analysis was performed on the water samples by 3 different laboratories namely; Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), National Institute of Health (NIH) Nutrition Division and CDA and WASA water quality labs.

Based on these results a recommendation report will be developed for the concerned agencies on how they can further improve quality of drinking water. Additionally training workshops for the water supply departments of the concerned agencies will also be arranged with the objectives of;

1. Capacity building of the water supply departments on compliance of SOPs used for the maintenance of filtration plants
2. Compliance of national and international standards used to ensure contamination free drinking water
3. Consensus building on the recommendations drafted by TheNetwork for Consumer Protection on the gaps identified during the water quality testing
4. Capacity building of officials on ensuring an efficient complaint redress mechanism

## Media campaign

A media campaign will be launched in the twin cities to ensure that the submitted recommendation reports regarding water quality are indeed taken up for further action by the concerned agencies. The media campaign will involve newspaper supplements, television commercials, radio programs and production of 5 minute documentary.

## International collaborations

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In the outgoing year TheNetwork's networking with international organizations like Bloomberg Foundation, Consumers International, World Health Organization, Third World Network, NCDs Alliance continued.

TheNetwork participated in two meetings organized by WHO in Jordan and Egypt on the action plan to reduce non-communicable diseases burden. For ensuring healthcare for all, an active participation was made in Malaysia. The US was the venue of the strategic planning on tobacco control. The Consumers *International's* World Congress was held in Brazil.

### Future Strategy

In 2016 TheNetwork will remain committed to the strategies, action plans developed by Consumers International, WHO, Bloomberg, SUN, NCD Alliance with the specific focus at:

Consumer Protection

Tobacco Control

Micronutrient Deficiencies

Non Communicable Disease

Road/Vehicle safety standards

Taxation

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

BASIC NEEDS

CHOOSE

**KNOW YOUR  
CONSUMER  
RIGHTS**

REDRESS

SAFETY

BE HEARD

BE INFORMED

CONSUMER EDUCATION

TheNetwork for Consumer Protection

1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Plot 3-4, I & T centre, Sector G-8/4, Islamabad-Pakistan

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