

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**November 16, 2024**

**PAKISTAN'S REVOLUTIONARY HOUSING INITIATIVE EMERGES AS A GLOBAL EXEMPLAR FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE AT COP29**

**Baku, Azerbaijan** — In a landmark address at COP29 today, the Honourable Chief Minister of Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, showcased the remarkable achievements of the Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affectees (SPHF) program in a keynote address, positioning it as a global model for climate-resilient reconstruction.

A humanitarian housing program larger than the population of 154 countries captured global attention at COP29 today, as the SPHF unveiled its revolutionary approach to climate-resilient reconstruction. At a landmark panel discussion in the Pakistan Pavilion titled, "Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affectees: A Blueprint for Global Resilience," international development leaders explored how this Government of Sindh initiative has redefined the parameters of post-disaster recovery and community rebuilding.

Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah emphasized that the project is inspired by the vision of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, with a mission to build resilience for flood-affected communities.





Shah highlighted several key milestones: Currently, 2.1 million homes are being constructed. Over 1 million bank accounts have been opened, facilitating 810,000 disbursements to families affected by floods. In Sindh alone, 300,000 climate-resilient houses have already been completed. The next phase will focus on enhancing Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities, with 60,000 resilient settlements currently in progress.

In a gesture of gratitude, a flood-affected village has been named after UN Secretary-General António Guterres, recognizing his support. CM Sindh expressed his sincere appreciation to the global community for their unwavering assistance.

The keynote address was followed by a high-level panel discussion featuring:

- Mr. Khalid Mehmood Shaikh, Chief Executive Officer of SPHF
- Ms. Xiaohong Yang, Deputy Director General, Central and West Asia Department, Asian Development Bank
- Dr. Issa Faye, Director-General, Global Practices and Partnerships, Islamic Development Bank
- Dr. Valerie Hickey, Global Director for the Environment Department, World Bank

Beginning the session, Ms. Xiaohong Yang, when asked about the inclusion of technology and transparency in the project's execution, said, "It truly deserves outstanding applause. The transformational digitalization through the MIS mechanism means that

anywhere, anytime, we can see how funds are being spent and how many facilities are being built. We know the exact number of women beneficiaries and are working to create a resilient system for future floods by including community input in the project design. This strategy of transparency adopted by the Government of Sindh leadership has accelerated the efficiency of the project tremendously."

The initiative's cutting-edge **Management Information System (MIS)** has revolutionized aid distribution through direct beneficiary transfers, eliminating intermediaries and setting new global benchmarks for transparency in humanitarian assistance.

Addressing what motivated the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) to support the SPHF initiative, Dr. Issa Faye stated, "It is in our charter to show solidarity and support the countries of our Ummah. We need to deliver for the people of Pakistan. Our strategy is based on two pillars: one, green, sustainable infrastructure development—building resilience—which completely aligns with this project; and second, human capital development. These two pillars provide the framework to support this project. Beyond this, we have witnessed the deep commitment from the Sindh government toward rehabilitating rural Sindh, reaffirming our ongoing support."

SPHF's pioneering approach extends beyond housing to comprehensive community rebuilding. Through innovative settlement-level planning, the program integrates **GIS technology**, household surveys, and community engagement to create climate-resilient villages.

"In many ways, we view this initiative as more than a project. This is a miracle happening in Sindh province—for decades, there have been smaller floods in many countries, and governments have never figured out how to provide housing, Government of Sindh's efforts are highly commendable in this regard. It's not just about the house or bricks and mortar; it's about the family living in that house—about families now living in 300,000 houses that have been built, finding independence. Through monsoons this year and previous, to know they are safe; their livelihoods are safe. This miracle is equivalent to a million job opportunities, financial inclusion, and security within the community. It's allowed tens of thousands of women to open bank accounts and acquire land certificates safeguarding their future—they now have assets they can leverage," Dr. Valerie Hickey expressed, sharing how the World Bank views large-scale housing initiatives like SPHF in building climate resilience for historically marginalized communities.

Speaking on SPHF's transformative impact as the world's most significant post-disaster housing reconstruction effort, Mr. Khalid Mehmood Shaikh highlighted two major achievements: "First, the sheer scale of impact, reaching 15 million people, and second, the unprecedented advancement in women's empowerment and financial literacy. When people with meagre financial resources were entrusted with \$1,000 for rebuilding their houses, they demonstrated exceptional entrepreneurial skills. They opened bank accounts, withdrew money, made informed decisions about materials and masons, and built remarkable houses that we now see across Sindh. This proves that when people are empowered to manage their resources, it opens doors not just for housing, but for their overall prosperity, health, and education."



The discussion at COP29 highlighted how SPHF's multi-hazard-resistant housing aligns with climate adaptation goals while also driving economic growth, women's empowerment, and social transformation. Panellists emphasized that the initiative not only rebuilds communities but transforms them, offering a replicable model of climate resilience. By integrating technology, community engagement, and sustainable practices, SPHF has set a global benchmark for disaster recovery efforts.



**About SPHF:**

The Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affectees (SPHF) is one of history's most significant post-disaster housing reconstruction efforts. Launched by the Government of Sindh following the catastrophic 2022 floods, SPHF has evolved into a comprehensive program combining cutting-edge technology, community empowerment, and climate-resilient construction. Its unprecedented scale, innovative approach, and transformative impact have set new global standards for disaster recovery and climate adaptation.

**DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affectees:****A Blueprint for Global Resilience COP29 – Pakistan Pavilion, Baku, Azerbaijan  
November 16, 2024**

**KHALID MEHMOOD SHAIKH** Chief  
Executive Officer Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affectees  
(SPHF)

Mr. Khalid Mehmood Shaikh leads one of the world's most significant post-disaster housing reconstruction efforts as CEO of SPHF, spearheading an initiative that impacts over 12.3 million lives. Under his leadership, SPHF has secured \$2 billion in funding and implemented innovative solutions for housing reconstruction at an unprecedented scale.

A distinguished public service professional, Mr. Shaikh brings extensive expertise in public-private partnerships (PPP) and institutional reform to this critical role. As former Director General of the PPP Unit, Government of Sindh, he established ground-breaking partnerships with international organizations, including the Asian Development Bank, and developed comprehensive legislative and institutional frameworks that transformed municipal institutions into financially sustainable entities.

His strategic leadership at SPHF has resulted in remarkable achievements, including the construction of over 800,000 houses, the opening of 1 million beneficiary bank accounts, and the implementation of innovative technology solutions for transparent program delivery.



**XIAOHONG YANG**  
**Deputy Director General Central West Asia Department, Asian Development Bank**

Ms. Xiaohong Yang brings 30 years of distinguished experience in international development to her role as Deputy Director General of ADB's Central West Asia Department. Her expertise spans complex operational and corporate assignments, including regional, sectoral, and country strategies, fiscal and monetary policy reforms, and innovative climate change initiatives.

Previously serving as the Chief Thematic Officer of ADB's Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department, Ms. Yang led ADB's COP26 delegation in Glasgow in 2021. As the first woman Country Director for ADB's Pakistan Resident Mission (2017-2021), she demonstrated exceptional leadership in sustainable development initiatives.

Ms. Yang holds a postgraduate master's degree in economics from Peking University and a Bachelor of Arts in International Finance from the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics. Her work consistently emphasizes effective managerial leadership, technical excellence, and strong stakeholder collaboration.



**DR. ISSA FAYE**  
**Director-General, Global Practices and Partnerships Islamic Development Bank**

Dr. Issa Faye provides strategic leadership in the Islamic Development Bank's global practices and partnerships, driving innovative solutions for member countries' development challenges. His expertise encompasses climate finance, environmental and social initiatives, fragility and resilience, women and youth empowerment, and food security.

Prior to joining IsDB, Dr. Faye served as Senior Economic Advisor to the Vice President of Global Industries at IFC, where he spearheaded the development of the Anticipated Impact Measurement and Monitoring system (AIMM). His decade-long tenure at the African Development Bank included managing the Research Division, demonstrating his commitment to evidence-based development strategies.

A renowned economist with a Ph.D. in the field, Dr. Faye has contributed significantly to academic discourse as a lecturer at the University of Auvergne/CERDI and researcher at the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) in France. His extensive publications cover private sector development, impact investing, financial inclusion, and various aspects of sustainable development.



**DR. VALERIE HICKEY**  
**Global Director, Environment Department World Bank**

Dr. Valerie Hickey leads the World Bank's global environmental initiatives as Global Director of the Environment Department, where she champions nature-based solutions for sustainable development and climate resilience. Her strategic leadership focuses on unlocking healthy nature as an engine of jobs and GDP while building green, inclusive, and resilient economies.

Prior to her current role, Dr. Hickey served as manager for Advisory and Operations in the Climate Change Group, overseeing the implementation of the World Bank's climate commitments and climate finance initiatives. Her expertise in Latin America and the Caribbean included managing cross-sectoral teams supporting countries on climate change, sustainable forest management, coastal zone management, and environmental risk management.

Since joining the World Bank in 2003, Dr. Hickey has demonstrated exceptional leadership in post-disaster recovery, notably directing the Bank's environment portfolio in Haiti following the 2010 earthquake. She has pioneered analytical work on frontier issues related to the blue economy, biodiversity, and wildlife conservation, consistently delivering innovative solutions to complex environmental challenges.

Dr. Hickey holds a Ph.D. in Environmental Science and Policy from Duke University. Her diverse experience includes work with World Wildlife Fund, the Wildlife Conservation Society, and the US National Park Service, bringing a unique combination of field experience and policy expertise to global environmental initiatives.