

Sustainable utilization of natural resources of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA

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Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Province and FATA covering North and Northwestern part of Pakistan are mostly comprised of mountainous areas and have been endowed with a variety of minerals and industrial rocks including dimension stones, metallic minerals, gemstones and energy resources like coal and radioactive minerals. KP covering 74521km² is rich in marble and Granites of various colors and shades, gemstone i.e. world best quality emeralds, topaz, corundum, tourmaline, aquamarine, peridot, industrial rocks and minerals which mainly include phosphate, clay minerals, soapstone, feldspar, nepheline syanite, gypsum, rock salt, limestone and silica sand. All these deposits have a good accessibility, infrastructure and have a co-operative and skilled manpower in the area.

FATA covers 27000 km² areas in the northwest and western part of Pakistan lying along the Pak Afghan boundary. The area is mostly mountainous and has a little flat land for agriculture however very rich in mineral resources like world best quality marble and granite of various colors and shades. The other minerals are soapstone of kurram agency, copper deposit of North Waziristan, coal of Aurakzai agency and radioactive minerals of Khyber Agency and limestone deposits in various parts of FATA.

For the optimum development of mineral sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa a separate department of mines and mineral development has been established having exploration promotion division, licensing division responsible for granting mineral titles and inspectorate wing. Licensing division acts as a one window facility to facilitate investment in the mineral sector of the province. Similarly for development of mineral sector in FATA a well-established directorate has been created. All these developments by provincial governments are aiming to enhance the share of mineral sector in the national exchequer and utilize indigenous resources in the industry besides providing job opportunities to locals.

To develop the marble and granite sector of Pakistan to make it a competitive player of the international dimension stone market, Government of Pakistan has established Pakistan Stone development company (PASDEC). The company has a short term goal to develop the quarrying sector of Pakistan so as to reduce their wastage from 85% to 45%. After the introduction of Modern technology in the quarrying sector of Pakistan the annual marble production has increased up to 2.5 million tons. The company is planning to enhance the processing facilities in the country for value addition to earn foreign exchange for the country and to achieve the export target of US \$ 2.4 billion till 2017.

To encourage investment in the mineral sector and enhance its share in the GDP of the country, National Mineral Policy 1995 has been revised which is in final stage of approval by the competent foura. The National Mineral Policy – 2013 formulated with the consensus of all the stake holders and provinces is offering various fiscal incentives to the investors in mineral sector.