

## MASOOD KHAN EMPHASIZES AWARENESS AND SOCIAL MOBILISATION ON DRUG ABUSE



Sardar Masood Khan, President Azad Jammu and Kashmir, has said that there is a need for an effective counternarcotics strategy to combat the use and abuse of psychotropic substances including street drugs, prescription drugs and alcohol causing massive damages to a large segment of the population, particularly youth

The AJK President made these remarks while attending a high-level meeting on the drug situation in educational institutions, convened by the President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi. The meeting was attended by the Federal Minister for Narcotics Control Mr. Muhammad Azam Khan Swati, Governor Punjab Mr. Mohammad Sarwar, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mr. Shah Framan, Governor Balochistan Mr. Amanullah Khan Yasinzai, Governor Sindh Mr. Imran Ismail, Governor Gilgit-Baltistan Raja Jalal Hussain Maqpoon and Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Health Dr. Faisal Sultan.

The President said that in the past the drug abuse situation in AJK was not very serious, but recently the Government and the civil society organizations have become concerned as well as vigilant to counter incidences of use of illicit narcotics. The AJK Social Welfare department is making strenuous efforts to fight this scourge inside and outside educational institutions. “Coordinated efforts between Law Enforcement Agencies, the leadership of educational institutions, parents and social reform groups will have a salutary impact on the situation”, he said.

Sardar Masood Khan said that in Muzaffarabad, Mirpur and Rawalakot Rehabilitation Centres have already been established and more could be set up if required. “The emphasis remains on collation of precise and disaggregated data, interdiction of couriers and traffickers, awareness raising and social mobilisation”, he said.

The key lies in, he said, in a strong partnership between public sector, civil society and management of educational institutions. “Such an approach is necessary to get an optimal societal response”, the President said.

President Masood Khan said that five public-sector universities in AJK have already held a series of events on counter-narcotics to adopt best practices in the field. “The lessons we have learnt are that only

police action would not help; it is important to inspire and wean addicts off illicit drugs by involving motivators, such as health professional, religious scholars and social entrepreneurs.

The President invited the Mr. Azam Swati, Federal Minister for Narcotics Control to visit Azad Kashmir at the earliest so that a coordinated approach could be developed.