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REPORT OF THE SENATE FUNTIONAL COMMITTEE ON PROBLEMS OF LESS DEVELOPED ARES

ON

Infrastructure and Development in Chitral Raised by Senator Talha Mehmood on 23rd January 2026 and Referred by the House of the Committee

PRESENTED BY

SENATOR NIAZ AHMAD

CHAIRMAN COMMITTEE

SENATE OF PAKISTAN

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I, Senator Niaz Ahmed, Chairman of the Senate Functional Committee on Problems of Less Developed Areas on behalf of the Committee, have the honor to present the report on the subject matter raised by the Senator Talha Mehmood on 23 January 2026 regarding "Infrastructure and Development in Chitral referred by the House to the Committee for consideration and report."

2. The matter was taken up consecutively in three meetings held on 13 April 2026, 19 May 2026 and 20 July 2026. In view of its wide-ranging nature, the Committee called the relevant federal and provincial ministries, divisions, departments and implementing agencies, including the Ministry of Water Resources, Planning and Development Division/Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Federal Flood Commission, KP Irrigation and planning authorities, NHA, PTA, Ministry of Information Technology and Universal Service Fund, PESCO/Power Division, NDRMF, PCSIR, NAVTTC and Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited, besides the provincial Board of Revenue and district administration.

3. On 13 April 2026, the Committee examined rehabilitation and capacity enhancement of the 50-year-old 1 MW powerhouse commissioned in 1975 for enhancement to 5 MW. The revised PC-I costing Rs.7,211 million was before the Planning and Development authorities and the Committee directed expedited processing. The Federal Flood Commission and KP Irrigation Department briefed on flood-protection, irrigation and restoration schemes in vulnerable areas along the Chitral, Mastuj, Reshun, Shandur Green, Lutko and other rivers/nullahs. The Committee emphasized the serious damage caused by recurring floods and glacial outburst events to villages, agricultural land and infrastructure and called for immediate priority to flood mitigation. NHA road projects, telecom connectivity, electricity feeders, skills development and other interventions were also examined.

4. On 19 May 2026, the Committee undertook detailed follow-up. NHA briefed on the Chitral–Booni–Mastuj–Shandur, Chitral–Ayun–Bumboret and Chitral–Garam Chashma/Drosha Pass roads. Non-availability of land was identified as a major impediment to the Chitral–Ayun–Bumboret project. The Committee actively brought NHA and the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa together to resolve the matter. The Board of Revenue and district administration subsequently informed the Committee that, after consultation with NHA, a way forward had been developed: NHA committed to commence work at full pace upon provision of land and funds, while the provincial side moved a summary for approval of funds for land acquisition. The Committee also decided to call the Chief Secretary, KP, if necessary, to ensure resolution of the remaining bottlenecks.

5. The Committee gave particular attention to telecom and digital connectivity. PTA reported satisfactory but severely congested coverage in Lower Chitral, while Upper Chitral remained largely underserved with very low throughput; several sites were 2G-only or affected by faulty

equipment, and Upper Chitral depended heavily on a single PTCL fiber link, making repeated cuts capable of causing district-wide outages. PTA proposed fiber r[illegible], additional USF-supported sites, LTE upgrades, reliable power and coordination with NHA and PTCL. The Committee expressed concern for students, businesses and residents and directed effective use of USF resources for unserved and underserved areas. Subsequently, the Ministry of Information Technology and CEO, USF, reported that USF management had visited Upper and Lower Chitral with service-provider engineering and field teams and cross-checked field findings against KPI data. The visit identified recurring fiber cuts, road-construction damage to buried fiber, hazardous access routes and sites requiring final approach on foot. USF engaged the service provider and was coordinating with PTA for sustainable connectivity. The Committee appreciated this intervention and directed completion of pending USF projects and service to remaining non-service areas.

6. PESCO also briefed on the Chitral PSDP electrification project, including three 11-KV feeders and associated villages. Progress was reported on the Bros and Kesu feeders and the Ayun feeder, for which an alternative alignment was being pursued after road-widening works affected the original route. The Committee directed PESCO to identify electricity-deprived villages, prepare an electrification plan and address transformer capacity and the absence of a functional workshop in Lower Chitral. The Committee also noted the need for regulatory facilitation for transformer and infrastructure upgradation.

7. NDRMF, PCSIR and NAVTTC briefed on disaster-risk reduction, livelihood, and human-capital development. NDRMF reported flood-protection structures, early-warning systems and community disaster-risk interventions and was directed to undertake further survey and feasibility work and engage additional donors. PCSIR reported food-preservation and processing training and locally prepared fruit products and was directed to prepare a roadmap covering fruit products, mines and minerals, tourism, and other local opportunities. NAVTTC explained its structured and merit-based mechanism for selecting training providers and trainees and was directed to undertake a Chitral-specific feasibility assessment and identify demand-driven trades and suitable partners.

8. The Committee also examined the proposed LNG project in Chitral. The Ministry concerned and MD Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited informed the Committee that the project had been approved in 2017 at a cost of Rs.170 million and three LNG plants had been acquired and taken to Chitral, but the project remained stalled after ECC observations regarding feasibility. The Committee expressed serious concern that public assets were lying idle and directed SNGPL to pursue the case with the concerned quarters and provide a clear status and way forward. The Committee also decided to follow up the matter with the ECC.

9. In the concluding meeting of 20 July 2026, the Committee reviewed the remaining road, telecom, energy and land-acquisition issues. It noted that the Committee's intervention had brought the concerned institutions together and had produced a concrete way forward on the NHA/KP land issue. The Committee also emphasized coordination among PTA, USF, PTCL, NHA, PESCO and other agencies so that development works do not repeatedly damage existing infrastructure and roads. Having considered the matter over three meetings and recorded the required follow-up actions, the Committee concluded its deliberations, disposed of the agenda and decided to submit this Report to the House in accordance with the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Senate, 2012.

Recommendations of the Committee

I. All concerned federal and provincial authorities shall treat Chitral's development needs as a priority and implement the commitments recorded before the Committee.

II. Planning and Development authorities shall expedite pending PC-Is relating to Chitral and ensure that procedural delays do not hold back critical projects.

III. NHA and the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa shall maintain direct coordination on land acquisition for ongoing Chitral road projects and implement the agreed way forward; the Chief Secretary, KP, and Chairman NHA shall ensure resolution of remaining land/funding bottlenecks.

IV. PTA, USF, PTCL and cellular operators shall prioritize Upper Chitral and other underserved areas through fiber redundancy, new sites, LTE upgrades, reliable power, and rapid restoration arrangements. USF shall submit an action plan for non-service areas within 30 days.

V. PESCO shall complete pending electrification works within the committed timelines, identify electricity-deprived settlements and submit an area-wise electrification plan; the Lower Chitral workshop shall be operationalized on priority and transformer/infrastructure approvals expedited.

VI. The Ministry of Water Resources, Federal Flood Commission and KP Irrigation Department shall prioritize flood-protection and irrigation schemes, expedite PC-Is and funding, and assess areas repeatedly affected by floods and glacial outburst events.

VII. NDRMF, PCSIR and NAVTTC shall prepare targeted interventions for disaster resilience, fruit and food processing, mines and minerals, tourism, digital skills and employability and submit the required feasibility/action plans within the timelines communicated by the Committee.

VIII. SNGPL shall pursue the Chitral LNG project with ECC and other concerned authorities and provide a clear status, feasibility position and way forward for utilization of the LNG plants at the earliest.

IX. The Committee may seek progress reports from concerned departments where commitments remain outstanding and, where necessary, call responsible senior officers to account for delays.

(MUHAMMAD ASGHAR GONDAL)
Secretary Committee

(SENATOR NIAZ AHMAD)
Chairman Committee