

7th Karachi International Water Conference

Water, People, Health – Coping with Floods

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Closing remarks

By

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege to be here and to reflect on the evolution of the Karachi International Water Conference — and how this 7th edition is charting a bold new path.

My own journey has crossed research organizations, academia, and public service — always rooted in water: water quality, water reuse, and water resources management. Through that work, I have seen firsthand how water shapes lives, health, economies, and futures — and how urgently we must act.

KIWC started in 2013 and has become a powerful driver of national and global water discourse, influencing policy, governance, and collaboration. At the 10th anniversary conference in 2023, we saw the theme “Bring Water Back to Climate Discourse” — a clear statement that water must be at the center of climate action. That conference also gave rise to the Pakistan Water Panel for Transformative Futures, now working with IWMI to bring bottom-up change into national and international water policy.

I have long admired the leadership of Simi Kamal. We worked together years ago on the Technical Committee of the Global Water Partnership, and on the International Water Management Institute Board of Governors where she was vice-chair and chair. And I have continuously been inspired by her vision and persistence in building platforms that combine grassroots wisdom with rigorous policy thinking. And I must say — the leadership of Pakistani women in the water sector has impressed me. It is both bold and deeply rooted in community resilience.

This conference centers those voices: women, youth, and marginalized groups who have been too often left out of decisions that affect their survival.

This year’s conference marks a major shift:

- From talking about climate impacts → To enabling community-led adaptation.
- From siloed water discussions → To integrating water, health, and equity.

- From expertise flowing top-down → To honoring indigenous and local knowledge as expertise in its own right.

Pakistan sits at the heart of this urgency — with per-capita water availability down 80% since independence, and the Indus River under mounting pressure from climate and mismanagement.

This year, we see topics that were missing in the past:

- Public health and waterborne diseases
- Child stunting and sanitation
- AI for water and health
- Women's leadership in water justice
- Listening to marginalized voices — the Café of the Unheard

These additions are not cosmetic — they redefine the water agenda.

The outcome we are all anticipating is the Living Charter for Water and People — a roadmap co-created with the communities it intends to serve.

Where the 2023 conference reframed water as central to climate resilience... 2025 is about transforming the system, and transforming who gets to lead.

Hisaar Foundation's initiatives — from the Think Tank and Universities for Water Network to the Panjwani-Hisaar Water Institute — have already laid a strong foundation for research, collaboration, and real-world action. But for me, the most important evolution is this:

KIWC now recognizes that the people who live closest to the crisis must be the architects of its solutions.

I believe this is how transformation truly begins — with women, youth, and local communities leading us toward a future where sustainability and equity are inseparable.

Thank you.