

## Key Note Address

Dr. Muhammad Saeed

Horticulturist (Retired) Fruit Development Project, Quetta /Consultant  
Horticulture/Agriculture/Rural Development, House No.12-C Street Number 4 Model  
Town Extension Khojak Road, Quetta

Worthy Vice Chancellor, Deans, Directors, faculty members, fellow horticulturists and dear participants, Assalam-o-alaikum!

I am really pleased and thankful to the organizers for inviting me as a participant in this conference. I have been listening for last so many years about food security but I am pleased for the first time that horticulture and food security are linked together. Because horticulture has remained a relatively neglected field in the past.

There are countless definitions of food security and the only latest, the shortest is that by Johnson "when all the people at all-time have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritional food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for healthy and active life". Production deals with the land holding size, human capital, distribution, transportation, infrastructure, storage facility, packing and distribution. For perishable commodities like fruits and vegetables, our infrastructure is not good for transportation (i.e. bumpy roads) and when the produce reaches to market, most of it is spoiled and we have to face 30-44% losses in fruits and vegetables at postharvest level. Now storage facility is a big question mark. The fruit should immediately be stored where pre-cooling is the first step, and after precooling, grading packing and removal must be done very carefully. Most effective time for harvesting is before noon. Cold stores are located away from the production centres and transportation of horticultural produce from farm to cold store face significant loss due to postharvest delay in precooling and storage. Farm inputs are relatively expensive, specially the agro-chemicals. Now, our fresh produce is entering into the export markets. WTO regulations are really very strict and luckily there are progressive growers who have been accepted by WTO and they are following all precautions needed by the WTO specially on agro-chemicals including safe use of pesticides under permissible dose rate. Crop yield in Pakistan is also very much low or almost stagnant as compared to other developing, if not developed, countries like Malaysia, Berma and India. Water conservation is the major concern in Balochistan. Most of the vegetable fields are not levelled and our vegetable seed industry mostly depends on the imported hybrid seeds. There is need to develop management strategies to tackle such issues. I am very hopeful that this conference will come up with concrete recommendations that might help to overcome horticulture industry issues and pave our way to better future with sufficient and good quality of food for everyone.