Proposed Content of the Individual Sessions

Session 1- The Constitutional Framework for Governance
As the framework for the organization of government and inter-government relations, the constitution assumes fundamental importance in laying the basic structure of all governmental power, and its provisions very largely determine the authority of federating units and state institutions as well as the conduct of relations between the federation and the provinces with mechanisms for consensus, cooperation and conflict resolution.

The 18th amendment to the constitution has furthered the devolution process in Pakistan though reservations persist on its adequacy, in particular on the continuing status of local government as an institution of the Provincial government.

Papers for this session will review the provisions and amendments to the constitution affecting the critical elements of governance and specifically look at the new distribution of responsibilities under the 18th amendment with potential and opportunities for better governance.

Session 2- Legislative Support for Better Governance
Following the 18th amendment, provinces will now be able to legislate on a number of subjects earlier within the domain of the federal government. This is an opportunity for provincial legislatures to review outdated, conflicting or discriminatory laws, as well as close gaps in the legislative framework for development and the public welfare at a devolved level.

Papers for this session will focus on the performance of the Provincial Assemblies in progressive law-making and highlight landmark legislation for better governance. They will also identify areas for future legislation in pursuance of public policy keeping in view the devolved subjects after the 18th amendment.

Session 3- Making Provincial Devolution Work
The devolution of subjects to the federating units, earlier in the federal and concurrent lists, poses a major challenge to the provinces in terms of their readiness, resolve and ability to effectively undertake the devolved responsibilities. The quality of policy making and governance at the provincial level will largely determine the degree to which the benefits of devolution reach the citizen. There are legal, administrative, financial and capacity issues to be addressed in making the 18th amendment work as well as considerations of collaboration and coordination with the federal government in many areas of national concern.

Papers on the subject will address the imperatives of translating the devolution initiative to improved policy outcomes. Experiences of federations in the region would offer a useful comparative perspective.
Session 4 - Making Local Devolution Deliver
A number of local government models have been introduced in Pakistan but none has found firm roots at the local level. The latest devolution initiative took a step forward by placing some key public services under the elected district head and by affording him enhanced administrative authority. The success of the system in enhancing the level of service delivery continues to be debated. Papers on the subject will identify the major factors contributing to both successes and failures of the devolution approach and analyse the key issues emerging from the experience. A critical appraisal of the local government law, resource sharing arrangements, local administrative capacity and accountability for service delivery would constitute some of the significant areas of discussion.

Session 5 - Calibrating the Public Service to Local Devolution
The organization of the public services has remained largely unchanged since independence with local administrative services the weakest both in terms of organisation and capacity. Adapting to the new configuration of responsibilities and workload at the local level presents not only a major organizational challenge to the civil service, it also calls for the translation of organizational changes into viable administrative practices. An integral part of the process would be the accountability of civil servants to local elected bodies. Papers will discuss administrative models for effective administrative support to devolved local government.

Session 6 - Governance Issues in Judicial Administration
The administrative side of court functioning has received little attention in programmes to enhance the quality of justice. Yet efficient governance of the court system remains a crucial component of effective justice services. Efficient case management, record keeping and streamlined processes and procedures smoothen the passage of case hearings and cut down on litigation time in a cost-effective manner. Papers will appraise the state of administrative support services in the lower judiciary and identify best practices for case management and submission and management of disputes to meet the needs of the court and the public at the district level.

Session 7 - Implementation Issues in Social Policy
To the extent policy making is a hypothetical exercise based on a causal model, its execution may face both external and internal factors that may lead to unraveling at the implementation stage. The fact that those making policy are not implementing programmes makes implementation prospects a critical element of policy design. Papers will take specific policy initiatives in the social sectors at the provincial level and study distortions and slippages affecting service delivery at the implementation stage. Also relevant would be a review of the policy design itself as creating potential for future dilution of policy objectives.