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Govt committed to fair, inclusive tax reforms: Khurram Schehzad

KARACHI: Adviser to Finance Minister Khurram Schehzad said the government remains focused on enhancing tax collection while ensuring that tax policy is aligned with the principles of equity, fairness and inclusivity.

He said that under the social contract between the state and citizens, public resources must be mobilised and utilised in a transparent and welfare-oriented manner. Schehzad made the remarks while addressing the opening ceremony of a two-day workshop titled 'Pakistan's Evolving Tax Landscape: Challenges, Opportunities & Innovations', jointly organised by the PTBA Academy of Taxation and the Karachi Tax Bar Association (KTBA) in Karachi.

He said the government had introduced key institutional reforms by separating tax policy formulation from tax administration and collection functions. The Tax Policy Office, he added, had been restructured independently to strengthen transparency, improve policy design and enhance administrative efficiency.

Inviting participants to submit research, proposals and practical recommendations to the Tax Policy Office, Schehzad stressed the need for a collaborative and long-term approach to reform. While acknowledging that no system is perfect, he said the government remained committed to strengthening the economy through sustainable reforms, improved governance and broader taxpayer facilitation.

Giving an overview of the economy, the adviser said several sectors were showing encouraging signs of recovery despite regional and global challenges. He said the government's reform agenda was being advanced through macroeconomic stabilisation, structural reforms, Digital Pakistan initiatives, energy sector reforms, tariff rationalisation, privatisation, pension and debt reforms, and rightsizing measures.

Commenting on the economic outlook, Schehzad said economic growth in the first half of the current fiscal year stood at around 3.8 per cent. He stressed the importance of achieving durable and sustainable growth rather than cyclical recoveries followed by repeated external stabilisation measures.

He said improving fiscal and external indicators were reinforcing macroeconomic stability, strengthening public finances and supporting investor confidence. Referring to recent fiscal performance, he noted that Pakistan had achieved historically strong primary surpluses alongside significant fiscal consolidation, contributing to improved sovereign credibility and economic resilience.

Schehzad said Digital Pakistan reforms were being pursued at both micro and macro levels, including the introduction of user-friendly digital platforms aimed at expanding access to banking and financial services.

He added that tariff reforms under the National Tariff Policy 2025-30 would help enhance productivity, improve industrial competitiveness, support exports and integrate Pakistan more effectively with regional and global markets.

The government's broader reform agenda, he said, was aimed at reducing structural inefficiencies, improving the performance of state-owned enterprises and creating a more competitive and investment-friendly economy. He also said Pakistan's ongoing economic reforms were receiving growing international recognition, reflecting increasing confidence in the country's economic direction.

Schehzad appreciated the participation of young professionals and emerging experts in discussions on tax policy, saying their engagement would contribute to strengthening the national economy. He expressed hope that recommendations emerging from the workshop would support future policy formulation and implementation.

Chairperson of the PTBA Academy of Taxation Abdul Qadir Memon highlighted prevailing economic trends and identified key structural and policy areas requiring further attention to strengthen the country's fiscal and taxation framework. He reiterated that tax bars across the country remained committed to supporting reforms aimed at improving transparency, taxpayer facilitation, documentation and confidence in the tax system.

KTBA President Mehmood Bikiya said the government's recent reform initiatives were moving in a positive direction and were broadly aligned with evolving global trends and economic needs. He said the workshop aimed to facilitate discussion on Pakistan's evolving tax landscape, particularly in the areas of digitalisation, documentation, broadening the tax base and emerging compliance challenges.

He stressed that continued engagement among policymakers, tax authorities, professionals and the business community was vital for the effective implementation of reforms.