

**SPEECH OF CHIEF GUEST, MR. SYED MURTAZA MAHMUD
FEDERAL MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES & PRODUCTION
54TH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF
PAKISTAN SOCIETY OF SUGAR TECHNOLOGISTS
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**Mr. Zahid Mahmood Qureshi,
President, Pakistan Society of Sugar Technologists,
Distinguished Guests, Learned Delegates,**

Assalam-Alaikum,

It is a pleasure for me to address this important forum of the sugar technologists, sugar industry and the professional experts I would therefore like to pay my compliments to this highly organized body of professionals for its devoted services to the nation, the sugar sector and wish them success.

Although it is a matter of satisfaction that the small industry, that we inherited at the time of independence, has grown up into a giant industry. Thanks to almighty Allah we have received good rains this year, area under sugarcane cultivation has registered an increase and crop condition has been reported good so far. But at the same time, there are some reports about crop damage due to floods, final reports are awaited.

Although, we kept on exporting sugar in past many years and recent production is also surplus and available for export.

Let us hope for a better crop. In fact, being an agricultural country, we must be amongst the main exporters of agro based products. Sugar industry can certainly play a very important role in achieving this objective because of its direct relationship with farmers.

Gentlemen, you must realize that Pakistan has to rely more on its own resources for its development and economic progress. The present government has made it a national commitment to achieve self-reliance. We have to educate ourselves and explore ways and means for export to earn foreign exchange. This is not an easy task and cannot be achieved without the whole hearted participation of every stake holder. We have to educate ourselves to meet our future responsibilities. The leading role has, therefore, to be played by agriculture and industries based on agriculture, and you must ensure that the sugar industry plays a leading role. You have to guide the common farmer so that he can produce more sugarcane per hectare by planting high sugar yielding varieties. You have to work hard to minimize the cost of production. We have to be competitive in the international market. No doubt the sugar industry has played a very vital role in uplifting the agriculture and prosperity of rural areas but why don't we put extra efforts and make ourselves competitive, Due to low yield and low sucrose contents we are still much below the international level. We need to improve.

I strongly feel the need for modern technologies and invite representatives of farmers to benefit from knowledge and experiences of those getting higher yields. Sugarcane is a cash crop but the farmers are not satisfied. The industry can reduce their overhead expenditure if growers' friendly policies are implemented by sugar mills in letter and spirit. This will help us in elimination of middleman. The Government is taking concrete steps to improve agricultural sector. Better loan facilities have already been

announced keeping in view the requirement of farmers. The present Government firmly believes in self-reliance and is, therefore, fully committed in mobilizing all its resources for positive progress in all sectors where economic development is involved. Naturally, agricultural and industrial sectors are on our top priority.

To improve productivity of sugarcane crop, which is the main raw material for the sugar industry, the Government on its part, has already got decision of the ECC to allocate funding from the Sugarcane Development Cess for the Research and Development of sugarcane crop.

With improved seed the yield can be improved by 15-20%. To improve the quality of cane seed, Ministry of Food Security & Research, has formulated seed standard for sugarcane. This will help to bring certified sugarcane seed for multiplication on the farmer's field.

To obtain more per hectare sugar, efforts are underway to supplement sugarcane crop with sugar beet. In this regard successful experiments have been conducted and would again be replicated this year. I would urge upon all of you to help in the government efforts in order to become self-sufficient in sugar sector and to join the export market.

This will help to discourage varieties with low sucrose content. PSST & PSMA have to come forward with a concrete proposal. Then we all have to sit down with growers' representatives to resolve this issue. Regarding the other issues raised by the President PSST in his welcome address, we would like to consider any good proposal in the best national interest. We appreciate the proposal of cheap electricity by sugar mills. Ethanol blending will be big

support to economy. We will also appreciate and consider any other proposal also to make this industry export oriented and support to GDP.

Before concluding my speech, I would like to thank you once again for providing me the opportunity to share my views with you. I assure you that I would like to extend all the possible assistance in creating an atmosphere, in which, interest of Industry as well as growers are secured and consumers are also satisfied.

Thank you very much for inviting me to this forum.