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Sindh's environmental resources degenerating rapidly: WWF report

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The environmental resources of the province are declining at an alarming rate and particularly the condition of Indus Delta needs immediate attention, which is fast degenerating due to lack of fresh water in the Indus.

This was stated by Sindh Minister for Environment and Alternative Energy Askari Taqvi while talking to a delegation of the WWF-Pakistan who delivered a presentation on the "Indus for All Programme", which is implemented by the WWF-Pakistan, said a statement on Sunday.

Taqvi said that the shortage of fresh water had further deteriorated the quality of ground water, which had created health issues such as hepatitis, gastroenteritis, and diarrhoea.

While showing concern over the release of untreated waste into the delta by sugar mills in Badin, the minister assured the WWF-Pakistan that the Environment and Alternate Energy Department would initiate action against such mills.

Regional Director, WWF-Pakistan Dr Ghulam Akbar, in his presentation on the Indus ecoregion and the existing environmental problems, highlighted the concept of ecoregion. He noted that the ecoregion conservation programme was a global initiative developed by the WWF-Pakistan and other global partners such as UNEP and the National Geographic to prioritise the environmentally significant regions around the globe.

He said that out of the 238 global ecoregions identified in this regard, the Indus ecoregion is one of the 40 most prioritised ecoregions.

In order to save the Indus ecoregion, a 50-year vision has been formulated and a six-year Indus for All Programme is implemented by the WWF-Pakistan in collaboration with other partners and stakeholders.

Dr Akbar noted that during the detailed ecological surveys conducted under the programme, three species had been discovered which were new to the floral world.

He also underlined different initiatives focusing on institutional development and strengthening ties with the partners and stakeholders besides building their capabilities on different fronts.

Sindh Secretary Environment and Alternative Energy, Mir Hussain Ali and Director, Environmental Protection Agency, Naeem Mughal, were also present.