

**Syed Abu Ahmad Akif**  
**Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change**

Syed Abu Ahmad Akif has been a member of the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS), the premier group amongst the federal civil service of Pakistan since 1983. The PAS continues to comprise of “enlightened generalists” inspired by Confucian Mandarins. Possessing multi-disciplinary skills, officers usually work in many areas of management due to extensive horizontal mobility.

Syed Akif has worked in the “field” as a general administrator heading the law and order and governance coordination functions, as well as in the federal and provincial secretariats, a rural development programme, state-owned corporate sector, an Asian-Development Bank funded institutional reform project, and the national pension system. Most recently (2010-2015) he served as head of Pakistan’s Hajj Mission in Saudi Arabia. Syed Akif has also worked in the civil society and private sectors by way of leave from the government (2000 - 2003).

As he himself states, “Although my university training was in microbiology (masters, 1981), the process of self-discovery which in Mark Twain's words means "not letting my schooling interfere with my education" opened new vistas.” And so, the microbiology degree led to a short stint as a researcher in an institution dedicated to the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Academy he moved to become a copy-writer in what was then Pakistan's largest ad agency. Appearing for the highly competitive civil service examination in 1982, he secured the first position in Pakistan. In the subsequent training at the Civil Services Academy Syed Akif was declared the “*Best All Round Trainee Officer.*”

In 1998 Syed Akif received a fully funded degree fellowship at the East West Center Hawai'i that led to a master's degree in public administration. In 2008, he attended a five-week executive development program at Harvard. Again becoming a full time student in 2009, he completed the master's program in defence and strategic studies from the National Defence University, Islamabad (along with 70 senior military and civil officers from 20 countries).

Personally, Syed Akif considers himself to be a knowledge worker and has occasionally sought positions considered to be off the “career main line”. These have included managing the second largest library in Pakistan and serving as the Chief Instructor at the National Institute of Public Administration. He takes a keen personal interest in writing, intellectual dialogue, and not-for profit activities. In nearly all of his professional assignments, he has led and guided large teams, developed and implemented policies and vision plans and provided intellectual impetus. As a writer, editor and translator, Syed Akif has more than ten books to his credit as well as nearly 100 published articles. He has also presented two programme series on Pakistan Television (30-parts of *Values & Tenets of Islam* (2010) and a 20-part series, *Islam Today* (2002-03).