

Media Update

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UN Women

PRESS RELEASE

UN Women Pakistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judicial Academy sign MoU to promote Rule of Law and to make the judicial system accessible and gender-responsive

Peshawar: UN Women Pakistan and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judicial Academy (KPJA), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) today to take forward their partnership in advancing the agenda of gender equality & women's empowerment (GEWE), and support platforms to ensure that the justice sector stakeholders are gender sensitized in their approach when dealing with women survivors of violence in light of national/provincial policies and international best practices.

The MOU agreement was signed by Ms. Sharmeela Rassool, Representative of UN Women Pakistan, and Mr. Zia-ud-Din Khattak, Director General of KPJA.

Both organizations will be working closely to strengthen the response mechanism and to create an enabling environment that supports survivors of gender-based violence.

At the signing ceremony, Ms. Sharmeela Rassool, said, "Over the years, Pakistan has worked towards creating progressive legal frameworks to safeguard the rights of women and girls. The implementation of the law remains imperative for real change on the ground. Only a gender-sensitive, systematic and coordinated response mechanism from the state, the judiciary, legal community, and other stakeholders will be important to improve women and vulnerable communities' access to justice." She also appreciated the efforts of the provincial government on their progressive steps to take forward the agenda of GEWE, "UN Women Pakistan and the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa commit to this partnership – together, we are stronger in both our efforts and impact."

Mr. Zia-ud-Din Khattak highlighted that the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan guarantees equality before the law and equal protection for every citizen, and thus, he committed support of the Judicial Academy in the effective dispensation of justice to everyone without any discrimination. He added, “This MoU will contribute towards building the capacity and commitment of all the stakeholders of the justice sector in creating an enabling environment for delivering justice to women, especially survivors of gender-based violence in light of the Rule of Law Road Map of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The focus areas of this cooperation are to enhance women’s access to justice through building the capacity of justice sector stakeholders such as judges, lawyers, prosecutors, police officers among others; supporting data gathering and research analysis efforts at the provincial level; supporting criminal justice sector coordination institutions at provincial/district level; jointly establishing mechanisms for monitoring and impact evaluation of activities under this MoU; exploring avenues to strengthen justice sector institutions by promoting gender-responsive initiatives and fostering advocacy efforts for legal and policy reforms. The MoU establishes the terms and conditions of cooperation between the KPJA and UN Women in achieving their common objectives.

This collaboration will help steer the direction of joint efforts towards enhancing rule of law by the implementation of both international norms and national legislation.

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PRESS RELEASE

UN Women and Women Parliamentary Caucus of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa sign a Memorandum of Understanding to Promote Rule of Law and Enhance Pro Women Legislative Reform Agenda

Peshawar: UN Women and Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) of the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) fostered their partnership by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to advance Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) agenda with a renewed focus on strengthening Rule of Law in the KP province. The joint efforts will support the government institutions in drafting effective policies and action plans, build capacity and enhance accountability mechanism to protect, enable and promote rights (social, economic, political, and access to justice) of marginalized groups, especially women, including those from the newly merged districts.

During the signing ceremony, Dr. Sumera Shams, Chairperson of WPC said, "While having the same mandate as that of women's empowerment, the partnership between UN Women and WPC KP will further strengthen the pro-women legislation and implementation of those laws across the province as well as the deprived tribal belt."

Sharmeela Rassool acknowledged the efforts of the WPC in furthering the GEWE agenda in KP and shared that the joint efforts will be pivotal in realizing and safeguarding the rights of women and girls. "In the past, UN Women supported the WPC in finalizing KP's Women Empowerment Policy and contributed in mainstreaming gender in two draft bills. Now, we are taking a step forward by advocating for effective implementation of laws and policies."

Under this MoU, UN Women will support the WPC on the implementation of KP Domestic Violence Against Women Act 2021, Women Empowerment Policy 2017 and lead advocacy on Child Marriage Restraint Bill; enhance service delivery for survivors of gender-based violence through the rollout of capacity building of Dar ul Amans; undertake gender research, draft gender-sensitive laws, develop position papers, resolutions, declarations and reports.

Moreover, UN Women and WPC will work together for increased awareness-raising and capacity building of local government representatives, WPC members, parliamentarians, and political parties to better understand the challenges in strengthening rule of law and undertake concerted efforts to overcome those challenges.

"Together we can make a change. The development sector and Government are the two wheels that run the reformative system. The partnership with UN Women will aim to achieve a robust response in the area of gender equality

and women empowerment", said Mahmood Jan, Deputy Speaker KP Provincial Assembly.

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