

Media Update

25 September 2021

United Nations

READOUT

Readout of the Secretary-General's meeting with H.E. Mr. Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Hussain Qureshi, Foreign Minister of Pakistan

The Secretary-General met with H.E. Mr. Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Hussain Qureshi, Foreign Minister of Pakistan.

The Secretary-General expressed appreciation for Pakistan's support for the work of the United Nations, particularly in its successful presidency of ECOSOC and in UN peace operations.

The Secretary-General and the Foreign Minister exchanged views on developments in the region and on other issues of common concern, in particular Afghanistan.

New York, 24 September 2021

UN Women

PRESS RELEASE

Strengthening institutions key to women rights says President Alvi at National Seminar on Protection of Women Against Harassment

Lahore (September 24, 2021): President of Pakistan Dr Arif Alvi lauded the government's efforts of activating institutions to protect women against

harassment and to empower them by rights of ownership and possession of properties.

Addressing a national seminar on protection of women against harassment, the president said it is our religious duty to protect women against harassment and to give them property rights, but unfortunately this protection is not fully accorded in some parts of the country. He, nevertheless, expressed his satisfaction over the establishment and working of the offices of ombudspersons for protection of women and emphasized that society has a role to play for protection of women against harassment.

The mega seminar attended by parliamentarians, members of civil society, academia, youth and private sector entities was organized by UN Women Pakistan in collaboration with Office of the Ombudsperson, Punjab and Bargad Organization for Youth Development.

Governor Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar said that the government is committed to safeguard rights of women and giving them socio-economic status that they deserve. In this connection, he said that the ombudsperson offices are essential in providing speedy justice and we will continue working to further strengthen effective implementation of the passed laws.

The panelists of the seminar included Ms. Kashmala Tariq, Federal Ombudsperson; Ms. Sabira Islam, Ombudsperson Balochistan; Muhammad Kamran Khan Chief Operating Officer Punjab Safe Cities Authority; Senator Mr. Waleed Iqbal and Member Provincial Assembly Uzma Kardar, Bushra Butt, Shawana Bashir and Aysha Iqbal amongst others.

Punjab Ombudsperson Nabila Hakim Ali Khan briefed the participants about working of her office in creating an enabling environment and protecting women in Punjab. She added that Office of the Ombudsperson is striving and making strenuous efforts for establishment of Inquiry Committees at all levels and in all types of offices/ workplaces in Punjab. She urged the citizens and stakeholders to access this progressive and legally strong office for grievances of women over harassment and property rights.

Speaking at the seminar, UN Women Country Representative, Ms. Sharmeela Rassool said that "The Gender Equality and Women Empowerment policy developed with technical support of UN Women is one of the prominent achievements, yet we need to work together along with all our partners for its effective implementation". Ms. Rassool further added that Gender equality

cannot be achieved until women are given equal opportunities to develop and advance professionally, for which harassment-free workplaces are critical.

There were two Interactive sessions were held, first with government stakeholders and CSO, and the second with parliamentarians, to recommend ways to increase ownership of federal and provincial governments and create synergy across stakeholders for effective implementation of the existing law ombudsperson law for women empowerment. The government officials and the Ombudspersons shared their learning on practical issues around the implementation of the law. The panelists also agreed on a roadmap for effective coordination and oversight of the law for anti-harassment measures and the protection of women rights of ownership and possession of properties.

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