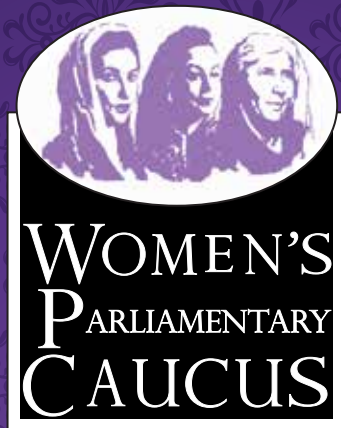


WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS

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14TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PAKISTAN

WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS

FIVE YEARS
PERFORMANCE
AT A GLANCE

2013-18

PREFACE

As the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) in the Parliament of Pakistan completes its second five-year term and marks 10 years of its successful existence, this report reflects on its key activities and accomplishments during its 2013-2018 tenure in the 14th National Assembly.

Since its inception in November 2008, the Caucus has continued to provide a forum to women parliamentarians across party lines, from both Houses of the Parliament, to freely articulate, discuss, and address issues that affect the lives of the citizenry of the country, especially the lives of women. Its aim is to strengthen the critical role of women parliamentarians in proposing gender responsive legislation, reviewing and amending discriminatory laws and policies, and raising people- and nation-centric issues. The WPC has succeeded in addressing some of the most pressing issues faced by women in Pakistan through a series of measures including legislation, sensitization, advocacy, and knowledge-sharing activities; particularly by organizing conferences, seminars, and study circles on topical issues.

During its first term, the WPC focused on initiating gender responsive legislation and influencing policy, in addition to gender sensitizing the two Houses of the Parliament. In its second term (2013 -18), the Caucus has focused on the

effectiveness and impact of these laws on our societal mindsets and their impact/benefits on the lives of our people, especially the women. During its second term, the Caucus also reviewed the issues and challenges in the implementation of pro-women laws, and proposed amendments with an objective to remove any structural gaps, lacunas or factors that may be impeding their implementation. To this end, the WPC has increasingly organized a series of thematic study circles, consultations and roundtable conferences in its scheme of work. The intent therein is to understand the intricacies behind the issues that women in Pakistan continue to face in the course of their socio-economic, public and political lives, as well as in their access to justice, in spite of the current legislative conditions in this country.

This report details all the key activities that the WPC has undertaken during its last five year tenure (2013 – 2018). Its purpose is to present before the readers the achievements, as well as the challenges, faced by women parliamentarians in accomplishing their aims. It is expected that the readers will draw lessons and recommendations that will inform the future policies of the WPC, so as to further strengthen the role of women parliamentarians across Pakistan.

HUMA A. CHUGHTAI

Technical Advisor
Women's Parliamentary Caucus
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As the 2nd five year term (2013-18) of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) comes to an end, I felt it pertinent to share an overview of its achievements along with the lessons learnt during its tenure. I am extremely glad that I had the privilege to serve the Caucus for almost four and a half years (January 2014 – May 2018). Prior to me, Hon. Senator Nuzhat Sadiq had served as its secretary for almost several months during which she further streamlined its work and set the stage to launch a smooth sail of this prestigious forum. Due to her position and overwhelming commitments in the party, Senator Nuzhat Sadiq opted to relinquish her charge as Secretary Caucus. During the rest of its period when I took charge of the WPC, I tried my best to optimally keep the Caucus alive and well contained, undertake substantive activities to meet its mandate. My sense of accountability has prompted me to share the overview of our performance over the last five years, hence, this review report.

Behind its substantive and successful tenure, many minds and hearts remained involved who worked relentlessly at individual, institutional, and organizational levels in supporting the Caucus's work.

At the very outset, I would like to extend my deep appreciation to the Hon. Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, for his continued encouragement, guidance and support to the WPC.

Efforts of WPC's Working Council members as well as certain members of its

General Assembly in particular are also deeply acknowledged for their pro-active participation in WPC's activities and for taking it to the next level. In this regard, special reference is made to the vision and guidance of MNA Dr. Fehmida Mirza (PPPP), Patron WPC/former Speaker National Assembly, and Members of the Working Council including MNA Shagufta Jumani (Treasurer), MNA Ms. Tahira Aurengzeb (PML-N), MNA Ms. Shahida Akhtar Ali (JUI-F), MNA Munaza Hassan (PTI), MNA Kishwar Zehra (MQM), MNA Ayesha Syed (JI), MNA Naseema Hafeez Panezai (PKMAP), MNA Reeta Ishwar (PML-F), Senator Rubina Rauf Khalid (PPPP), and Senator Sitara Ayaz (ANP). Besides special acknowledgement is extended to the proactive support of MNA Surraya Ashar, MNA Ms. Romina Khursheed Alam, MNA Shaza Fatima Khawaja, MNA Farhana Qamar, MNA Dr. Fauzia Hameed, MNA Ms. Nafeesa Inayatullah Khatak, Senator Nuzhat Sadiq, Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq, and MNA Amra Khan has been commendable.

WPC's "**Magic Team**" as had been named by me, deserves to be applauded for its relentless and marvellous work. Support of WPC's secretariat staff, especially Syed Wasim Kazmi, Section Officer WPC, who has remained the backbone of the WPC is indeed an asset to the WPC to say the least. He has worked with full dedication, diligence, and unremittingly in co-ordinating, managing and organizing WPC's work. Assistance of WPC's peon Mr. Abdul Jabbar is also appreciated for his care and hard work.

Special recognition and appreciation is extended to Mr. Muhammad Junaid Iqbal, Graphic Designer/ Consultant, for his amazing work in designing and printing Caucus reports and material including banners and streamers; and getting those timely printed.

On behalf of WPC, I extend my appreciation for the work of Ms. Huma Chughtai, Technical Advisor to WPC, who has worked closely with the Caucus since its inception, and has continued to bring to light, many facets of its work from her institutional knowledge through the longstanding work she has done with the Parliament of Pakistan. She has been an integral part of WPC's "Magic Team". She has assisted the WPC in agenda setting, conceptualizing and organizing conferences, seminars and roundtables for the WPC on topical issues and writing conference reports for the WPC. She has also compiled this five year performance review of the WPC. Huma has also been instrumental in developing the WPC's website content, and been involved in drafting pieces of legislations and resolutions for the WPC members.

The periodic but institutionalised partnership of Pakistan Institute of

Parliamentary Services (PIPS) has been of tremendous value to the WPC. The WPC wishes to thank Mr. Zafarullah Khan, Executive Director PIPS, for his kind cooperation, as well as Mr. Muhammad Mafzool Zaka Director PIPS, and Mir Shahi Mazar Baloch, along with their team for their substantive support extended from time to time.

Last but not the least, To advance its work, the WPC partnered and collaborated with various national and international organisations. At the national level, partners of WPC were inter alia, the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), PAIMAN Alumni Trust, PODA and Aurat Foundation. The international organisations that extended their support to WPC in undertaking its activities included Trocaire and Hienrich Boll Stiftung, both of which have been extremely gracious in providing financial and technical assistance to WPC. In addition, the UN Women, UNDP, the British High Commission, and the Australian High Commission have supported the WPC in its work, and are thanked for their support.

MNA SHAISTA PERVAIZ MALIK
SECRETARY
WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AJ&K	Azad Jammu & Kashmir
ANP	Awami National Party
BISP	Benazir Income Support Programme
BNP	Balochistan National Party (Awami)
CAN	Call Attention Notice
CNIC	Computerized National Identity Card
CPA	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECP	Election Commission of Pakistan
EU	European Union
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
GB	Gilgit-Baltistan
GoP	Government of Pakistan
HRCP	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
IDW	Internally Dislocated Women
IDP	Internally Dislocated Persons
IP3	Improving Parliamentary Performance in Pakistan
JI	Jamat-e-Islami
JUI – F	Jamiat-e-Ulema-Islam (Fazlur Rehman Group)
KPK	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MNA	Member National Assembly

MLA	Member Legislative Assembly
MMA	Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal
MoHR	Ministry of Human Rights
MP	Member Parliament
MPA	Member Provincial Assembly
MQM	Muttahida Qaumi Movement
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority
NCWP	National Commission of Women Parliamentarians
NCSW	National Commission on the Status of Women
PATA	Provincially Administered Tribal Areas
PLSP	Pakistan Legislative Strengthening Project
PML-N	Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz
PNL-F	Pakistan Muslim League – Functional
PML-Q	Pakistan Muslim League – Quaid-e-Azam Group
PPP	Pakistan People's Party
PPPP	Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians
PPP/S	Pakistan People's Party Sherpao
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SDPD	Strengthening Democracy Through Parliamentary Development
TDP	Temporary Displaced Persons
TI	Tehreek-e-Insaaf (Imran Khan's Party)
UK	United Kingdom
WDD	Women's Development Department
WPC	Women's Parliamentary Caucus

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), established in November 2008, is considered one of the major accomplishments of the women parliamentarians in the National Assembly of Pakistan. This cross-party forum of women parliamentarians was the first of its kind in the parliamentary history of Pakistan and is seen to be a watershed for the women parliamentarians in engaging towards meaningful participation in the business of the Parliament. Since its inception, the Women's Parliamentary Caucus has made a significant contribution in the legislative business.

The remarkable performance of women parliamentarians over the past decade has been motivational for not only for the provincial assemblies but also for the regional parliaments. The WPC has provided the women parliamentarians an opportunity to assume substantive representative, legislative and oversight roles. To advance their objectives, members of the Working Council and General Assembly of the WPC have duly carried out efforts to build consensus on common challenges.

Lessons Learnt

The lessons learnt from the WPC's existence and experience include:

I. Bringing together women parliamentarians across party lines on one platform whereby:

- Political will, vision and strong leadership remain vital ingredients in the development and strengthening

of Women's Parliamentary Caucus that guarantee its survival and the achievement of its objectives;

- consultative process is imperative for agenda setting of WPC;
- building consensus and raising collective voice is key to successful forums like the Women's Parliamentary Caucus;

The Women's Parliamentary Caucus was created on the initiative of women legislators who saw the need for a non-partisan forum for women's issues which cut across party lines;

II. Support from male parliamentarians was critical to WPC members in achieving their objectives, particularly in tabling new legislation.

This was sought through intensive lobbying and building alliances with the key stakeholders, including male colleagues in the Parliament and within the respective political parties and bureaucracy. This was further reinforced by the leaderships of the parliamentary parties as well as the Speaker.

III. Building linkages with experts and organisations outside Parliament including civil society and academia has

been a successful strategy for the WPC, as it has helped to bring in expertise as well as create support for their initiatives.

Recommendations

Drawing on the lessons identified as part of this review, recommendations have been put forward to enhance the role of the WPC in the future. This includes general recommendations to the WPC leadership and other critical stakeholders, including the Speaker of the House and the donors focusing on how they can support and sustain the work of the WPC.

Also, additional capacity-building recommendations are included. These recommendations are summarised in Table 1.

Summary of Recommendations

To the Incoming Speaker of the House

- Provide strategic direction, protection and support to strengthen the work of Women's Parliamentary Caucus;
- Ensure inclusivity in all programs and plans of the National Assembly;

To the Parliamentary Secretariats

- Continue to extend support to the Caucus in terms of institutional recognition as a parliamentary body, as sought in the Resolution passed during the 50th session of the 13th National Assembly on 14 March 2013;
- Provide the appropriate infrastructural support including space, resources and provision of a secretariat and research assistance to the Women's Parliamentary

Caucus to facilitate and assist in strengthening and developing its role;

To the Leadership of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus

- Undertake a critical assessment of WPC's achievements in order to inform a new cohesive strategy for the 15th National Assembly;
- Continue to build the case with the parliamentary parties to actively promote women's representation in the formal party structures;
- Continue to reach out to women representatives in the provincial assemblies, and develop institutionalized linkages and strategies with them, on issues of mutual interest;
- Broaden the scope of linkages with civil society, academia, the media and wider public;
- Develop a strong media and communications strategy around the achievements of the WPC as well as individual women MPs;

To Incoming Women MNAs

- Associate with, and draw upon, the expertise and experience of other seasoned members of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus;
- Try to build on their respective knowledge around gender concepts and topical issues;

To International Organisations and Donors

- Continue to support the institutionalization and development of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus as a body that is supporting the growing effectiveness of the Parliament as a whole.

Recommendations for the Capacity Building of the WPC

- Develop a WPC an overarching strategic plan drawn from the previous reports of Conferences and conventions organized by the WPC;
- Develop performance measures to support self- evaluation;
- Develop an institutionalized mechanism to follow-up on commitments vis-à-vis stakeholders such as the leadership of the two Houses, parliamentarians, donor partners and supporters;
- Continue to offer skills development in key areas relevant to the role of Members of the Parliament; for example, legislative drafting and analysis, oversight and constituency outreach, gender budgeting, parliamentary ethics and alliance building, and gender-mainstreaming in laws and policies etc.
- Develop collaborative approaches with relevant parliamentary and

government bodies and think-tanks that focus on issues related to development economics, peace and security, international and political affairs, gender and human rights etc.

Key Points to Consider

Last but not least, this report concludes by presenting a set of questions. What this review has gleaned is that a woman's leadership mattered in the formulation of the Caucus, and so did the determination of the following leadership in maintaining the momentum; but with the new government and thus new leadership, what should be considered is whether the momentum be maintained, if the Speaker is neither gender responsive nor a woman, and may therefore have different priorities. It remains to be seen how the women parliamentarians in the 15th National Assembly will muster the requisite political will to support and strengthen the institutionalization of WPC.

MESSAGE BY THE PATRON WPC

The establishment of a Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) in the Parliament of Pakistan was a realization of a vision that aims at strengthening the women parliamentarians by providing them a forum to collectively raise their voice on women issues across the board. Since its inception in November 2008, WPC has ensured inclusion of women in legislation, policies and programmes which has played an instrumental role in advancing the women empowerment agenda of Pakistan.

The WPC has strengthened the critical role of women parliamentarians in proposing gender sensitive legislation, reviewing and amending discriminatory laws and policies. By providing opportunities for peer sharing and learning, especially to women who are first timers in the National Assembly, WPC is playing a vital role in ensuring active participation of women in the business of the House. I would also like to congratulate the Secretary WPC for not only identifying a multitude of issues affecting the women



of Pakistan but also developing a policy of initiating follow ups to create a significant impact on their lives.

With the keen interest and strong commitment demonstrated by the honorable members of our WPC, I am confident that we shall continue to play a proactive role in the society.

MNA DR. FEHMIDA MIRZA
PATRON, WPC

MESSAGE BY THE SECRETARY WPC



Leadership role and power of women parliamentarians cannot be undermined in not only our country but also at the global level. Their adequate and meaningful participation in political life is imperative in ensuring pluralism and inclusiveness in democracies. Being fifty percent of the world population, women's role in development is crucial, and so is their participation in the processes across the board.

As women parliamentarians, we must assume a meaningful and substantive role in not only women's socio-political and economic empowerment efforts but also in all sectors of development as gender is cross cutting. We need to strengthen our joint efforts towards it by creating informal and formal fora like the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) in Pakistan which is an across party forum. A Woman Power must never be underestimated as we bring in perspectives, value, and

validity to all development actions across the board.

Despite being half of the world population, yet very few countries provide them adequate representation in the national legislatures. In order to make Parliament inclusive of the population it represents, equal representation of women in the legislatures and making them part of the decision making processes is imperative. The Constitution of Pakistan ensures representation of women in the Parliament through general as well as reserved seats. However, the socio-cultural environment has acted as a hindrance towards meaningful participation of women parliamentarians. It is, therefore, that the formation of WPC has been a watershed moment in the Parliamentary history of Pakistan. WPC has stood the test of time and I hope that it continues to play a proactive role in promoting gender sensitive legislation and gender responsive

policies.

Women are at the forefront of the socio-economic development of any economy and are yet invisible. It is, therefore, imperative that their needs and concerns are addressed by women representatives collectively. The enabling environment provided by the WPC has led to the enactment of some of the key legislations to ensure their participation in all spheres of the society. In the 14th National Assembly we, therefore, strengthened our efforts in playing a proactive oversight role to highlight the gaps in the implementation of the pro-women legislation so we can provide maximum relief to our womenfolk. The number of legislations may not have been

too many but they were substantive enough to facilitate women's access to justice, particularly in cases of rape and honour killings, for instance. We focused on advocacy and learning that lead to strengthening our legislative, oversight and representative roles as parliamentarians and true representatives of women.

I wish the new members of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus in the 15th National Assembly good luck as bearers of Pakistani women's aspirations and hopes, and would like urge them to work with missionary zeal towards strengthening their role as women parliamentarians for the socio-economic and political empowerment of women in Pakistan.

MNA SHAISHTA PERVAIZ MALIK
SECRETARY, WPC

CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP

POST MAY 2013 GENERAL ELECTIONS

The general elections of May 2013 are seen as a milestone in the country's democratic and political history as they marked the first-ever smooth transition of power from one democratically elected civilian government to another. The same democratic spirit was also reflected in the Women's Parliamentary Caucus, where a new Working Council successfully replaced the previous one.

Soon after the 14th National Assembly took oath following the general elections of 2013, a meeting of the General Assembly of WPC was convened on 18th June 2013, by the Founding Patron and former Speaker National Assembly, MNA Dr. Fehmida Mirza. It was an induction and orientation meeting of all the elected women members of the National Assembly. Subsequently, on 30th August 2013, the new Working Council of the Caucus was nominated by the founding Patron Dr. Fehmida Mirza in consultation with all the parliamentary political parties. Senator Nuzhat Sadiq from the ruling party PML-N, who was also one of the founding members of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), was initially appointed by the Hon. Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, as its new Secretary and MNA Shagufta Jumani from the opposition party (PPPP) was appointed as the Treasurer. Senator Nuzhat Sadiq spearheaded the new WPC until January

2014, and relinquished charge after the appointment of MNA Shaista Pervaiz Malik (PML-N) as Secretary WPC on January 29th, 2014.

There are two bodies in the WPC:

- 1) Working Council (Governing body of Women Parliamentarians; one member from each political party), and
- 2) General Assembly (All Women Parliamentarians from Senate and National Assembly)

Structure of the 2013 – 18 WPC was, thus, formulated as follows:

- **The Founding Patron:**
MNA Dr. Fehmida Mirza,
Former Speaker National Assembly
(Opposition)
- **Secretary:**
MNA Ms. Shaista Pervaiz,
PML-N (Ruling Party)
- **Treasurer:**
MNA Ms. Shagufta Jumani,
PPPP (Opposition)

Working Council

Under the Rules, the Working Council has representation of all key parliamentary political parties. During the reporting period of this Report, following women parliamentarians were the members of the Working Council:

WORKING COUNCIL



**MNA DR. FEHMIDA MIRZA, PPPP
PATRON WPC**



**MNA SHAISTA PERVAIZ MALIK, PML-N
SECRETARY WPC**



**MNA SHUGUFTA JUMANI, PPPP
TREASURER**



**MNA TAHIRA AURANGZEB
PML-N**



**MNA MUNAZA HASSAN
PTI**



**MNA KISHWAR ZEHRA
MQM**



**MNA SHAHIDA AKHTAR ALI
JUI-F**



**MNA AYESHA SYED
JI**



**MNA NASEEMA HAFEEZ PANEZAI
PKMAP**



**MNA REETA ISHWAR
PML-F**



**SENATOR RUBINA RAUF KHALID
PPPP**



**SENATOR SITARA AYAZ
ANP**

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS (2013 – 2018)

The collaborative approach of women parliamentarians transformed their individual energies into a collective momentum towards achieving specific goals that included women's rights. In the ten years of its existence, the WPC emerged as a successful forum in helping the women parliamentarians attain the "critical mass" in the two Houses of the Parliament to undertake a substantive role in the legislative business. It brought forth quality representation from women in the two Houses, in contrast with their traditionally perceived 'token presence.'

The women parliamentarians' focused approach and substantive work in legislative, oversight, and representative spheres continues to attract considerable national as well as international attention.¹ Through sheer dedication and hard work from the very outset, the WPC members have proven that they are dedicated and that they mean business; hence, the sterling record of work and accomplishments.

Specific Achievements

The Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) brings together women parliamentarians from across party lines on a single platform, and articulates the hopes and aspirations of Pakistani women in a collective voice. It provides women

parliamentarians with a unique opportunity to effectively assume their threefold parliamentary role, including legislation, representative and oversight. In the Caucus, peer learning as well as deliberations and open discussions on topical and gender issues, leads to consensus-building and a better prioritized agenda. In addition, a series of mechanisms including seminars, conferences, and study circles on key issues organized by the Caucus, in partnership with CSOs and relevant experts and academia, also provides significant learning opportunities to the women parliamentarians. They are thus further along the path towards fully assuming their meaningful legislative, representative and oversight roles.

Women parliamentarians have become increasingly proactive in their oversight role. This role was played both in the business of the House as well as beyond. Some of the initiatives undertaken by WPC during the 14th National Assembly include:

- Reviewing the issues and gaps in the implementation of pro-women laws in Pakistan, and removing the impediments through proposing amendments. In August 2016, landmark amendments were made to the relevant sections of Cr.P.C, the Evidence Act, and the PPC to make anti-honour killing and anti-rape laws

¹ For instance, CPA UK in partnership with the WPC arranged an exposure visit of the UK Women Parliamentarians led by Baroness D'Souza, Lord Speaker of the House of Lords, UK. Please refer to the REPORT OF THE VISIT OF THE UK WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS. WPC, February 2013.

more stringent to plugged the loose-ends in such cases;

- Taking special interest in strengthening & reforming the state of women police in Pakistan. As a result, the number of women in law enforcement was increased, specialized trainings were initiated for them, and are increasingly being given substantive roles;
- Reviewing and addressing the needs and concerns of persons with disabilities, organising the first ever regional conference on the role of women with disabilities in sustainable national development; and introducing a comprehensive rights-based bill on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; conceiving and presenting Khadija-tul-Kubra awards for women with disabilities were;
- Giving substantive recommendations to the Election Commission of Pakistan urging it to facilitate and ensure women's right to vote. In addition, WPC members strongly recommended quotas for women on general seats by all political parties apart from the special seats. As a result, the women parliamentarians in Caucus succeeded in achieving two key changes through amendments; these include i) ensuring participation of women voters in elections and declaring that every constituency must have at least 10% women casting votes, otherwise the election would be declared null and void; and, ii) every political party will dedicate 5% tickets for their women political leaders to run for general seats in elections.
- Supporting the rights of transgender persons;
- Strengthening women's economic and political empowerment

An overview of their work in the past five years during the 2013-18, as enlisted above is stated as follows:

1) LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS

i) Law Making

Despite the instatement of legal frameworks, the number of reported cases of honour killings continue. As a result, the government intensively reviewed and amended relevant laws to address loopholes and stiffen penalties to prevent crimes in the name/pretext of "honour" from being committed. MNA Shaista Pervaiz Malik made substantial inputs in the two bills in an attempt to deal with the issues of rape and honour killing effectively.

The two landmark laws that address the issues of honour killings and rape were passed in August 2016, and are namely:

- i) The Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offences in the name or on pretext of Honour) Act, 2016; and
- ii) The Criminal Laws Amendment (Offences relating to Rape) Act, 2016.

The impact of these laws, as amended, would only be observed in due course.

Some of the other Pro-women legislations supported and introduced by members of the WPC include:



- iii) Rights of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2018 was introduced and passed by the Standing Committee on Law and Justice;
- iv) Hindu Marriage Act, 2017
- v) The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2017 [to check the misuse of authority by the police in registering false FIRs]
- vi) The Islamabad Birthing Centre and Hospital Maternity Services Bill, 2017 [The Bill sought to ensure facility of Birthing Centers and Hospital Maternity Services for women at basic health unit level and prohibit operations by LHVs and paramedical staff during delivery process]
- vii) The Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils (Amendment) Bill, 2017.
- viii) Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016
- ix) The Compulsory Immunization and Protection of Health Workers Bill 2015

ii) Resolutions

WPC has played an active role in promoting gender sensitive debate in the

Parliament and has passed the following resolutions:

• 17 July 2016

Prompted by the WPC, a resolution was passed by the House condemning the brutal and inhuman attacks on women and girls in Abbottabad, Karachi, Faisalabad, Multan, Jhelum and Peshawar. The House reiterated its strong condemnation of all forms of violence against women in the country and called for urgent steps to curb the perpetration of these crimes. The House demanded an undertaking of all possible measures to ensure the effective implementation of existing laws for the protection of women, and further stated that exemplary punishment should be awarded against those found guilty under the law.

• 7th March 2014:

On the occasion of international women's day (8th march, 2014) the resolution was passed demonstrating the commitment of the Parliament of Pakistan towards women empowerment. The commitment was reasserted on every following International Women's Day ever since.

- **14th June 2014:**

A resolution was passed on the 'Increasing Intolerance, Rampant Paganism, and Violence Against Women in Pakistan.'

2) PUBLIC OUTREACH

Relief Visit to Temporary Displaced Persons (TDPs) Camps

WPC actively participated during the natural and man-made disasters confronting Pakistan in recent years, including in the relief and rehabilitation operations for the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Jalozai and Karak, KPK. The Caucus played its role by visiting flood-affected areas and victims of Zarb-e-Azb operation where natural calamity and terrorism have impacted the lives of women and children. A delegation of WPC members headed by the Secretary WPC MNA Shaista Pervaiz visited IDPs camps, distributed relief goods and discussed the issues being confronted by the people.

- On 15th January 2015, Members of WPC visited the Jalozai Camp to distribute relief goods.
- On 23rd September 2014, Members of WPC visited the camp of Internally Displaced Persons at district Karak to distribute relief goods.

3) CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

- National Convention to reflect on the Legislative, Representative and Oversight Role of Women Parliamentarians (28th March 2018)**

As the general elections of 2018 were drawing closer, the WPC prepared itself to reflect on and mark the successful conclusion of its second term in the Parliament. The basic objective of this consultation was to review the relevant laws and policies and identify gaps in legislations and their implementation. The purpose was to review and identify all/any impediments that stand in the way of the disadvantaged/vulnerable groups including women in accessing their legal, economic, political and social justice.

The Convention was organized in Islamabad on the 28th of March 2018. It also celebrated the role of women parliamentarians in taking legislative measures, their involvement in sensitization and advocacy schemes, and their active participation in knowledge sharing activities since the inception of the Caucus a decade ago. It appreciated the resilience and determination of the WPC members in addressing some of the most pressing matters, as well as the opportunities that led to the accomplishments of the WPC within the legislative, oversight and representative roles of the women parliamentarians.

- National Consultation on the 'Implementation Issues and Challenges of Women Protection Laws in Pakistan' (9th February, 2017)**

To celebrate Pakistan's National Women's Day that falls on 12th February, the WPC convened a one day National Consultation of women parliamentarians and experts, on 9th February 2017, which is the National Women's Day, to review the relevant laws and policies and identify gaps in

legislations and their implementation. The purpose was to review and identify all/any impediments that stand in the way of the disadvantaged / vulnerable groups including women in accessing their legal, economic, political and social justice. The intent was purely to technically understand the issues that women in Pakistan remain beset with in the enjoyment of their socio-economic, public and political lives, despite the legislation in place. The impact analysis of legal frameworks enacted between 2000 – 2013, were taken into account as the nascent pieces of legislations could not bring out the required results. It was to focus on the effectiveness and impact of those laws on our societal mindsets and the effect on the lives of our people, especially the women.

This one day national consultation, therefore, provided an opportunity to the women parliamentarians and key stakeholders including civil society representatives and academia to review and discuss issues and challenges that continue to confront women despite the women protection legislation being in place. The discussions were substantive that identified technical gaps and lacunas in the laws, as well as the external factors that impede implementation of these laws. Most of the issues identified pointed towards weak criminal justice system on account of poor prosecution and its reasons, inadequate forensics and evidence collection techniques/mechanisms, lack of awareness regarding rights and opportunities to access justice, and free legal aid etc

The Consultation was held at the Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS) in Islamabad. Women and men

parliamentarians from both Houses of the National Parliament, and from across the four provincial assemblies and the two legislative assemblies of Azad Jammu Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan were invited to participate. In addition, relevant stakeholders from the civil society, the Executive Branch of the government including the Police, medico-legal, media, and education department were invited to share their perspectives and challenges in the implementation of these laws. Some useful set of recommendations were the outcome of this Consultation.

This theme was planned in the context of the ongoing war against terrorism and its impact on women's access to justice. The expected outcome included:

1. Awareness raising of the law & policy makers about the challenges confronting women in accessing justice (securing their fundamental rights, safety and protection from all forms of violence, and socio-economic and political empowerment)
2. Identification of technical gaps and lacunas in the implementation of laws
3. Develop a strategic road map drawing upon recommendations ensuing from the deliberations for key players to address the technical issues in legislation and policies
4. The Report of the Consultation was presented the recommendations for consideration of key players in legislatures, the executive and judicial organs of the state.

Some of the key recommendations that

came out of this Consultation are:

- 1) Education should be used as a major tool for transforming the mindsets and gender sensitization;
 - 2) Curriculum in schools need to be reviewed and revised to make it more gender and human rights responsive;
 - 3) Adequate resources must be allocated for implementation of laws, capacity building measures, and awareness campaigns;
 - 4) Civics must be re-introduced at all levels as a subject in educational institutions;
 - 5) Public private partnership should be encouraged in processes
- iii) **International Conference on the “Role of Women Parliamentarians in Strengthening Democracy and Social Justice” (13-15 March, 2017)**

A three day International Conference on **“The Role of Women Parliamentarians in Strengthening Democracy & Social Justice”** was organized by the Women’s Parliamentary Caucus on March 13-15, 2017 in Islamabad. Twelve countries that participated in the Conference included Australia, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Iran, Turkey, Romania, Jordan, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, and Indonesia.

The Conference dates had been aligned with the International Women’s Day that falls on 8th March. Theme for the 2017 International Women’s Day was: “Be Bold for Change”. The Women’s Parliamentary Caucus in Pakistan had organized the event to engage Women Parliamentarians across regions to discuss how a social

contract in the societies in crisis can be renewed & how the women parliamentarian networks could build alliances to effectively support oversight, legislative & representative roles in achieving it. The need for a new social contract based on solidarity between all segments of society is imperative for achieving sustainable development.

The Conference was inaugurated by the Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan, Hon. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, and Ms. Maryam Nawaz, the First Daughter, delivered the message of her mother, Begum Kalsoom Nawaz, the First Lady.

The Conference provided a platform to women parliamentarians to be together to share their experiences, opportunities and challenges in accomplishing their mandate to empower women of their respective constituencies.

The Conference had been designed to address issues demanding immediate attention & substantial outcomes by intellectually engaging the participants in a series of debates through different Plenary & Thematic sessions such as **“Confronting Terrorism for a Peaceful Democratic World”, “Confronting Biases for an Inclusive Society”, “Confronting ignorance for a healthy & educated citizenry”, “Strengthening democracies; women parliamentarians as agents of change & transformation for their societies”, “Building Alliances – Women & Parliamentarians Working Together”**. The discussions prioritized issues and challenges under each theme, and identified best practices and strategies that would help giving strategic directions to women parliamentarians in effectively playing their representative, legislative and

oversight role.

The Conference concluded with the unanimous adoption of a declaration named as the ‘Islamabad Declaration’ and a ‘Resolution.’

Key features of the Resolution include:

- Building a network of “Women Parliamentarians for Social Justice and Democracy” to share and exchange our experiences and best practices in order to strengthen and make more effective our role as parliamentarians;
- Called to raise a collective voice for mainstreaming and increasing women’s meaningful representation on all democratic and political forums, including our national parliaments, provincial assemblies and local councils;
- Encouraged to prioritize and build a common vision for the empowerment of women for promotion of gender equality in social, political and economic fields;
- Resolved to further recognize the widespread discrimination leading to female disadvantage, our parliamentary agenda will focus on:
 - o Combating all forms of discrimination and violence against women
 - o Ensuring reproductive health and rights
 - o Promoting access to education
 - o Guaranteeing women’s inclusion in democratic processes and institution
 - o Eliminating gender inequalities in employment

The Resolution agreed to take this initiative forward by institutionalizing this Network. WPC was urged to set up a women’s parliamentary network of the participating countries that can develop into a continued platform to encourage regular intra regional interaction, support democratic norms and build alliances for sustained development and peaceful cooperation; It further proposed that Working Council of WPC Pakistan, being the host, to take the lead in setting up this network in consultation with the member countries; and to serve as the Secretariat of this forum;

The Islamabad Declaration expressed commitment to strengthen democracy through a concerted effort to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals, which are transformative for girls and women, for gender equality, educational attainment, family planning, reproductive care services, and economic empowerment.

The participants, in the Declaration, reiterated, Inter alia, that the scourge of terrorism and extremism in all its forms and manifestations is amongst the greatest threats to humanity. The assembled parliamentary community of women pledged to understand and address the root causes of terrorism and tackle conditions that lead to violent extremism and radicalization, and promote non-violence, tolerance, and diversity including through inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue and cooperation for greater understanding and harmony.

It was also acknowledged and agreed that more women be integrated in law enforcement and security agencies and participate at all levels in developing counter terrorism strategies and

rehabilitation plans, especially for children, widows, single mothers, single/separated women, women with disabilities, and the destitute.

The participants committed to work for policies, laws and practices which broaden women's political, economic, social and cultural opportunities and promote full participation in political decision making. They called for, inter alia, "Zero Tolerance to Violence", and urged for the enactment and enforcement of laws against all forms of violence including domestic violence, which is deemed to be one of the most pervasive of human rights violations that denies women and girls equality, dignity, security, and right to enjoyment of fundamental freedoms.

They committed to work for change in the political paradigm to being more inclusive of women, persons with special needs, all genders, and minorities. They further called for engendered political parties, and affirmative action from the grassroots to national level.

The Iranian delegate also moved motion which was unanimously adopted with acclamation that each year, 15th of March, be celebrated as the day of "Women, Democracy and Social Justice."

iv) 2nd Round table Conference on the State of Women Policing in Pakistan (November 2014)

Women's Parliamentary Caucus has been pushing for the increase in the number of women in the law enforcement, especially in the police services. The Caucus strongly believes in the substantive role that women in law enforcement can play in the

implementation of pro-women laws, facilitating women's access to justice and creating peace and stability in the society. The Caucus further urges a meaningful role and intensive capacity building trainings of women in the law enforcement at par with their male colleagues. For the purpose, Secretary WPC MNA Shaista Pervaiz Malik built alliances with the National Police Bureau (NPB) and National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), and succeeded in convincing the competent authorities to increase the number of women in the police and imparting specialized technical trainings to the women police.

In November 2014, the WPC organized the second roundtable on the State of Women Policing in Pakistan in partnership with Heinrich Boll Stiftung (HBS). The objective of this Round Table was to reemphasize the importance of women policing in peace-building and security, assess and improve the dismal condition of women policing and to evaluate and monitor implementation of previous recommendations of the report forwarded to the Interior Ministry by WPC.

Speaker National Assembly, Minister of State for Interior, Parliamentarians, and representatives from Provincial WPCs, the National Police Bureau, men and women police officers, and representatives of relevant CSOs participated in the Roundtable.

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq emphasised that 'the role of women police in curbing VAW and CVE cannot be underestimated. Therefore, increasing their number, giving them adequate facilities, and providing conducive work environment

would not only raise their self-esteem but would also be critical in enhancing their performance’

Ms. Shaista Pervaiz Malik, Secretary WPC: ‘Adoption of modern policing with inclusion of women’s role at all levels is imperative under the prevailing circumstances in particular.’

Mr. Balighur Rehman, Minister of State for Interior while lauding WPC’s efforts committed to increase the number of women in the Law enforcement from less than 1% to 5% by the year 2015.’

Mr. Ihsan Ghani, Director General National Police Bureau, stated that ‘the high-handedness, corruption and torture in the police services could be reduced by increasing the number of women. Furthermore women have a greater potential as compared to their male colleagues to gather intelligence and to identify issues of violence and crime against women.’

MNA Marriyum Aurangzeb, Parliamentary Secretary Ministry of Interior underscored the ‘dire need for revamping the police services in terms of the attitudes and behavioral changes within their existing police culture and also incentivize the police services making reward benefits as an integral part especially for the women police.’

Ms. Khawar Mumtaz, Chairperson National Commission on the Status of Women stated that ‘the lower number of women police meant lesser security for

women results in continued incidences of Violence Against Women.’

MNA Dr. Nafeesa Shah stated that the ‘numbers were a starting point for women as is evidenced from the experience of women parliamentarians in Pakistan. She said that with increased number of women in the Parliament, the quantity and quality legislation also started emerging since over a decade. Therefore, at this point in time, we need to have one solid target oriented commitment from the Police Leadership and that is to increase the number of women in police.’

Ms. Marion Muller, Country Director Heinrich Boll Stiftung (HBS) stated that ‘the legal and political rights of women, their participation and inclusion in the policy and decision making process is imperative for development’

Huma Chughtai, Governance Specialist/ Technical Advisor WPC stated that the ‘women have always been known to defend themselves, their families and their communities-overtly and covertly, whether formally or informally.’ ‘Women in police is not a new or modern phenomena in our part of the world. The natural changes in societal norms over the passage of time, and the emerging challenges on account of these changes call for aligning the police services in proximity to deal with those challenges.’

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE; VISIT OF JALOZAI CAMP



NATIONAL CONVENTION ON LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE AND OVERSIGHT ROLE



NATIONAL CONSULTATION FEBRUARY, 2017



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE MARCH, 2017





2ND ROUND TABLE ON THE STATE OF WOMEN POLICING - NOVEMBER 2014



v) Launching of the “Gender Action Manifesto” (13th October, 2017)

The Women’s Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) in collaboration with Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS) launched the “Gender Action Manifesto – 2018 General Elections” on 13th October 2017, in Islamabad.

The Manifesto was commissioned in the environment of the forthcoming election year and the fact that the WPC had been calling for women’s substantive political participation by getting specific quota for women in the allocation of party tickets by the political parties. WPC’s struggle in this regard yielded results and the law was eventually passed mandating the political parties to allocate atleast 5% quota tickets to women in general elections.

A series of dialogues and roundtable conferences around strengthening women within, inter alia, women in politics and leadership were organised by WPC in the past. Through these conferences and dialogues, issues and gaps that impede women’s meaningful role at the decision and policy making processes were highlighted and recommendations presented to the party leaders. Some of the unanimous recommendations that came out of previous consultations with stakeholders include taking special legislative and policy measures to ensure women’s right to vote, their right to run for general elections, and integrating them at the decision making strata with the political parties. The consultations also called for gender audit of the political parties manifestos.

The Manifesto was drawn from some of the credible existing substantive research

papers on the subject. It was undertaken in view of the election year 2018 ahead, and to capitalize and emphasise on this previous work i.e. research findings regarding women’s political participation and representation. It was considered timely as most of the political parties were in the process of drafting their party manifestos for the 2018 elections, which provided the opportunity to draw the attention of the political parties’ leaderships to incorporate research based recommendations related to women’s empowerment in their manifestos. It was initially presented in five national consultation workshops in Quetta, Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and Peshawar to women politicians and activists from different backgrounds, along with findings from a desk review on a gender-specific study of election manifestos of Pakistan’s political parties (2008-2013). This served as a baseline for setting out the discussion and strategising on necessary components of a Gender Action Manifesto 2018 Elections, moving beyond a particular focus on gender quotas and women’s substantive political representation. The findings of this national consultation process outlining arenas/fields of intervention, objectives, approaches, stakeholders as well as spoilers/veto actors were expected to be considered for any kind of gender strategy/ policy making. Members of the WPC, political parties leaderships, representatives of academia and CSOs were invited to discuss the findings and recommendations compiled in this policy paper.

Secretary WPC, MNA Shaista Pervaiz Malik, in her address at the launch thanked HBS for undertaking such an important

assignment and for partnering with the WPC in achieving its mandate in various ways. She stated that although it was slightly late in the day, she did aspired that the findings and recommendations of this Report would be adhered to by those at the helm of affairs within our respective political leaderships and accepted for a fully inclusive democratic system in the country.

vi) Solidarity with Victims of Human Rights Atrocities in Indian Occupied Kashmir (07 October 2016)

The Women's Parliamentary Caucus organized a half day event on the rampant and overwhelming human rights violations being committed by the Indian army on Kashmiri Women in the Indian Occupied Kashmir; Ms. Mashaal Yasin Malik, wife of Kashmiri Leader and Human Rights Activist, Mr. Yasin Malik, was specially invited as the panelist. She apprised the participants about her experience regarding the issue and stories of atrocities being committed on Kashmiri women regardless of their age or condition, and how their defenders/political leaders were being tortured by the Indian army. A large number of parliamentarians, representatives of the diplomatic corps, human rights activists and academia participated in the event. The event was held at PIPS;

vii) Dissemination of Research Report on “National Assessment of Medico Legal Systems from Gender Perspective in Pakistan” (16th March 2016)

The Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) organised a half day event, in

collaboration with Trócaire, to disseminate a Research Report on National Assessment of Medico Legal Systems from Gender Perspective in Pakistan.

Held at the Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS), Islamabad, on 16th March, the Report “Gender Based Violence and Responsiveness of the Medico-Legal Criminal Justice System” highlighted the issues and challenges within the existing mechanisms in addressing the gender based violence (GBV) across Pakistan. The perspective of the Report was issues and challenges around medico-legal including forensics and weak prosecution, evidence collection and its preservation etc. The research was conducted by Dr. Aeysha Hameed Khan, an accomplished young public health specialist and her team. Speaking at the occasion,

Provincial representatives of police, health medico legal, law, human rights departments as well members provincial assemblies, and a large number of national parliamentarians from across Pakistan attended the event along with representation from the relevant international organisations, civil society and academia

The Chief Guests at the occasion included Saira Afzal Tararr, Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, and Mr. Ashtar Ausaf Ali, Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Law and Convener Treaty Implementation Cell (TIC). Mr. Ihsan Ghani, National Coordinator of NACTA, presented his keynote address. Besides, the High Commissioner of Australia H.E Margaret Adamson and Mr. John O'Brien, Country

Director Trócaire also spoke at the occasion. Special guests/panelists included Mr. Zia Awan, Karachi based Human Rights Lawyer and Founder Madadgar Helpline, Dr. Wasim Haider, Surgeon General Medico Legal (Phd Forensics) in the Government of Punjab, and Ms. Khawar Mumtaz, Shirkat Gah/ Former Chairperson NCSW.

Secretary WPC MNA Shaista Parvaiz Malik said that 'WPC's interest in facilitating women's access to justice inevitably dovetails with the positioning, strengthening and increasing the number of women within the law enforcement, amongst others, has been at the forefront of Caucus's agenda. She said that this event is in continuation of the Roundtable on women policing organized by WPC in October 2014, in which one of the proposed recommendation was regarding analysis of the state of medico-legal in the criminal justice system.

viii) South Asian Regional Exchange: Women's Political Participation and Leadership (July 15-17, 2014)

In 2014, the Women's Parliamentary Caucus took an initiative with the support

of UN Women and UNDP to host a meeting of Women Parliamentary Caucuses and women parliamentarians, the Election Management Bodies and the National Women's Machineries in the SAARC region. Called the 'South Asian Regional Exchange Meeting', the event was held in Kathmandu, Nepal on July 15-17, 2014 as a joint venture of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), the National Commission on Status of Women Pakistan (NCSW), and the National Women's Commission (NWC) Nepal.

More than 100 participants from Nepal and some 45 delegates from Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka participated in the meeting. The participants included parliamentarians, representatives of Women's Caucuses, Women Ministries, Women Commissions, Election Commissions, as well as UN agencies and international development partners.

Secretary WPC Pakistan, MNA Shaista Parvaiz Malik, lit the lamp to inaugurate the meeting. In her inaugural address, she stated that "while a lot is being done in all our countries and we acknowledge that we have come a long way; there remains a



need to do a lot more; and that empowerment is not restricted to one sphere, we need to bring forth the women in education, equal economic opportunities and also decision making. We need to bring about a change in attitude and bring forward women from grassroots to give 10% quota on winnable seats in political parties. Nations win if women win, let us hold hands and become one voice and one face for the voiceless and the faceless women”.

This two days exchange meeting included technical sessions on: mechanisms to enhance women’s political participation; challenges and opportunities for national women’s commissions and possible legal and institutional provisions to end violence against women and girls. The meeting concluded with consensus on key recommendations to enhance women’s representation and leadership in decision making in public institution, national parliaments and local council, media and civil society. The meeting also agreed to develop standardized indicators for measuring the extent of violence against women and to ensure the availability of comparable data in the regional. The group also agreed to set up a regional portal to facilitate sharing of information and peer learning, and establishing regional alliances of women parliamentarians, national women’s machineries and election monitoring bodies.

ix) 1000+ National Consultation Conference on Pakistan Vision 2025 (November 2013)

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif inaugurated the “National Consultation Conference” of 1000 Plus on November 25, 2013, that was

organised to finalize the Government of Pakistan’s “Vision 2025 and Eleventh Five Year Development Plan.” The Conference was convened to take inputs from all the relevant key stakeholders. Senator Nuzhat Sadiq was invited, as Secretary WPC, to address the “1000+ National Consultation Conference on Pakistan Vision 2025,” in which she highlighted the importance of gender equality in the society and appropriate resource allocation in this direction, as it transforms the women from disadvantageous position to their empowerment at levels.



Senator Nuzhat Sadiq’s made substantive contribution to Chapter 10 of the Plan that is dedicated to women empowerment. The 11th Five year Plan of the Government of Pakistan is comprehensive documents that sets out guiding principles and implementation strategies for the national development plans and programs for the of the Government of Pakistan. Chapter 10 of the Plan focuses on Gender and Women Empowerment and details various lines of actions for women development in Pakistan.

An amount of Rs. 2.7 billion has been proposed for gender and women

empowerment including their socioeconomic development during the Eleventh Five Year Plan of the Government of Pakistan.

x) First Women Parliamentary Kashmir Peace Conference (May 7- 8, 2015) Muzzafarabad, Kashmir

The first ever conference by women members of Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Council was organized by its Women's Caucus, headed by Deputy Speaker Shaheen Kausar Dar.

Speaker National Assembly, Hon. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, and Secretary Women's Parliamentary Caucus in the Parliament of Pakistan, MNA Shaista Pervaiz Malik along with members of the Caucus had been extended special invitation to attend the Conference. Besides, former Minister for State on Kashmir Affairs, MNA Qamar Zaman Kaira along with opposition leader Raja Farooq Haider Khan, former Prime Minister of AKJ, Sardar Ateeq Ahmad Khan, and key leaders of Huriyat Conference also participated. Over 35 members of the WPC Islamabad, from both Houses of the Parliament attended.

Members of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus showed solidarity with women parliamentarians of AJK Legislative Assembly and committed to raise a collective on the issue especially the atrocities being committed on Kashmiri women in the Indian occupied Kashmir by Indian army.

The Government of AJK was represented by its Hon. Prime Minister, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, Speaker AJK Legislative Assembly, Sardar Ghulam Sadiq Khan, a

number of ministers, members legislative Assembly, and AJK Minister for Social Welfare Ms. Farzana Yaqoob and women parliamentarians overwhelmingly participated.

The Deputy Speaker AJK Legislative Assembly, Ms. Shaheen Kausar Dar in her address welcomed the prestigious guests from Islamabad and underscored the need to protect women's rights and increase the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly and Council by taking special legal measures granting quota to women in the legislative body. She further called for finding a sustainable solution to the atrocities being inflicted on women in Indian occupied Kashmir.

Speaker National Assembly, Hon. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, endorsed the need for increasing the number of women's seats in the parliament as well as emphasised on the need for women's representation at all levels in all forums as was the spirit of true democratic system. Hon. Speaker also promised to not only encourage a joint statement by members of both Houses of the Parliament, and will also include members of AJK legislative assembly as part of parliamentary delegations on Kashmir issue from Pakistan abroad to effectively highlight the issue.

Former minister for Kashmir Affairs, Mr. Qamar Zaman Kaira, while lauding the initiative of organizing this first ever women parliamentarians conference on Kashmir, reiterated the commitment of the past and present governments of Pakistan, the political and armed forces that have consecutively been supporting the cause of Kashmir. He said that the Government of Pakistan has a consistent policy on

Kashmir that seeks to find a permanent resolve to the issue; the Kashmiris, nevertheless, need to assert their identity as Kashmiris first and then be Pakistanis. Prime Minister AJK, Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, in his address stated that Kashmir movement requires a strategic and well planned foreign policy to make it effective. He stated that the Kashmiris will never accept any such resolve to their issue to which they are not involved in the making of. The Conference concluded with a vote of thanks to the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) for its solidarity and commitment with women parliamentarians of AJK Legislative Assembly and the Kashmiri women at large.

4) ADVOCACY AND OVERSIGHT

I. Supporting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

The Women's Parliamentary Caucus fully supported the cause of persons with disabilities. It lobbied intensively to sensitise the stakeholders regarding the rights of the persons with disabilities, insisting on the importance of addressing their needs and concerns as a matter of right and not as a matter of charity. It further lobbied to guarantee their full rights by taking special measures ensuring their accessibility to health, education, and socio-economic empowerment in a cross-cutting matter. It is with the same intent that the WPC moved a Bill on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

i) 2016: South Asia Conference on the 'Role of Women with Disabilities in Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals'

Women's Parliamentary Caucus organized the first ever South Asia Regional

Conference on the 'Role of Women with Disabilities in Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals' in January 2016. The main objective of this Conference was to recognise the abilities of women with disabilities in contributing to national development. It aimed to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, to unleash their talent in the course of taking a more inclusive approach towards national development. The Conference drew wide attention and was much lauded across the region given its unique subject. It served as a wake-up call to the governments and the general public regarding the potentials and abilities of women with disabilities and their right to self-fulfilment.

ii) Setting out Khadija tul Kubra Awards, 20th March, 2018

The Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) and the Ministry of Human Rights jointly announced Khadija tul Kubra Awards to honour the prodigious contributions made by women for the empowerment of women with disabilities in Pakistan.

The Award aims to recognize and honour the achievements and contributions of women with disabilities who continue to provide support, leadership, advocacy, service and education to increase the socio-economic and civic participation to persons with disabilities, and have been pushing for a rights-based approach and for integrating broader inclusivity in all policies, legislative and decision making processes. Announcing it as an annual event, the first set of awards distribution ceremony was held on 20th March 2018 in Islamabad.

DISSEMINATION OF MEDICO LEGAL RESEARCH REPORT - MARCH, 2016



FIRST WOMEN PARLIAMENTARY KASHMIR PEACE CONFERENCE - MAY, 2015



SOUTH ASIA CONFERENCE - JANUARY, 2016



KHADIJA TUL KUBRA AWARDS - MARCH, 2018



SEMINARS AND STUDY CIRCLES

I. Series of Seminars on Women's Political Empowerment

The Women's Parliamentary Caucus initiated a series of seminars in May 2014



on women's participation in politics. The first Seminar in this series was held at the Marriott Hotel Islamabad and focused on women's representation within political parties. It was jointly supported by UN Women and UNDP

i) First seminar on "Enhancing Gender Equality in Politics"

Representatives of all key political parties attended the seminar as well as Chairperson of National Assembly Parliamentary Committee Mr. Abdul Mannan, Chairperson of Senate



Committee on Parliamentary Affairs Mr. Jahangir Badar, National Commission on Status of Women (NCSW), Ministry of Law Justice and Human Rights, Government officials civil society organizations and international partners.

ii) Second seminar on "Enhancing gender equality in politics" Quota seats

Second seminar was held in the Serena Hotel Islamabad which was graced by the Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. It was also attended by a large number of parliamentarians from all parties, Chairpersons of Parliamentary Affairs Committees and the National Commission on Status of Women (NCSW),



representatives of the Ministry of Law Justice and Human Rights, Government officials from key line Ministries and departments, civil society organizations and international partners.

Following key recommendations emerged from the discussions that aim at ensuring a more democratic process for women's quota seats which included;

- o Retaining the system for both quota and direct election for women
- o Strengthening political parties to have transparent and democratic

electoral processes within party to enable women to compete directly for party positions

- o Strengthening women wings in political parties and bring forward women
- o Setting up electoral schools at local, provincial and federal level
- o Convincing the party leaderships to dedicate 10% quota in granting ticket for women in general elections

II. Study Circles

In 2015, the Women's Parliamentary Caucus organized a series of study circles and consultations to acquaint women parliamentarians on various national and international issues affecting women. The topics of these study circles is enlisted below:

- Seminar on **'Role of Women Parliamentarians in De-radicalization Options and Opportunities for Pakistan'** on 19th December 2015. This seminar highlighted the role women parliamentarians can play in contributing to addressing the issue as lawmakers. Through this seminar it was identified how women can fulfill the representative role in their respective constituencies, through the 'women folk' of their respective areas.
- Study Circle on 'Elimination of Violence against Women and Launching of 16 Days of Activism.' On 25th November 2015. The study circle deliberated on the existing laws on Violence against Women and the role women parliamentarians can play to eliminate violence Against Women.
- Study Circle on 'Beijing plus 20 and

Sustainable Development Goals' on 27th July 2015. The study circle included a presentation by Honorable MNA Marriyum Aurangzeb, Chairperson Parliamentary Taskforce on Sustainable Development Goals. The study circle discussed the role of women parliamentarians in sustainable development and the impact of the shift from Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Goals.

- 'National Sensitization Workshop with Women Parliamentarians on 1-3 April 2015.' The workshop aimed to increase the knowledge of women parliamentarians on legislative process and to develop network and alliance among national and provincial women caucuses.

III. Parliamentary Partnership Program among WPC Pakistan, CPA UK and Afghanistan

- Third round of Dialogue of interactive dialogue among Parliamentarians from Pakistan, UK and Afghanistan, on advocating women's issues and rights in Pakistan held in February 2014; with special focus on maternal health and girls education

WPC and CPA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) outlining the willingness of the two organizations to



explore opportunities to collaborate on international programs and activities when their interests and priorities coincide

- Fourth round of dialogue was held in London in June 2014 where parliamentarians from South Asia and CPA-UK discussed the role they can play in promoting rights of women



within the parliament and their constituencies.

- The fifth round of dialogue took place in December 2015 where a seven member parliamentary delegation represented Pakistan. It built upon the work on previous programs and the role parliamentarians can play in establishing a broader community.



VISITS BY FOREIGN DELEGATIONS

i) Visit of the CPA-Canada Delegation



A high profile delegation of CPA_Canada, comprising several Canadian Senators and Parliamentarians paid a visit to the Secretariat of WPC on 4th April 2018. Technical Advisor WPC gave a presentation on the work of WPC with special reference to its strong connection with CPA-UK and the joint activities being taken with it. Secretary WPC, Shaista Pervaiz Malik welcomed the delegation along with members of the Working Council. Head of the Canadian delegation indicated her interest to establish relations with WPC for learning and sharing experiences and information on women issues in both countries. During the meeting matters of mutual interest were discussed including women empowerment initiatives in the two friendly countries.

ii) Visit of the CPA-UK Team

Mr. Jon Davies, Chief Executive, CPA-UK Branch & BIMR Secretariat and Mr. Robert Harper, Asia Pacific Program Manager visited the WPC Secretariat on 22nd



January, 2018. Secretary WPC, Shaista Pervaiz Malik welcomed the delegation along with members of the WPC's Working Council. The meeting discussed future collaboration with the WPC especially in the context of women empowerment efforts of the Government.

iii) Call on of the Australian High Commissioner

The High Commissioner of Australia to Pakistan, Margerate Adamson, called on the Secretary WPC, MNA Shaista Pervaiz Malik on 18th April 2016. Agenda of the meeting was around the cooperation of the Australian Government and the WPC. Secretary MNA Shaista Malik appreciated



the Government of Australia for its work on promoting democratic governance and supporting the women empowerment initiatives in Pakistan. Secretary Caucus thanked the High Commissioner for her

interest in supporting women's parliamentary caucus in achieving its mandate and activities.

iv) **Call on of the Secretary General CPA**

Secretary General of the CPA, Hon. Akbar Khan, visited Islamabad upon special invitation from the Senate of Pakistan. The Secretary General made a special visit to the WPC Secretariat on May 6th 2016, as he desired to meet its members as he is a keen supporter of parliamentary diplomacy. The WPC Secretary, MNA Shaista Pervaiz Malik briefed him about the vision and mission of WPC and its ongoing work. The Secretary General was deeply impressed and remarked that WPC was being seen as a great model and a source of inspiration for many parliaments around the world .



v) **Visit of the CPA UK Delegation to the WPC Secretariat**

A delegation of CPA UK Delegation paid a visit to the WPC Secretariat on 1st February, 2016. Secretary WPC Shaista Pervaiz Malik, Members of the WPC's

Working Council and some members of the General Body attended the meeting.

Led by Mr. Andrew Tuggy, Chief Executive & Secretary Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK/CPA/BIMR Secretariat accompanied with Mr. Hatty Cooper, Head of International Outreach CPA, the delegation appreciated the work of the Caucus and remarked that it was quoted



as a role model for many democratic parliamentary systems. The meeting explored strengthening the cooperation between CPA-UK and the WPC.

vi) **Visit of German Parliamentary Delegation**

Delegation of German Parliamentarians visited WPC on 25th May, 2015. Purpose of the visit was to interact with the



members and understand the scope, vision and mission of the Caucus and ways of connecting the WPC with German women parliamentarians.

vii) Institute of Inclusive Security (IIS) USA and Paiman Alumni Trust (PAT)

Members of the WPC chaired by the Secretary Ms. Nuzhat Sadiq held a meeting with the delegation from PAT and IIS on 8th October 2013. Briefing to Women's Parliamentary Caucus was given about the joint work of Paiman Alumni Trust and Institute of Inclusive Security in Pakistan in involving women in peace-building process. The delegation was briefed about the working and achievements of Women Parliamentary Caucus and areas of future cooperation were discussed.

viii) Member Chamber of Deputies Argentina Mrs. Julia Perie

The members of the WPC chaired by the Secretary Ms. Nuzhat Sadiq held a meeting with the Member Chamber of Deputies Argentina Mrs. Julia Perie on 7th November, 2013. Ms. Perie was briefed about the Women Parliamentary Caucus. The importance of WPC was highlighted for its work related to women empowerment and gender equality and areas for future cooperation were discussed.

ix) Delegation of the National Women Commission (NWC) Nepal and UN Women

Members of WPC met the members of the NWC Nepal and UN Women on 5th

December 2013. The delegation was given presentation on the working and achievements of WPC which was followed by an interactive session on exchange of information and experiences .



x) Delegation of Women Parliamentarians from Iraq

The delegation of women parliamentarians from Iraq met the members of Women's Parliamentary Caucus on December 7th 2013. The delegation was given a comprehensive presentation on conception, achievements and contribution of the Caucus. The meeting concluded with a joint agreement to work collaboratively on addressing the common issues faced by women in both countries.

xi) Delegation of Swedish Parliamentarians headed by Speaker of the Riksdag (Sweden Parliament)

Speaker of the Riksdag accompanied with other members visited and met members of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus on 20th May 2014. It was agreed upon to strengthen bilateral ties between women parliamentarians of both countries

LIST OF SOME MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES INVOLVING WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS

- 1) Commemoration of annual 16 Days Activism: The WPC has regularly been part of 16 Days Activism that is celebrated every year, from 25th November to 10th December (international Human Rights Day). The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women is commemorated across the globe. Known as 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign, the period is observed as a major advocacy initiative that aims at not only raise awareness on perspectives around VAW and girls, but also provides an opportunity to galvanize action to end VAW/GBV around the world. This international campaign originated from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute coordinated by the Center for Women's Global Leadership in 1991.
- 2) The Women's Parliamentary Caucus has regularly been part of the annual Rural Women's Day, celebrated in October, the WPC has supported the celebration with PODA, a local NGO dedicated to the empowerment of rural women.
- 3) A two day National Dialogue of parliamentarians on "Women in the Informal Economy: Recognising the Invisible Hands" was held in Nathiagali on May 27-28, 2016. The event was an opportunity to review the performance of Women's Parliamentary Caucus regarding its efforts for the betterment of women workers in the informal sector, especially the domestic and home based women workers. The Parliamentarians committed that they would make all possible effort to trigger and strengthen the process that leads to devising of effective strategies and drafting of national policies according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention in order to protect the rights of women working in the informal economy. The participants also explored the legislative and non-legislative avenues to work for the rights of the informal workforce and discussed how parliamentarians can make a difference in this context.
- 4) A meeting with the members of Women's Action Forum (WAF) was held by the members WPC in which the members of the WAF conveyed their concerns regarding the vacant position of Chairperson National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW); (8 June 2016)
- 5) The screening of Oscar winning film "A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness," by a Pakistani producer, Sharmene Obaid Chinoy, was organized; (13th April 2016)
- 6) A Consultation was organized with members of the Women Parliamentary Caucus on the "Compulsory Immunization and Protection of Health Workers Bill 2015;" (24th March 2016)

- 7) The Improving Parliamentary Performance in Pakistan (IP3) Project organized a briefing session for the parliamentarians on the “International Electoral Standards – Pakistan Perspective,” at PIPS; (January 13, 2016)
- 8) A protest was launched by WPC against stopping women for casting their votes in bye-election in District Dir, Resolution was presented by members of WPC to Election Commission is Annex.
- 9) Aurat Foundation made a presentation on Beijing 20+ in Caucus Secretariat for the members of the WPC; (February 2015)
- 10) A presentation on Gender-sensitive Legislation was made before the WPC’s General Assembly by Mehr Garh; (May 2014)
- 11) Signing of MoU with Aurat Foundation in 2015

RESOLUTION

“PAKISTAN’S WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS URGE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN VOTERS IN ALL ELECTIONS”

We the Members of Women’s Parliamentary Caucus, on this day of 15th March 2016 Firmly believing that without the full participation of these groups, especially the women, in the election processes, especially as decision-makers in the guise of voters as well as candidates, there cannot be a legitimate parliament reflecting the inclusiveness and true representativeness;

Recognizing that being half the population, women’s opinion has to matter and their right to choice has to be duly appreciated, acknowledged and realized as their fundamental human right; for ensuring sustainable development; and, in the larger interest of conforming to true democratic principles;

Referring to Article 25 of the Constitution of Pakistan that lays down equal opportunities to men and women; and to Art. 218 (3) that mandates the Election Commission to make such arrangements for conducting elections that ensure honest, just, and fair elections and which in accordance with law are ‘guarded’ against the traditional corrupt practices; Further referring to the international Conventions ratified by Pakistan including CEDAW (Art. 2,3,4,7) and particularly ICCPR (Art. 25 –b) seeking right to vote and to be elected in elections by universal suffrage ...and guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors, and further seeking the state parties to respect these rights of all individuals without discrimination;

Considering that the ECP is not only empowered but is constitutionally obligated to free and fair elections under the law and to declare any poll in any area void partially or fully and issue directives for re-election in that area;

Therefore

1. Express our deep concern regarding the setting aside of the ECP’s decision of declaring the by-elections held in PK-95 as void under the law on account of non-participation of women voters, by the Peshawar High Court; and
2. Urge the ECP to take appropriate measures in this regard under the law

Sd: _____

MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES



WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS

AN INTRODUCTION

Women around the world, with just a few exceptions, continue to be under-represented in parliaments. Despite constituting half of the world's population, with an exception of only two countries, their presence in parliaments is significantly less than half. Although a slight increase of women's representation in the parliaments is being witnessed around the world since the last decade, the overall percentage, nevertheless, remains low and slow. The IPU data indicates that the global average of women in national parliaments increased just slightly from 22.6% in 2015 to 23.3% in 2017. This increase, however little, signifies the growing consciousness to include women in the democratic processes and get validation of those processes.

There has been, nevertheless, a growing consensus that making parliaments "fully inclusive" of the population they represent cannot be possible without giving equal representation to women and making them part of the policy and decision making processes. It is further recognised that women's experiences, their needs and concerns are different from men's and ought to be represented in the deliberations and decision making leading to policy-making, legislation, and implementation. The foundations of a strong and vibrant democracy, therefore, lie in a fully representative and inclusive parliament.

In the emerging democratic scene, women parliamentarians are seen to be transforming politics and attempting to redefine political priorities to include women's perspectives, needs and concerns.

"I have always maintained that no nation can ever be worthy of its existence that cannot take its women along with the men. No struggle can ever succeed without women participating side by side with men. There are two powers in the world; one is the sword and the other is the pen. There is a great competition and rivalry between the two. But, there is a third power stronger than both, and that is of the women."

***Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali
Jinnah 25th March, 1940***

Even where women make up a small portion of the legislature, a Women's Caucus, if strategically planned and organized, has strong potential to serve as a watch dog and pressure group to influence the government on several areas simultaneously.

Caucuses not only bring together the women parliamentarians on a variety of issues to enact and influence policies, but also provide space for networking with other entities, parliaments and international organizations. Since caucuses are generally informal bodies within parliaments, there are no hard and fast rules about their structure or organizational set-up.

Given the local political context and the cultural, social and financial peculiarities of their respective countries, different parliaments of the world have adopted and adapted structures that suit them best. Due to their effectiveness, these forums have become a growing feature in the world of Parliaments.

Women's Political Participation in Pakistan

Historically, women have played a major role in the struggle for Pakistan, supported under the leadership of the father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who was a strong believer in the power of women and took them along, side by side, in all his endeavours and decision making. In Pakistan, women have been fortunate enough to have remained part of the legislative assemblies ever since their establishment.

Women have been part of the Parliament both through direct elections as well as through special reserved seats as provided by the Constitution of Pakistan. Constitutional measures to provide reserve seats were taken in light of deep rooted cultural mindsets that continued to exclude and disempower women socially,

politically, and economically.

The number and percentage of reserved seats has varied historically. Article 52 of the Constitution provides for 17% reserved quota for women's seats in the national assembly while Article 59 provides for 16% reserved seats for women in the Senate of Pakistan. Quotas were introduced during the 12th National Assembly when the Constitution was amended to provide 17% quota of reserved seats for women in the national and provincial assemblies. The year 2002 was a watershed in women's political representation in Pakistan. For the first time, they got 17 percent representation in both the national and provincial assemblies based on nominations by their parties. In addition to the given 17% quota in National and Provincial Assemblies and 16% in the Senate, the women were also elected to the assemblies on general seats through direct elections. In the 13th National

In 2006, at a workshop organised by PILDAT, women MPs complained of "not being taken seriously", not only by their male colleagues but also by the Speaker of the National Assembly and the Chairman of the Senate. They publically complained that their calls to attention notices were ignored and the time allocated to them on the floor of the House was always less than the male parliamentarians.

Assembly, women's representation increased further and brought the highest ever number of women to the national Parliament, i.e. 22.5% in National Assembly and 16.3% in the Senate. In the 14th National Assembly, the percentage of women in the national Parliament was 21% in the National Assembly and 18% in the Senate. With the passage of time, more women are involving themselves in politics and returning to the parliament on both special reserved seats as well as on general seats. The progress has been slow but steady. The 13th National Assembly brought the election of the first ever woman Speaker, not only in the history of Pakistan but also in the entire Muslim world where parliamentary democracy is practiced. Speaker, Dr. Fehmida Mirza had been a parliamentarian through direct elections since 1997, who has seen and faced the challenges women parliamentarians encountered in the male-dominated House. The election of Dr. Fehmida Mirza, a seasoned politician known for her progressive outlook, together with the presence of the highest number women parliamentarians, changed the dynamics of the House in the five year tenure of the Assembly.

Formation of the First Ever Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) in Pakistan

With a 22% presence in the 12th National Assembly (2002 – 2007), and despite emerging as strength through their pro-active participation in the business of the House, there was a sense of dissatisfaction amongst women members. During the 12th National Assembly when

the highest quota for women in the Parliament was provided, an attempt was made to establish an all-woman parliamentary caucus. This failed due to lack of support from the then leadership and on account of opposition from extreme elements within the right and left wing parliamentary parties. A Parliamentary Group of 100 parliamentarians on Women Issues (PGWI) with an independent and non-partisan approach was therefore established. 67% of its membership consisted of women. It was an effort prompted and supported by an NGO, PILDAT under the USAID-funded Parliamentary Support Program. Due to the lack of political will and little internal support, the group was not effective, indicating that the Speaker's role is critical in setting up such forums and taking the lead.

In the 13th National Assembly, with a woman Speaker in place, a sense of confidence in the female leadership within the fraternity of women parliamentarians increased. 'Women's voices got stronger with the presence of a woman Speaker.'

The Caucus initially comprised women Members National Assembly. After the Senate elections in March of 2009, the membership of WPC was also extended to the 17 newly elected women Senators. Since then, the WPC became truly representative of both the Houses of the National Parliament. On August 13, 2009, a seal of approval was received by the WPC from the National Assembly which passed a unanimous Resolution recognizing and congratulating the Speaker on its formation.

Objectives of the WPC

The WPC is primarily intended to provide a united platform for women parliamentarians to share and discuss their challenges as parliamentarians, to raise a collective voice on issues of concern, to prioritize women's agendas, and to come together to play a key role in supporting and monitoring the implementation of gender-responsive legislation.

The resolution was unanimously passed by the women Members of the National Assembly on 21st November, 2008, and established the WPC's mandate as follows:

- 1) To attain a broad-based consensus among all women members of the Parliament on an agreed agenda for women development, empowerment and emancipation, enabling them to work beyond and above party lines for the uplift of the women of Pakistan.
- 2) To enhance the role of women parliamentarians in proposing gender sensitive legislation, reviewing and amending discriminatory laws and policies;
- 3) Ensure effective parliamentary oversight of implementation of international and regional commitments, national policies and programmes;
- 4) Facilitate exchange of views and information sharing on critical areas of concern, particularly social discriminatory practices, both nationally and internationally;
- 5) Liaise and build working relationship with key state and civil society

institutions and organizations in order to contribute towards national and international efforts for promoting women's rights, empowerment and gender equality;

- 6) Review rules, procedures and processes in order to ensure women's continued access to, and participation, in the Parliament;
- 7) To jointly work for the achievement of the social indicators so that the Millennium Development Goals are within reach;
- 8) To connect with women parliamentarians across the globe by forming and strengthening alliances;

Organizational Setup

The approved Rules of the WPC provide for a comprehensive mechanism to lead and manage the forum in the best possible manner and ensuring an optimum meaningful participation of all members of the Caucus. According to the WPC Rules, the Caucus functions through three main decision-making bodies:

The Patron: A woman legislator, serving the highest legislative office (either as Speaker, the Chairperson Senate, Deputy Speaker or the Deputy Chairperson Senate) shall become the patron of the Caucus. The Patron is to preside over the meetings of the General Assembly and the Working Council, and convene their meetings on as and when required. She is authorized to take any decisions for the working of the Caucus, which are required to be ratified by the General Assembly. In addition, she is also authorized to appoint the Secretary and the Treasurer of the

WPC from amongst the Members of the Caucus in consultation with the General Assembly.

The General Assembly: Comprises of all the Members of the Caucus. Only women legislators are eligible to become the Members of the Caucus. They are required to seek membership by paying the membership fee, followed by monthly dues on a quarterly basis. Membership of any member who fails to pay her dues for two consecutive quarters shall be suspended. The membership can only be revived after seeking fresh membership. All decisions are taken by the General Assembly, which is bound to meet at least once in every session of the Parliament.

The Working Council: The Working Council comprises representatives of all the parliamentary groups in the parliament that have women representation. Its members are chosen for a period of one year by the Patron in consultation with the General Assembly. It meets on frequent basis, as and when desired by the Patron, and is authorized to take decisions and make plans for the effective functioning of the Caucus.

The Secretariat: The Rules provide for a Caucus Secretariat that will assist the work of the above-mentioned offices and bodies to be headed by the Secretary WPC. The Secretary is appointed by the Patron in consultation with the General Assembly for a period of one year from amongst the Members of the Caucus and is responsible for running the day-to-day business of the WPC. She is also responsible for keeping the records of the General Assembly and Working Council meetings, setting their

respective agenda and getting their decisions implemented through the Secretariat. Besides the Secretary, there is also a Treasurer, who is also appointed by the Patron in consultation with the General Assembly from amongst the Members of the Caucus for a period of one year. All financial matters, including the accounts, are dealt by her in association with the Secretary.

At the support level, the WPC Secretariat is assisted by the Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator who are officials appointed by the Caucus. In addition, there is also an Assistant Coordinator who is an official of the National Assembly seconded to the WPC along with a Peon. With this setup, the work of the WPC was carried out well. In case of extra technical support, consultants were engaged periodically. The Caucus has been allocated an office space in the Parliament Building with state-of-the-art multi-media and IT equipment, a Conference room, Office of the Secretary and workstations for the Secretariat Officials.

Resources

Lack of basic administrative support can be a barrier for the sustainability of such informal groups as caucuses. In many instances, womens' caucuses do not receive any support from their respective parliaments such as financial resources, support services or even the office and meeting spaces needed to organize their work. Meeting arrangements can be difficult and must be organized around the formal business of the parliament. As can be seen, the WPC in Pakistan has been fortunate in this regard whereby, it has

In recognition of the WPCs performance the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani, donated Rupees 30 million to support and strengthen the WPC in June 2011

been given a space for its secretariat with state of the art equipment and human resource in terms of an assistant coordinator and a peon.

In terms of its financial resources, the WPC sustains itself from the following sources as provided by the Rules:

- Membership fee collected from the women parliamentarians;
- Donations from Parliamentarians/Government;
- Technical Assistance/ Support from donors in some activities.

In 2011, the Prime Minister of Pakistan made a significant donation to the WPC. With the given resources, the WPC has managed to survive and retain its independent status. It is not dependent on the parliamentary budget and seeks technical assistance for publications and event management from a carefully selected list of donors, like the UNDP's SDPD Project, the Heinrich Boll Stiftung, and UN Women. The seed money donated by the Prime Minister has been prudently used so far and plans were being made to

invest that money as an endowment-fund. It is now anticipated that this seed money would be invested for the WPC by the next leadership of the Caucus.

Mobilizing Women Parliamentarians – The Role of the Speaker

Although the Women's Parliamentary Caucus is an independent non-partisan forum, the role of the Speaker is considerable as s/he remains the overarching bonding force between the male and female parliamentarians by providing strategic guidance to the Caucus to strengthen and triangulate its scope and work. The Speaker provides space and resources to the Caucus and includes its presence at the national and international fora. S/he also plays a role in promoting the women parliamentarians in their legislative business as well connecting them globally. Being guardian of the House, the Speaker plays the role of protector and promoter of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus and their work towards integrating gender concerns through the institutional structures of parliament and to ensure that norms promoting women's rights and empowerment were translated into national legislation.

Various legislative watch-groups and parliamentary reporters attach the achievements of WPC to confidence in the Speaker. Her fair and non-partisan approach led to a strong commitment and partnership between the women parliamentarians and the Speaker.

Conclusion

Although, there is no strategic plan or

established target on which the work of WPC can be measured, there are indicators which show that, in its five years of existence, the WPC enhanced the performance of the women parliamentarians by providing mechanisms for the advancement of the women's empowerment agenda.

From the evaluation of its functions and performance, patterns have emerged which indicate that the Caucus has provided a platform for devising forward-looking strategies in promoting women's political participation as law makers meaningfully. It may also be taken into account that in the given timeframe of this study, there was enthusiasm of women parliamentarians that supported by the political will of the leadership, including the Speaker and the parliamentary parties, that played a significant role in achieving the WPC's objectives. The fact that opportunities for women parliamentarians were increased by the Speaker further highlights the significance of women's role

in influencing policies and law making. Similarly, the Prime Minister's donation of seed money to the Caucus demonstrates the recognition of the work of Caucus members and the political will to support at the highest level.

The success in attaining a broad-based consensus, beyond party lines, is manifested in all the areas of WPC's work. Women parliamentarians are playing their legislative, oversight, and representative roles as successfully as they can and are meeting the objectives agreed when the WPC was established. Various issues related to national and international commitments of Pakistan have been raised and linked to the parliament, and appropriate measures taken. Building alliances at national and international level, and making in-roads through 'parliamentary diplomacy' are some of the key approaches adopted to strengthen and broaden the role of women parliamentarians.

ANNEXES

ANNEX – I

RESOLUTION ON WOMEN PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS (13TH AUGUST, 2009)

This House congratulates the first woman Speaker Dr. Fehmida Mirza, and the women parliamentarians on establishing the Women Parliamentary Caucus as a tribute to the torchbearers of women's movement, spearheaded by Madar-e-Millat Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah, Khatoon-e-Pakistan Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan, and Shaheed-e-Jamhooriat Motharma Benazir Bhutto.

This House recognizes the contribution of all political parties in uniting women on a single platform.

No nation can progress unless women are not made an equal partner in social, economic and political development.

This House recognizes this Caucus as an invaluable forum that will help in uplifting women of Pakistan, eliminating violence against women, promoting women's rights and ensuring the participation of women in all national and public life, as enshrined in the 1973 constitution.

We, all Parliamentarians of this House, vow to stand by the Women Parliamentary Caucus in this important mission.

Mehreen Anwar Raja Advocate

Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs

Resolution Date: August 13, 2009

ANNEX – II

RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS

Recognizing the contribution of all Political parties in uniting women on the single platform of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus, we the members of the National Assembly hereby resolve to support the WPC in upcoming parliaments.

This House acknowledges the extraordinary work of the WPC and the example it has set for bipartisan cooperation in Pakistan's Parliament. Further recognizing the enormous contribution of Pakistan's first Women Speaker, Dr.Fehmida Mirza, in the formation and success of the WPC; we hereby, resolve to nominate Dr. Mirza as the founding patron of the WPC so that she may continue as a guiding force to this important forum in upcoming Parliaments.

Sd/-

Dr. Donya Aziz	Ms. Asiya Nasir
Dr. Nafisa Shah	Chaudhry Mahmood Bashir Virk
Ms. Kishwer Zehra	Begum Ishrat Ashraf
Ms. Shireen Arshad Khan	Ms. Mehreen Anwar Raja, Advocate
Dr. Attiya Inayatullah	Ms. Zubaida Jalal
Ms. Bushra Rehman	Ms. Farkhanda Amjad
Ms. Farzana Mushtaq Ghani	Ms. Tahira Aurangzeb
Ms. Shaheen Ishfaq	Dr. Imtiaz Sultan Bukhari
Ms. Khalida Mansoor	Ms. Nighat Parveen Mir
Ms. Shahnaz Saleem	Ms. Parveen Masood Bhatti
Ms. Tasneem Siddiqui	Dr. Nahid Shahid Ali
Ms. Shagufta Jumani	Ms. Rubina Saadat Qaim Khani
Ms. Imrana Saeed Jamil	Mr. Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry
Ms. Shagufta Jumani	Dr. Mehreen Razaque Bhutto
Ms. Surraiya Jatoi	Ms. Yasmeen Rehman
Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho	Ms. Rukhsana Bangash
Ms. Shakeela Khanam Rashid	Syed Nasir Ali Shah
Ms. Nosheen Saeed	Ms. Khurshid Begum
Pir Aftab Hussain Shah Jilani	Ms. Belum Husnain
Ms. Samina Mushtaq Pugganwala	Dr. Zil-e-Huma
Ms. Rahela Baloch	Ms. Saima Akhtar Bharwana
Justice (R) Fakhar-un-NisaKhokher	Ms. Shazia Mari
Ms. Shahnaz Wazir Ali	Ms. Farzana Raja
Ms. Jamila Gilani	Ms. BushraGohar
Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah	Mr. Muhammad Tariq Tarar
Ms. Faryal Talpur	Begum NasimAkhter Chaudhry

Members, National Assembly
Resolution Date: March 14, 2013

PICTURE GALLERY



PICTURE GALLERY



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