

GROUP 1

THEME 1: BRINGING UPON CHANGE: WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS INFLUENCING AND REINFORCING POLITICAL AGENDA TO ADVANCE WOMEN EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES



The thematic session “Women Parliamentarians Influencing & Reinforcing Political Agenda to Advance Women Empowerment Initiatives” reviewed and discussed policy options to facilitate women parliamentarians to advance the cause of women advancement. The importance of women in parliament is increasing. With time, it has become crucial for women to speak for themselves and for their rights.

The panellists included:

- Honourable Ms. Asiya Nasir, Member Balochistan??? National Assembly;
- Honourable Ms. Asma Rasheed, Maldives?
- Honourable Ms. Ayesha Syed, Member National Assembly;
- Honourable NAME? Delegate from Nepal.

Ms. Asiya Nasir opened the session by



lauding the participation of international delegates from Nepal, Maldives, Turkey, Iraq and Jordan. She stated that the institution of parliament and the role women parliamentarians in it is one of the major components of the political system in a democratic society. Although, there are only 17% reserved seats for the women, yet the women parliamentarians undertake more than 60% of legislative business.

As one of the founding members of the WPC, MNA Aasiya Nasir informed that the Caucus was made to strengthen the legislative, representative and oversight role of women parliamentarians with an aim to advance the greater women empowerment agenda in the country. With keen interest and pro-activeness of the Caucus members, it has successfully attained its targets and achieved a name by substantively contributing in the legislative business of the House. Caucus has to its credit over two dozen various pieces of landmark legislations, most of which aim at women protection and/or favour women by being gender responsive, she said. Area of

implementation has been a little bit slow as compared to the legislative purpose, she pointed out. Ms. Aasiya concluded that collective voice can move mountains and that is why caucuses succeed as the aim is the same and everyone has to rise above their political affiliations to achieve that aim. This conference is also part of this collective effort, Ms. Aasiya Nasir concluded.

Ms. Asma Rasheed from Maldives shared her experiences in the parliament. She said that women in politics face difficulties but fortunately we have been able to overcome those difficulties. She said that being women leaders and representatives, we must be



sensitive to the needs and concerns of women and legislate in order to guarantee their basic social, economic and political rights. We must keep ourselves closely connected to the women at the grass roots in order to understand their issues. Ms. Anara from Maldives also added points to this topic by saying that only few members in Maldives Parliament are women. Efforts are being made for increasing the quota for women representation in the parliament.

She informed that Only 5 women members are present in the parliament currently out of 85 members. In Maldives society women are considered only responsible for the household and women in politics are not respected or appreciated. Therefore, there is a dire need to change the mind sets of the people to bring transition in the society. But we as women are struggling hard for better status of women in the society and to get equal opportunities and rights.

Ms. Ayesha Syed stated that ignorance leads to instability and unrest in the society. Equal rights for everyone and no discrimination are essential in this regard. Women can better understand the problem of the other women as compared to men, as they are the sufferers. It is important for the political system to give equal opportunities and representation to the women in the mainstream politics. Merit should be kept under consideration. While allocating seats the intra party transparency is also mandatory. The issue of reserved seats and general seats for women should be resolved. The problems faced by the women should be solved and for this unity amongst the women is required. A parliamentarian has the right to make laws and do legislative work and get those laws implemented and women parliamentarians play an important role in it. These parliamentarians are working not only for the issues of the women but they are also playing a significant role. She mentioned about her ranking as 5th out of all the parliamentarians according to the merit and she has passed 14 bills while her 15th bill will be presented in the assembly soon. Ms. Khatri from Nepal thanked the WPC for providing her a chance to speak on this effective topic of discussion. She firstly presented her view of empowering the parliamentarians. So they can play their best role. We all have the problem of having heavy and detailed legislation with lack of implementation. She mentioned that they have endorsed their constitution presented by their respective constituent assembly. The milestone achieved by the Nepal government is the issuance of citizenship on the name of mother only. Proportional inclusiveness is one of the major achievements. Out of the President, Vice President, Speaker and Deputy Speaker, one women representative is mandatory. She has been very pleased to inform the participants that in governmental system of Nepal currently a woman is at the post of the Speaker and also one of the judges of the Supreme Court is a woman.

Ms Atiyya Inayatullah further added her comments. She mentioned about her work in progress on the resolution and declaration to be signed. In the closing ceremony, the draft will be presented to the delegates for signature. She mentioned that there is a need for the change to bring the women to a better position in the society and for that participation from opposite gender is also required. WPC has also got gentlemen friends who are playing their role in empowering women caucus.

The empowerment of women is a work for the humanity. Hindrances that women face due to social, cultural, political and economic aspects should be eliminated. The political system and political parties should have



their merit based selections for both men and women. Hard work is recognized with continuous efforts else you get brushed away with time. The women parliamentarians are struggling hard to get

open constituency seats and that will be a great achievement. The motto of this



conference is networking and taking the women agenda together both nationally and internationally, so we should be bold for change now. The whole panel agreed that women are fully capable and can do anything if they have support and are provided with the right opportunities. Women can do more than men. The participants of this conference are from various states and are rightly representing their respective states and societies. Equal rights for all will lead towards the more stable society. WPC is a success story at national and international level. Despite political differences, all women joined hands, treat and bring solutions to the problems faced by the women. One of the outcomes of this joint effort is the bill regarding the harassment of women at workplace. It is time to promote women emancipation for economic and social development.

GROUP 2
THEME 2: COHESIVE STRATEGIES TO CURB VARIOUS FORMS
OF VIOLENCE; DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, CHILD LABOR,
FORCED AND CHILD MARRIAGES, HARASSMENT AT WORK PLACE,
PHYSICAL, SEXUAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE



Violence against women is a global challenge and cannot be confined to any particular region. To iron out policies to curb all forms of violence is the need of the hour. The panel for the said discussion consists of members of national parliament, international parliamentarians, members from the civil society and other stakeholders. The panel included:

- Mr. Shafqat Mahmood, Member National Assembly of Pakistan;
- Former Speaker National Assembly Honourable Dr. Fahmida Mirza
- Honourable Senator Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq;
- Delegate from Sri Lanka;
- Delegate from Turkey;
- Delegate from Nepal;
- Delegate from Myanmar.

The delegate from Turkey initiated the discussion by highlighting the importance of sensitization and public awareness through such conferences which is highly essential for preventing violence against women. She especially stressed upon raising awareness vis a vis emotional abuse and harassment at workplace. She said that it is the parliamentarians' responsibility to create an appropriate working environment where women are comfortable. She then talked



about child marriages and how they are detrimental to the society. She reiterated that it is vital that we spread awareness regarding this issue by sensitizing our society through media and conferences like the one that she was attending. She stressed that a profile of existing legislation should be undertaken and grey areas requiring further legislation need to be identified. She wanted the panel to focus on the lacunae that existed in the present laws and which must be fixed accordingly. She raised a very important point that forms of domestic violence that don't have any legislation must



be legislated e.g. marital rape. A legal framework is the starting point of weeding out any menace from the society. Implementation is the key and it's at the government level that changes must be brought about to get a trickle-down effect. Collective action must be taken to empower women financially and ensure that they can stand on their own two feet.

The delegate from Sri Lanka had the floor next and the honourable parliamentarian she reiterated that Gender Based Violence is not confined to a region but is a global phenomenon. She talked about murder, rape, slavery, trafficking, exploitation and other harsh discriminatory situations that women are put through. She said it was entrenched at all levels. However, talking about Sri Lanka she expressed with pride that the situation is satisfactory. She told the panellists about the Penal Court Amendments and about the National Action Plan incorporating strategies

to counter Gender Based Violence including dowry related violence, disappearances, violence of domestic maids and forced pregnancies. She highlighted the importance of a separate ministry to deal with Gender Based Issue and one that can negotiate with the concerned authorities. She told how in Sri Lanka there is a separate desk for women in police stations and a separate day established in courts.

Delegate from Myanmar talked about the lack of awareness and inability of the education system in instilling this awareness. She talked about child labor and said that every country must invest in education of all individuals. She said Gender Based Violence is dangerous for all countries.

The delegate from Nepal talked about a National Information Commission that disseminates information about all new and existing laws to the public. She displayed a book which had all the legislation and policy of Nepal and talked about how it has ensured to make everyone at all levels aware of their rights. She further praised her country by stating that there can be no amendment to the constitution unless a woman member is present in its committee. She emphasized that women need to spread the information about their constitutional rights. She stated that CEDAW made a list of all the laws that were discriminatory and make amendments to them. She then listed down some of their women-friendly laws: Inheritance Right Bill, Equal rights to sons and daughters, Gender responsive budget system. She also talked about making women financially empowered and working from the highest level.

Next delegate was from Turkey who talked about the laws on fighting violence. She appreciated programmes like those that give out family planning advice and trainings to the housewives. She stressed that reactions must be made to what has happened to women in the past in all sphere of life. She

emphasized that every country must pay heed to women issues.

Another worthy contribution was made to the discussion by Ms. Yasmeen Rehman who talked about criminalizing domestic violence. She also talked about economic empowerment as without this no further step towards women emancipation can be taken. She also talked about reforming the irrelevant education system that does not guarantee jobs to those even who are qualified. She wanted an applicable education system for all especially women to increase their participation in the labour force. She emphasized on the lacuna that exists when there is a disconnect between the public and the parliament. She said it is imperative that an inclusive and interactive parliament be there to address the issues of the common man. She also suggested that shelter homes for those who want to escape an abusive setup must be made by the government and full protection must be provided there. Her focus also was on accountability mechanisms that must be made transparent and effective in order to increase the currently abysmal conviction rate. She also gave the suggestion of making

helplines that can guide our women better.

The discussion was then held among the other members of the thematic session whereby some very important suggestions were made:..

- The capacity building of police and administration relevant to implementation of pro-women laws should be undertaken. People should be educated about legislative processes and laws for effective implementation.
- A separate desk for women should be established in courts and police stations respectively.
- Women should be provided with a conducive work environment free from all kinds of harassment and discrimination.
- The UN Women Charter should be used as a guide to ensure effective implementation of the policies.
- Media should play a vibrant role in preventing violence against women.
- Education of women is indispensable for their economic empowerment and hence be invested in heavily.

GROUP 3

THEME 3: GENDER BASED VIOLENCE & CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATING TRANSGENDER IN DEVELOPMENT AGENDA



An insightful debate on the critical issue of “Gender Based Violence and Challenges of Integrating Transgender in Development Agenda” took place on the sidelines of the plenary sessions on second day of the conference. The panellists included:

- Dr. Ayesha Isani, Member Parliament of Pakistan
- Ms. Shaza Fatima Khwaja, Member Parliament of Pakistan
- Ms. Amna Sardar, Member Parliament of Pakistan
- Mrs. Mara MAREȘ (Romanian Parliament)

Dr. Ayesha Isani initiated the debate by stating that the gender base violence is the social and cultural reality and not just the topic of conversation in drawing rooms or conferences. She holds a view that victims of gender base violence are unable to articulate their issue to their husbands, sons, fathers, etc. which is big problem of our society. She emphasized on the mobilization of society in this regard. She identified the problem of inapproachability of victims. Another problem is the harassment at home,

public and workplace which to some extent is experienced by all women whether educated or uneducated. So, she presented the idea of approaching these women by the



mobilizers themselves and gaining their confidence for resolution of the issues. She recommended that all the institutions should have places like centres, rooms, dedicated workforce which encourages them to come over.

Member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Assembly Ms. Amna Sardar highlighted that

transgender are the most vulnerable strata of the society facing harassment and bullying on daily basis. She informed the audience about her work in this regard. She presented a resolution in her respective provincial assembly about the protection and provision of the fundamental rights to the transgender community.

She holds a view that being a transgender is not a matter of choice, it's a natural phenomenon but instead of acknowledging this fact the society treats them in an inhumane manner. It's the social setup which forced them to live with "Guru" and adopt inappropriate professions like prostitution, begging, etc. It's the society which denied them the right of education, job and health facilities which is a clear violation of Article 25 of 1973 Constitution of Pakistan. They don't have separate educational institutes, hospitals even wards. She substantiated her stance by giving the example of a transgender who expired in Peshawar few months back because hospital authorities did not decide in which ward she should be admitted for first aid. She also revealed that 26 members of transgender community were killed in province of KPK only. They are the victims of physical abuse and sexually transmitted diseases like HIV as highlighted in various videos on social media in Pakistan. However, there are also some good examples in this regard. She narrated the story of two educated transgender having full support of their families. She recommended that the emphasis should be on their education. They should be encouraged and involved in political process. Government of Pakistan should reserve seats for them in Federal and Provincial Assemblies.

Member of Parliament from Romania termed the issue as it as a global issue. not the sub continental issue only. As a Secretary Committee on equal opportunities for women and men in her country, she stressed to adopt an inclusive approach in a democratic system towards the issue of




transgender as it's the issue of nature not nurture. She encouraged the women to work as the mobilizers because of high level of empathy and sensitivity as compare to men. She concluded by recommending audience to educate the children, society and political community to be more tolerant and permissive towards them.

MNA Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja started by highlighting the major issue of confusion in




society regarding what is gender based violence and who are actually transgender? She defined gender based violence as any kind of violence that is perpetuated just because a person belongs to a certain gender. Highlighting the complexity of issue she informed the audience about the diversity within mix gender community e.g. transgender, transsexuals, Unix, zero gender people, born male but feel like women or vice versa. So, it's the whole spectrum of individual to be looked at which makes the matters in hand more complicated. As a



member of YPF which is working on the issue from last five years in consultation with civil society, NGOs and transgender community, she is working to involve the state machinery e.g. parliament, police, human rights commission. She also informed that she had a very candid discussion with all the above mentioned institution regarding the role of parliament in this particular matter. She said that in Pakistan this issue is socially, culturally and religiously bounded issue. Here main question is was: How to define and differentiate between the physically and emotionally transgender? The answer to this question will bring the matter from the domain of nature to nurture. All state institution in Pakistan across the board including supreme judiciary accept the fact that the whole community of transgender is at high risk of discrimination, harassment, violence, denial of basic right to live. However, it's a matter of pride that Supreme judiciary in Pakistan accepted their right of legal identity and ordered NADRA to issue them national identity cards after medical check-up which technically gave them the

voting rights. However, government is facing various problems in the implementation e.g. separate polling booths, revising the voter lists, etc. Recommendations in this respect were sent to electoral reforms committee. In the 2017 census, there is a separate provision for transgender. After the census government will have the data of the total number of transgender in particular constituency. Afterwards government will ensure the separate polling booths for them.

She also shared her experience with transgender community and enlightened the audience that transgender community does not want separate institutions because after establishment these places will become taboo places. It requires a gradual change of mindsets that this community should be allowed to be integrated in the mainstream without harassment. She also shared the good news that Transgender Person Protection of Rights Bill, 2017 has been introduced in Pakistan Senate. However, the law will be of no utility without social acceptance.



PLENARY THREE

CONFRONTING IGNORANCE FOR A HEALTHY AND EDUCATED CITIZENRY

"Accelerating the Achievement of SDGs and the Role of Women Parliamentarians"



The third plenary session on day two was focused on the role of women parliamentarians in accelerating the achievement of SDGs. The discussion examined the promotion of a gender-responsive and rights-based approach to implementing, monitoring and reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for women's social, economic and cultural empowerment. It deliberated on the foundations for approaches as already laid down in international human rights conventions for addressing issues of violence against women that thrive in the absence of women's rights, especially around the SDGs.

The discussion revolved around:

- Mainstreaming SDGs for implementation by the State and the stakeholders and aligning SDGs with relevant international human rights instruments [CEDAW, CRC, UNCRPD, ICESCR, and ICCPR vis a vis the SDGs

(Goals 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, & 16)]

- Gender in climate change and disaster risk reduction; Role of women Parliamentarians in developing gender responsive strategies;
- Women and Climate Change achieving SDGs 6, 13 & 7;
- Role of women parliamentarians in integrating women in environmental planning and policy making processes

The Panellists for the third plenary session included:

- Pakistan's Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Honourable Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb (Session Chair)
- Honourable Senator Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq
- Dr. Sudarshini Fernandopulle (Sri Lanka)
- Dr. Mehreen Farooqi (Australia)

- Honourable MNA Mr. Shehryar Khan Afridi
- Ms. Ammy Amalia Fatma Surya – Indonesia

The session started with welcome remarks by Honourable Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb. She informed the audience about the journey of Pakistan towards achieving the SDGs that started off in 2013. She said that a Parliamentary Task Force (PTF) has been established in all the provinces of Pakistan with the objective of strengthening the legislation, oversight mechanism, and representation not only to address the challenges but also to play a pro-active role for accelerating the pace in achieving the agreed and committed targets. It will allow the inclusion of Human Development Index (HDI) framework in parliamentary debates. In addition to the development of PTF, Pakistan also aligned the goals and targets of its Vision 2025 and entire Disbursement Funds of Prime Minister with SDGs. She highlighted that Parliament of Pakistan is internationally first to have SDGs Secretariat. Besides this, Pakistan's Parliament is also the first to have Planning and Development Unit for SDGs which coordinate at local, district and provincial levels to make policy and interventions at both Provincial and National level. She mentioned that the Standing Committees were also engaged relative to each goal of MDGs and afterward SDGs.

Honourable Minister urged the media to play its imperative role in educating people about the SDG's. She also put in the picture the contribution of Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) which has made it compulsory for electronic media to dedicate 10% of the airtime on public messages for generating awareness related to SGDs, Vision 2025 and prioritizing weekly programmes on human development. Finally, Honourable Minister announced that from March 15th, 2017 population census will commence after 19 years in Pakistan and requested all citizens to cooperate with government in this initiative and provide

accurate and authentic information. She entitled the contribution for the timely completion of census as a "national responsibility."

The Prime Minister's Focal Person for Polio Eradication Honourable Senator Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq was the second speaker for plenary three. She presented a comprehensive picture of polio cases in Pakistan. Few years back, thousands of polio cases were reported in Pakistan but the lowest number of cases in the history was reported in 2016. She termed it as a big achievement for government of Pakistan. Furthermore, she recognized that Pakistan lies in a geographical region where unexpected weather patterns such as flooding, cyclones and temperature fluctuations are exceptionally predominant leading to poor health status, water borne diseases etc. Women and children are among the most vulnerable strata for them.

She termed good communication as a key to social change and pressed the need for developing equitable, efficient and effective policies, strategies and programmes to ensure poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihood. In her view, these initiatives are possible only if social development is encouraged. Last but not least, she identified that the health and education of women is



frequently compromised. She emphasized on learning from the past experiences and strongly supported the women empowerment for healthy nation through

educating the all levels of society.

Third speaker was Dr. Mehreen Farooqi from Australian Parliament. She made a statement at a very beginning of her speech that women are special as they can work structurally and easily manage multitasking. While addressing the issue of climate change, she highlighted its adverse impacts experienced by those who have little or no input in causing them e.g. hottest years ever recorded, flooding, drought and changing patterns of rainfall. She identified women as severely affected group from climate change because of many reasons such as in many societies women are responsible for water and fire wood collection and as a consequence of climate change most of the regions around the globe are confronting water shortage and drought, making it difficult for women to find water and fuel for their families. Moreover, it has also resulted in wastage of time which could have been utilized for other productive works. She concluded by acknowledging the initiatives and working of WPC and requested everyone to unite, work and fight for this noble cause.

Fourth speaker of the day was Dr. Sudarshini Fernandopulle from Sri Lanka. She shared Sri Lankan journey towards the achievement of SDGs. She highlighted the implementation of SDGs at the parliamentary level in Sri Lanka. She also mentioned the establishment of Sri Lankan National Policy and National Development Programmes on SDG's. Furthermore, she shed light on the achievement of Goal 5 by mentioning the fact that current quota of women at government level is was 25% which has been asked to enhance up to 30%. They also have a chapter of women rights related to laws, resources and opportunities for women. Lastly, she mentioned the active participation of Sri Lankan women in

workshops and discussions regarding the adaptation of SDG's and their suggestions are also valued.

Next speaker was Honourable MNA Mr. Shehryar Khan Afridi. He said that when we talk about SDGs we must internalize one key thing; this thing is "education". If we are not aware of our roles and responsibilities and if we don't build bridges for solutions then these the issues that we facefaced currently will persist and humanity will suffer. r. So, we The is need to make sure that all the parliamentarians and citizens must be aware of SDGs in order to make our voice heard globally. He also mentioned that women have a pivotal role in the society. They are an inspiration from both religious and cultural perspective. To conclude, he requested all citizens of Pakistan to unite and send a strong national message to all international communities that we will resolve our issues and we will survive and do our level best to achieve SDGs and human development.

Last speaker from the panel was Honourable Ms. Ammy Amalia Fatma Surya from Indonesian parliament. She highlighted the




current programmes in the sector of health and education that are being implemented in

"...Humanity should not suffer..."

Mr. Shehryar Khan Afridi

Honourable MNA




Indonesia. In terms of development in health sector, Indonesian Government has initiated Indonesia Health Programme under which access to various health facilities are made easy for citizens.

In her speech she accepted the lack of education as the main problem. In Indonesia during 2015-16, 1 million students could not proceed to higher education. Therefore, Indonesian Government has issued "Indonesia Smart Program" with the objective to establish healthy, educated, creative and confident citizens capable of solving their own problems. The Card issued under this programme can also be used to exchange the education cost to schools and to exchange school needs but this card

cannot be used to draw money it only provides provision for school, it is like a scholarship program.

Second phase of their development in education sector is "to strengthen the educator" in which teachers were given special education to increase their quality as an educator because it was observed that large number of students are unsatisfied from teaching methods in practice. Third phase is focusing on increased infrastructure building to ensure easy access to schools and colleges as Indonesia has many Islands and 60% of the total area is covered with water making it difficult for many students to reach their respective institutes on time.



DAY THREE: WEDNESDAY MARCH 15TH, 2017

PLENARY FOUR

STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACIES; WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS AS AGENT OF CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION FOR THEIR SOCIETIES




The third day of the international conference commenced with fourth plenary on Wednesday March 15th, 2017 and initiated a thought provoking discussion on the role of women to influence the political agenda, policy making and legislation for inclusive sustainable development. The sharing of experiences by the international participants added enormous insights into shared understanding of promoting gender equality and women proactive participation in political decision making.

The Panellists for the fourth plenary session included;

- Ms. Marvi Memon (Chairperson BISP), Member National Assembly Pakistan
- MNA Ms. Fouzia Hameed, Member National Assembly Pakistan
- Ms. Fouzia Viqar (Chairperson PCSW), Member National Assembly Pakistan
- Delegate from Jordan
- Delegate from Myanmar
- Delegate from Kyrgyzstan

The session started with the Delegate from Jordan addressing the participants. The Honourable delegate highlighted the role of the Jordanian constitution is playing to ensure women's rights. She urged that women need to be politically aware in order to fight against all forms of discrimination in order to make changes in the society. The Jordanian constitution gives great importance to women rights. An amendment was made in 2011 which compels women to be highlighted in every field. She mentioned that due to the male dominated and tribal nature of the Jordanian society, the likelihood of women being elected is low. However, in the House of Representatives there are 20 women out of 130 total members. Women are also a part of the Senate. Moreover, the House of Representatives has a separate council which deals with the issues and legislation related to women. It is also responsible for holding conferences and workshops for women. Likewise, a coalition



has been formed which consists of many women from Arab States. The Delegate applauded the work of King Abdullah and considered him as a firm supporter of women's rights; he was the first one to introduce the quota system for women. Finally, the delegate congratulated the WPC on organizing such a conference by stating that it is a good opportunity to highlight the injustice for a woman faces in different fields.


The second speaker was Dr. Fouzia Hameed, Member National Assembly of Pakistan. She highlighted the significant role that women's entry into the parliament has played in creating a genuine interest in politics amongst women. Sustainable Development is based on the three pillars of economics, environment and social development. Dr. Fouzia highlighted that gender equality is a major part of the social aspect of sustainable development. Due to the participation of women parliamentarians, women specific issues have been legislated e.g. gender biases, honour killings, domestic violence and harassment of women in the workplace. She mentioned that despite the presence of 22% women in the Parliament of Pakistan, women are still denied important ministerial positions as well as chairmanship of important standing committees. There are no women leaders or deputy leader in political parties of Pakistan. For her, this was a very discouraging aspect for female political workers. According to her, women in the reserved seats have a greater mandate as compared to their male colleagues. However, no funds are issued to them to realize their mandate. She urged that there is a need to tackle these issues with a comprehensive approach. She requested her colleagues to make consolidated, constructive and purpose oriented efforts to prove themselves as agents of change in order to:

- Translate the pending/ proposed bills on women oriented issues into acts as soon as possible;

- Formulate strategies for implementation of women specific legislation in true spirit;
- Make strategies for creation of awareness among women regarding their rights and provision of legal aid to needy women.

Finally, she expressed her optimism and concluded by saying that we must adopt the theme of International Women's Day 2017, "be bold for change," and thanked the WPC.

The next speaker was the Delegate from Myanmar. She began by expressing that this conference was an important meeting for discussing women related issues. Women form 50.8% of Myanmar's population and also half of their labour force. She mentioned that even though there are a number of labour laws in Myanmar which provide social protection to women, such as maternity leave and other social benefits, but their enforcement and implementation is ineffective. There is also the issue of less pay as compared to male workers working in the identical conditions. Protection against sexual harassment in the work place, appropriate emergency medical response, social security measures in hazardous work conditions and allocation of funds for women are still inadequate. Due to the deteriorating economic conditions, conflicts, natural disasters, lack of job opportunities and low wages in Myanmar, many women have lost agricultural land and have migrated to Thailand, Malaysia or Singapore in search of better income. She emphasized the following need to be done in order to revive the living conditions of women in Myanmar:

- Review current labour laws in terms of fulfilling the needs to women workers;
 - Collect accurate gender specific data so that adequate standards can be created for women workers regarding job opportunities;
 - Increase civil society participation in order to strengthen the decision making processes of the executive,
- 

legislative and judicial bodies.

She concluded by thanking the WPC and applauded the conference for promoting women's role in building democratic societies, social justice and peace.

The fourth speaker was the Honourable Delegate from Kyrgyzstan. The Delegate expressed her deep appreciation for the conference and thanked the organizers for the opportunity to participate. She began by stating that since 2010, after the Kyrgyz Revolution, Kyrgyzstan has made vital progressive steps in terms of women's development. It was the first in the region to adopt democracy and the first and only country in the region to have a woman president. The number of women in politics has significantly increased over the years. She mentioned that women's participation in political parties is very important and a part of the law in Kyrgyzstan. She also highlighted that women's involvement in decision making is a sign of developed societies. In Kyrgyzstan, women's participation and promotion of gender equality is a part of all three pillars of state: legislation, executive and judiciary. She mentioned that much legislation has been adopted to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women in Kyrgyzstan. They have a Women's Forum in the Parliament which deals with women specific issues such as reproductive rights and violence etc. They are consistently working to improve the framework for gender equality and fulfilling the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In Kyrgyzstan, CEDAW is in direct implementation and is a strong part of legislation. Recently, government have made remarkable efforts in removing the laws from the constitution which allowed child

marriage and also made pro women amendments to the family and criminal laws. Also a law for the protection against violence has been passed. She concluded by stating that despite these developments, politics remains male dominated and women need to gain more experience in order to achieve gender equality.

The last speaker of the session was Honourable Ms. Marvi Memon, Member National Assembly of Pakistan. She congratulated the WPC and acknowledged their immense efforts. She highlighted that real change comes from the grass root levels. She stated that there is need to celebrate those women who are at the grassroots, who have worked for other women, those who have put aside their party conflicts and worked collectively, and those who have survived discrimination against themselves in politics. She applauded all the women present in the conference for being fighters and survivors and for being the real agents of change. She mentioned two legislations which have brought about massive change for the women in Pakistan:

- Acid Legislation; which became the subject of Pakistan's first Oscar.
- Benazir Income Support Programme; which is the largest platform for women empowerment in Pakistan.

She highlighted that women were able to achieve these goals because women acted collectively putting aside all their differences. She concluded by saying that the competition needs to go beyond women and that we need to work towards our collective goal of women empowerment. We should work together for the betterment of ourselves and future generation. She stated that women parliamentarians should devote their time and efforts for those in need.

CLOSING PLENARY

BUILDING ALLIANCES – WOMEN AND PARLIAMENTARIANS WORKING TOGETHER



The closing plenary on “Building Alliance-Women and Parliamentarians Working Together” commenced with an insightful and compelling dialogue on building alliances for the promotion of women empowerment agenda and strengthen the existing regional women parliamentarians associations and to foster effective coordination between women organizations, civil society and women in Parliament.

The panellists consist of the entire working Council of WPC included:

- Ms. Fehmida Mirza, Former Speaker NA (Chair of Plenary)
- Honourable Dr. Atiya Inayatullah
- Honourable Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja
- Honourable Ms. Nafeesa Inayatullah Khan Khattak

- Honourable Ms. Tahira Aurangzeb
- Honourable Ms. Naeema Kishwar Khan
- Honourable Ms. Naseema Hafeez Panezai
- Honourable Ms. Shaista Pervaiz Malik

Dr. Atiya Inayatullah opened the plenary with a token of appreciation and acknowledgement for the women and man champions of woman empowerment. She

“Dream! And dream as much as you can even it is to dream that you conquer the world but let us not forget one thing and that is what you are is God’s gift to you, what you make of yourself is your gift to God.”

- Dr. Atiya Inayatullah

believed that it's more than appropriate to end the efforts of two days on connectivity and building alliances.

"Women are meeting cross culture in Islamabad and we are challenging the commonality of our inequality," said Dr. Atiya. She expressed gratitude for the hard work of WPC which provided a platform for the women across the culture to share their experiences. She pressed the continuity of this unity and solidarity for the time to come in the form of and reminded the audience the working of a remarkable feminist Ms. Isabel Allende who said, "I can promise you that women working together – linked, informed and educated – can bring peace and prosperity to this forsaken planet."

She articulated her believes about the progress of women working together. Her entire narrative revolved around the role of constitution, laws, academia, media, civil society and state machinery e.g. parliamentary community, judiciary for the achievement of women rights. Discussing the achievements of struggle for women rights in Pakistan she informed the audience that Constitution of Pakistan provides a very favourable environment to women. Pakistan is first among the community of nations to have a clause in Constitution that forbids discrimination against women. It also prohibits the formulation of any discriminatory law. Above all, Pakistani women are fortunate to get their political space and reservation right in the constitution. She highlighted the especially reserved seats in Federal and Provincial Assemblies for women to ensure their inclusion in political process. She appreciated the 33% representation of women in political decision making bodies. Furthermore, she pointed to various state machineries working for women empowerment e.g. WPC, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and National Commission on Status of Women. She emphasized on extended role of media and

civil society. She appreciated the initiatives taken by judiciary for violence and injustice against the women especially "sue motto power" through which it had taken up the various cases which is very encouraging. She hoped for further measures for protection of women in lower judiciary. She advised women to abandon reactive attitude to become proactive. She paid tribute to all wonderful women who struggled and sacrificed in traditional patriarchal society of Pakistan and placed Benazir Bhutto at the epitome of this struggle in political realm. She also mentioned the contributions of women in education, sports, armed forces and arts.

While deliberating on the role of alliance and connectivity, she specified that there is enough evidence based information that alliances reduce pressure and exchange of these alliances is very imperative for condensation. Alliances generate networks which create pressure points to influence change. Alliances also enhance leadership, she added.

Finally, she appreciated and thanked PIPS for providing high quality research assistance in all efforts of WPC.

The thought provoking speech by Honourable Dr. Atiya Inayatullah was followed by an eloquent address of former Speaker NA and founding member of WPC Honourable Ms. Fahmida Mirza. On the behalf of WPC, she expressed gratitude to all foreign delegates who participated in the conference e.g. Australia, Iran, Iraq, Indonesia, Jordan, Kyrgstan, Maldives, Nepal, Romani, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Turkey. She termed these participations in the conference as an unprecedented expression of Pakistan's unflinching resolve to envy the voices of women. She termed the women parliamentarians and leaders "the catalyst" of democracy, peace and women empowerment. She saw the future of women empowerment as promising. Furthermore, she is of view that the concept of patriarchy

is not confined within borders. Therefore, women's collective actions should go beyond these arbitrary boundaries. Subsequently, all participating women are a mosaic of unique narrative and diverse background. However, all women parliamentarians are under the common goals of combating the systematic injustices towards marginalized groups. She pressed that women can't be left out of the decision making role and asserted the motto "Nothing about us, without us." Relating to her inaugural speech she again emphasized that all 17



goals of SDGs impacts women's life. So, women must be included in every step to substantiate the effective change. Pakistan's government is the first power that institutionalized the oversight and monitoring of SDGs by establishing the parliamentary secretariat which is headed by the women Minister Honourable Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb.

Expressing her thought on the working of the conference, she said "In these two days of the conference, all participants deliberated through thematic sessions on terrorism, biases, and ignorance and building alliances and concluded that women should be

included in peace dialogues as they are the worst and direct affectees of war, terrorism and violence." She emphasized on maintaining the collective momentum and called upon all members of parliament from all participating countries to establish a coalition and persuade their respective governments to prioritize social justice. Additionally, transform these concepts into a permanent network of women parliamentarians for democracy and social justice which will enable all here to meet annually and provide a platform to share knowledge, formulate actions plans and unveil a future strategy of empowerment for

our population. She thanked all international delegates for their support and participation throughout the conference which has opened new avenues of cooperation and friendship between countries and their people. She emphasized on concrete action when she said "the distance between your dreams and action is called action. She announced the WPC Pakistan is opening its membership for men and women parliamentarians and civil society members to join as friends of WPC. She concluded with the token of appreciation for working Council and Secretary of WPC, Speaker NA and the entire organizing team.

The conference concluded with the presentation of Islamabad Declaration, Resolution and Note of Thanks by Ms. Shaista Pervaiz Malik. It was unanimously endorsed to take forward the Resolution adopted for building alliances in spirit of Islamabad Declaration. The international delegates thanked the WPC in Pakistan for convening the conference.

PROGRAM AGENDA

Sunday, 12th March 2017

International Guests Arrive
Stay: Marriott Hotel Islamabad

DAY ONE

Monday, 13th March, 2017

INAUGURAL SESSION

VENUE: **Marriott Hotel, Islamabad**

08:30 - 08:45	Participants to arrive at the Conference Hall
08:50 - 08:55	Participants to be seated All gates closed
09:00 - 09:05	National Anthem
09:05 - 09:10	Conference to commence with the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran
09:10 - 09:20	Formal Welcome Address by MNA Shaista Pervaiz Malik, Secretary WPC
09:20 - 09:30	Opening Remarks by Dr. Fehmida Mirza MNA/ Former Speaker National Assembly and Patron WPC
09:30 - 09:50	Special Program
09:50 - 10:00	Address by the Speaker National Assembly
10:00 - 10:15	Address by the Chief Guest
10:15 - 11:00	TEA BREAK
11:00 - 13:00	PLENARY ONE

THEME: **Confronting Terrorism for a Peaceful Democratic World**

Inclusive, accountable and strong democratic institutions imperative for ensuring peace and stability; the role of political parties in positioning women in peace dialogues and decision making;
The discussion will revolve around:

- Effective role of women parliamentarians in promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies for women's socio-economic empowerment
- Role of media in curbing terrorism and reassessing its rhetoric while covering news/stories on terrorism _ a responsible way forward
- Role of media in promoting women's engagement in peace building and democratic processes

Panelists:

1. Senator Mushahid Syed
2. Senator Nuzhat Sadiq

3. Mr. Muhammad Baligh Ur Rehman, State Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control
4. Ms. Mossarat Qadeem, Member National Commission on Status of Women
5. International Delegate
6. International Delegate
7. International Delegate

The Panellists will speak for 5-7 minutes each on the subject followed by Q & A Session

13:00 – 14:00
1400 – 16:00

LUNCH BREAK

Thematic Group Discussions [Three Simultaneous Thematic Groups]

Thematic Breakup Groups:

Chair: Pak Delegate Co-chair: International Delegate

1. Role of strong democratic institutions in peace & security nexus
2. Women parliamentarians' mandate to effectively promote peaceful, just and inclusive societies
3. Responsibility of media in curbing terrorism and violence

16:00

DAY ONE PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDE

EVENING PROGRAM:

18:30 – 19:30
19:30 – 21:30

Visit to the Parliament

Conference Dinner hosted by the Hon. Speaker National Assembly

DAY TWO

Tuesday 14th March, 2017

09:15 – 09:30

Participants to gather in the Conference Hall

09:30 – 11:00

PLENARY TWO

THEME:

Confronting Biases for an Inclusive Society

The session will review and discuss social inequalities and injustices within societies – Issues of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Violence Against Women (VAW); effective role of women parliamentarians in addressing the Issues and Gaps. The discussion will revolve around:

- Socio-Economic and cultural biases that put women to disadvantageous position and makes them most vulnerable to all forms of violence;
- GBV- Special reference to the issues and challenges for Transgender in our respective societies
- Strategies and best practices that effectively curb VAW & GBV
- Women with Disabilities -Issues and challenges of their participation for sustainable development
- Nature and extent of inequalities that undermine social cohesion;

Review of scientific and empirical evidence verses perceptions of injustice;

- Women Parliamentarians strengthening their legislative, oversight and representative roles for contextually addressing GBV and VAW

Experts

1. Former Parliamentarian Ms. Yasmeen Rehman
2. Secretary WPC Ms. Shaista Pervaiz Malik
3. Senator Ms. Sitara Ayaz
4. Barrister Zafar ullah (SAPM Law)
5. International Delegate
6. International Delegate
7. International Delegate

The Panellists will speak for 5 minutes each on the subject followed by half hour Q & A Session

11:00 – 11:30 TEA BREAK

11:30 – 13:00 Thematic Group Discussions [Three Simultaneous Thematic Groups]

Thematic Breakup Groups:

Chair: Pak Delegate Co-chair: International Delegate

1. Bringing about change; women parliamentarians influencing and reinforcing the political agenda to advance women empowerment initiatives
2. Cohesive Strategies to curb various forms of violence; domestic violence, child labor, forced and child marriages, harassment at work place, physical, sexual and emotional abuse
3. GBV and challenges of integrating transgender in development agenda

13:00 – 14:00 LUNCH BREAK

14:00 – 16:00 PLENARY THREE

THEME: Confronting ignorance for a healthy and educated citizenry

“Accelerating the Achievement of SDGs and the Role of Women Parliamentarians”

The session will review and promote a gender-responsive and rights-based approach to implementing, monitoring and reporting on the SDGs for women’s social, economic and cultural empowerment. It will deliberate on the foundations for approaches as already have been laid down in international human rights conventions for addressing issues of violence against women that thrive in the absence of women’s rights; The discussion will revolve around:

- Mainstreaming SDGs for implementation by the State and the

stakeholders and aligning SDGs with relevant international human rights instruments [CEDAW, CRC, UNCRPD and ICCPR vis a vis the SDGs (Goals 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, & 16)]

- Gender in climate change and disaster risk reduction; Role of women Parliamentarians in developing gender responsive strategies
- Women and Climate Change achieving SDGs 6, 13 & 7
- Role of women parliamentarians in integrating women in environmental planning and policy making processes
- Gender in climate change and disaster risk reduction; Role of women Parliamentarians in developing gender responsive strategies
- Women and Climate Change achieving SDGs 6, 13 & 7
- Role of women parliamentarians in integrating women in environmental planning and policy making processes

Panelists:

1. Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb, Minister of State for Information
2. Senator Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq, Focal Person, Prime Minister's Polio Cell
3. MNA Mr. Shahryar Afridi
4. Mr. Ashtar Ausaf (Attorney General of Pakistan)
5. International Parliamentarian
6. International Parliamentarian
7. International Parliamentarian
8. International Parliamentarian

The Panellists will speak for 5 minutes each on the subject followed by half hour Q & A Session

16:00 – 16:30 TEA BREAK

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS OF DAY TWO CONCLUDE

DAY THREE

Wednesday 15th March, 2017

09:30 – 10:30

PLENARY FOUR

THEME: Strengthening democracies; women parliamentarians as agents of change and transformation for their societies

The discussion to revolve around:

- Women influencing the political agenda, policy making and legislation for inclusive sustainable development
- Existing and Potential Mechanisms Supporting a Meaningful and Substantive Role of Women Parliamentarians In Realizing their Mandate
- Experiences from participating Countries – Discussing Similarities and mechanisms that work for women in democracies
- Strategies for Working With Fellow Parliamentarians and achieving Gender equality

Panelists:

1. Ms. Marvi Memon (Chairperson BISP)
2. MNA Dr. Fouzia Hameed
3. Ms. Fauzia Vigar, Chairperson PCSW
4. International Parliamentarian
5. International Parliamentarian
6. International Parliamentarian

The Panellists will speak for 5 minutes each on the subject followed by half hour Q & A Session

10:30 – 11:00**TEA BREAK****11:00 – 12:00****Meeting of the Core Committee with international delegates to finalise the text of Conference Declaration****12:00 – 13:30****CLOSING PLENARY****“Building Alliances - Women and Parliamentarians Working Together”****Panelists:**

1. MNA Dr. Fehmida Mirza, Patron WPC
2. MNA Ms. Munaza Hassan
3. Former Parliamentarian Dr. Attiya Anayatullah
4. International Parliamentarian
5. International Parliamentarian
6. International Parliamentarian

Discussions to revolve around

- How women's organizations, including the state gender machinery, can support women in parliament and other decision-making positions in promoting social justice collectively
- Mechanisms to promote coordination between women's organizations, civil society and women in parliament
- Building Alliances: Strengthening the existing regional women parliamentarians' associations - Discussion on how to make these associations sustainable and effective
- Coordination of Women Parliamentarians at a Regional Level_ Revival of the Association of Women Parliamentarian from South Asia

Chief Guest:**Senator Mian Raza Rabbani, Chairman Senate of Pakistan****Chair:****MNA Dr. Fehmida Mirza/ Patron WPC**

12:00-12:10

Address of the Chair on the Revival of the SAARC Women Parliamentarians' Association, followed by discussion, if any

12:10 - 12:15

Presentation and approval of Conference Declaration

12:15 – 12:15

Signing of the Declaration by Heads of delegations

12:15- 12:30

Concluding Address of the Chief Guest

12:30- 12:40

Vote of Thanks by the Secretary WPC

12:40 –13:00**Group Picture****13:00 – 14:00****LUNCH**

ANNEX – III

LIST OF INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES

Sr.#	Countries	Nominations
1.	Maldives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hon. Asma Rasheed, MP Hon. Anara Naeem, MP
2.	Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hon. (Dr.) (Mrs.) Sudarshini Fernandopulle, Member of Parliament and State Minister of City Planning and Water Supply Hon. (Dr.) (Mrs.) Anoma Gamage, Member of Parliament and Deputy Minister of Petroleum Resources Development
3.	Turkey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Şenal Sarihan, MP (Republican People's Party - CHP) Ms. Zühal Topcu, MP (Nationalist Movement Party - MHP) Ms. Hüsnüye Erdoğan, MP (Justice And Development Party – AK Party) Mr. Ali Yildiz (Foreign Relations and Protocol Officer)
4.	Myanmar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myintmyintsoe, Judicial and Legal Affairs Committee Botahtaung Constituency, Young Division Cho Cho Win, Public Accounts Committee Mawlaik Constituency, Sagaing Division Nawmya Say, Chairman Enhancement of Education Committee, Kayah
5.	Iraq	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Iqbal Abdul Hussain
6.	Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Mahreen Farooqi
7.	Romania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mrs. Mara MAREŞ (Parliamentarian / Secretary of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men)
8.	Kyrgyzstan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Aida Ismailova (MP of the Jogorkukenesh (Parliament))
9.	Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hon. Chitralekhayadav Hon. Pemba Lama Hon. Srijanataramukhatri Ms. Rekha Upadhyaya Acharya (Under Sectary)
10.	Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mrs. Dewi Coryati, M.Si (Member of Commission on the home and Council of Ministers and General Election Affairs) Ms. Ammy Amalia Fatma Surya, SH. M.Kn (Member of Commission on the Education, Sport and History Affairs)

Sr.#	Countries	Nominations
11.	Jordan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E MP Ms Enssaf Alkhawaldeh. • H.E MP Ms Shaha Abushusheh • H.E MP Issa Ali Issa Khashashneh • Mr Mansour Kraishan Administrator.
12.	Iran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Parvaneh Salahshoori MP • Ms. Masoomeh Aghapor Alishahi MP • Ms. Pantea Ranjbar Mohammadi (Protocol InCharge and Interpreter) • Ms. Nayeera Adeeba (International Affairs Expert)