

# Democracy for All - International Democracy Day 2019



in collaboration with



WESTMINSTER  
FOUNDATION FOR  
DEMOCRACY



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## Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my profound gratitude to the Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan, Mr. Asad Qaiser for his invaluable support.

I express my gratitude towards all honourable members of WPC for their cooperation.  
A very special thanks to all our distinguished guests and Panelists whose presence and participation made the celebration an inspiring experience.

I appreciate the partnership support extended by Westminster Foundation of Democracy to materialize this activity.

Tireless work and constructive contributions of WPC team deserves applause.



Ms. Munaza Hassan  
Secretary Women's Parliamentary Caucus

## Acronyms

BAP	Balochistan Awami Party
GDA	Grand Democratic Alliance
JUI-F	Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazl-ur-Rehman)
MNA	Member of National Assembly
PPP	Pakistan People's Party
PIPS	Parliamentary Institute of Parliamentary Services
PML-N	Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz
PTI	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf
PML	Pakistan Muslim League
MQMP	Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan
PTV	Pakistan Television News
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
WPC	Women's Parliamentary Caucus
WFD	Westminster Foundation for Democracy
UNWomen	United Nation Women

## 1 Background

The International Day of Democracy offers an opportunity to look for ways to strengthen democracy and seek approaches for the systemic citizen engagement. This includes reaching out to masses to understand the role parliament plays and can potentially play in tackling economic and political inequalities and making democracies more inclusive by bringing the young and marginalized into the political system.

In this regard, WPC in collaboration with WFD planned to reach out and engage with the citizens of the country at a broader scale and help youth to showcase their talents while building a lasting understanding about the parliamentary system in Pakistan.

### Objectives

To highlight the intent of the parliament to engage more actively with citizens especially young future leader from all walks of society.

Some specific objectives for the event were as follows:

- 1- Fostering better understanding about parliament in general and role of citizens in inclusive democracies.
- 2- Inviting citizens especially young future leader and marginalized groups to interact more actively with the parliament especially WPC.
- 3- Initiating a formal liaison between WPC, youth and women at digital media outlets for continued engagement beyond the event.

### Target Audiences

#### Primary

##### Youth

1. Youth Leaders
2. University Students
3. Anchors of Electronic Media (TV)

### Approach

The event included four major activities on the theme of inclusive democracies

1. Poster Competition: “Women in Democracy”.
2. “30 Second Video Message” on: “Youth Participation in Democracy its importance and dynamics”
3. Blog writing competition: “Democracy Vs Majoritarianism”
4. Online Quiz – “Know your parliament” <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kindly see annexure 1 and 2 for details about the sequence of the program and details about the competition



## Management

A phased approach has been adopted for engagement of the citizens. The following phases were proposed for the event.

Details of the pertinent activities have been mentioned in the proposed action plan.

- A. **Design Phase Activities:** Panel of judges to be finalized and systems would be placed to cater to inquiries and submissions with transparency. Preparations for the International Democracy day celebrations were completed in this phase.
- B. **Promotional Phase:** WPC facilitated the parliament through its various sections reach out to segments of people working in the relevant areas with an effort to invite participation in the event.

In this regard each section encouraged their respective audiences such as women caucus focus on engaging women and young parliamentarians mobilizing youth from universities through a planned engagement while conducting information and invitation sessions as well as social media campaigns facilitated by Social Media team.

- C. **The Launch:** A series of competitions "Jamhoriyat Hum Sey" was also inaugurated by Honourable Speaker, National Assembly, Mr. Qaiser. This series of competitions will invite submissions in different categories such as, Blog writing, Online Quiz etc.
- D. **The Closing event:** The event will invite the top three submission in each category, asking them to present their work to the leading relevant parliamentary panels. Present them with awards for working with the Parliament. The event would be attended by academia, young leaders, media groups, diplomatic corps and students who have participated in the online quiz as well as parliamentarians.

## Expected Outcomes:

- A. Citizens have better understanding about the Parliament as a whole.
- B. Better awareness on avenues for inclusion and participation for common citizens.
- C. Strengthening image of the house as an inclusive representative of the citizens.
- D. Increased awareness and understanding among MPs on areas of inclusion and their importance.

## Participants Rewards

1. Certificates of Participation for all participants.
2. Cash Prizes (20,000, 15,000, and 10,000) for top three submissions in each category.
3. Letter of appreciation from WPC Secretary.
4. Exclusive meeting and Dinner with Speaker National Assembly, Secretary WPC and senior political leadership of all parties.

## 2 Democracy for All- International Democracy Day Celebration

### 2.1 Setting the stage

In September 1997 the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) adopted a Universal Declaration on Democracy. That Declaration affirms the principles of democracy, the elements and exercise of democratic government, and the international scope of democracy. In 2013, IPU promoted the International Day of Democracy through its Member Parliaments in 162 countries. In 2007 the United Nations General Assembly resolved to observe 15 September as the International Day of Democracy—with the purpose of promoting and upholding the principles of democracy—and invited all member states and organizations to commemorate the day in an appropriate manner that contributes to raising public awareness.

Democracy literally means power of the people in Greek. **Democracy originated in Athens during the 5th century BC.** Democracy in Athens was very different from more modern forms. There were two main factors that were considered essential to the success of ancient democracy: the size of the community must not be too large, because this would not allow all members of to participate in debates and meetings, and citizens should have enough free time to actively engage in politics. In Athens, this meant that slaves were used to perform the majority of work. True democracy is a two-way street, built on a constant dialogue between civil society and the political class. This dialogue must have real influence on political decisions. This is why political participation, civic space and social dialogue make up the very foundations of good governance.

The purpose of this very event was to bring together youth from universities across Islamabad and give them an opportunity to interact with Parliamentarians and encourage them to take part in political process. The event was also organized to launch a quiz competition “*Jamhoriyat Hum Se*’ for youth of Pakistan in collaboration with WFD.



#### BOX 1: Key Statistics related to the Event

- A. Total number of attendees: Total= 197, Female = 118, Male = 79
- B. Total number of students: Total = 180, Female = 104 , Male = 76
- C. Total number of guest legislators: Total = 13, Female = 11, Male = 2
- D. Total number of panellists: Total = 7, Female = 6, Male = 1
- E. Total number of Universities: 13
- F. Total number of media personalities/TV anchors: 4

## 2.2 Proceedings:

Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), in collaboration with Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Pakistan successfully conducted an interactive event "Democracy for All" on 19th of September at Pakistan Institute Of Parliamentary Services to commemorate the International Day for Democracy. This informative activity mainly engaged University students and academicians. The primary objective of this gathering was to initiate fostering a better understanding and meaningful relationship about parliament in general and role of citizens in inclusive democracies in particular. This event impressively highlighted the importance of active participation of every community for the purpose of strengthening democracy.

Honourable Secretary Women Parliamentary Caucus, Ms. Munaza Hassan welcomed and thanked the panelists and guests for their presence. Ms. Hassan, while talking about the event said that the purpose of the event was to bring the youngsters close to the parliament and to involve them within the political process. Honourable Munazza Hassan, who spoke on importance of youth in promotion of democracy and encouraged the students to take ownership of their state and work for its betterment. She also concentrated on the need for Pakistani Youth to look at Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah's struggle and take inspiration from him.



*WPC presenting souvenir*

In his keynote address Honourable Speaker National Assembly (NA), Mr. Asad Qaiser spoke at length about the sheer importance of active participation of citizens in democracy and also about the need and relevance to follow democratic ideals at an intra-party level. He focused on the need for intra-party election, giving workers respect and opportunities to lead and hold decision-making positions. The Honourable Speaker passionately motivated the youth to strive and struggle for a better tomorrow. He also reminded the young audience of their importance within the system.



The Speech of the Honourable Speaker was followed by formal inauguration of "Jamhoriyat Hum se" competition. The inauguration was followed by speeches of the distinguished panellists. The format of the event was as such that the honourable Parliamentarians from the panel spoke to the audience first and then the floor was opened to take questions from the audience. The questions were taken in three rounds, in each round 3 of the audience members were given the opportunity to put forward their questions to the panel followed by the panel members' response.



## BOX 2: Key questions in the interactive session of the event

Main questions that were raised by the audience during the interactive session

### Round I:

- i. How can Parliamentarians ensure the public that if they openly speak up, their livelihoods would not be threatened?
- ii. What is the work that has been done by National Assembly towards filing of public petition to the Standing Committees in National Assembly?
- iii. Should Pakistan have a Parliamentary form of Government or Presidential form of Government? Which one is better?
- iv. Globally there is a debate going on that debt-based economy should be replaced by resource based economy because debt base economy keeps wealth in certain hands and is not climate friendly? What system is better for Pakistan?

### Round II:

- v. Why has KP Government imposed the rule for students to wear burqas to school and other provinces have not when harassment is the issue that women face in all provinces alike?
- vi. The elected Representatives of people from North and South Waziristan were jailed for 3-4 months on the basis of suspicion. For all this time, people of North and South Waziristan had no representation in the Parliament? What kind of democracy is this?
- vii. How is the vote of an illiterate person equal to the vote of a literate person?

### Round III:

- viii. Why do parties accept politicians who have previously sided with dictators and were part of autocratic system of governance?
- ix. When will situation South Punjab change?
- x. If a farmer raise his voice and protests against injustice, would he be treated the same way as politicians are treated by Police in Pakistan?
- xi. Students are told to work hard and come forward, which students do but there are very little opportunities for us. The only way that we say is to go abroad. Why are not more job opportunities created for young people in Pakistan?



*Audience Interaction*

In their speeches, the panellists discussed the importance of democracy and youth participation in the democratic process. They spoke on the importance of democracy in a country like Pakistan which is racially and ethnically very diverse. The panel pressed on the need for youth to work hard for strengthening of democracy in Pakistan. The perils of dictatorships and autocratic governments were also focused upon with freedom of expression and human rights violation as the main elements of it.

#### **Panellists included**

- MNA Asad Umer, PTI
- MNA Kishwer Zehra, MQM
- MNA and Ex-secretary WPC, Shaista Pervaiz, PML-N
- MNA Shahida Akhtar Ali, JUI-F
- Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq, PML-N
- Honourable Secretary WPC, MNA Munaza Hassan, PTI
- TV Anchor Fareeha Idrees

MNA Saira Bano, GDA, MNA Naureen Farooq, PTI, MNA Sobia Kamal, PTI, MNA Zill E Huma, PTI, MNA Nusrat Wahid, PTI, MNA Sajida Zulfiqar Khan PTI, MNA Nafeesa Khattak PTI also graced the event with their presence and inspired the youth to step ahead in building national and social cohesion.

The event was moderated by Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen Senior Technical Advisor UNWomen to WPC.

Most of the male audience were directing their questions to the only male Parliamentarian, Honourable Asad Umer, on the panel. Male audiences question were more general and open ended. While the female audience questions were issue based and addressed to the whole panel.



*Senior Technical Advisor Dr. Rakhshinda moderating the event*

### **BOX 3: Key points from the Statements of the Distinguished Panellists**

#### **Honourable Speaker Asad Qaiser**

- Democracy has changed the culture of the world. It is the only form of the government that has given people the complete right to govern themselves as well as ensured their rights.
- In Pakistan, all the institutions as well as parties need to work extensively for the strengthening of democracy.
- Political parties in Pakistan need to put work and effort into making their parties truly democratic.
- Democracy in parties can only come through intra-party elections.
- Political parties should discourage nepotism and favouritism. They are destroying democracy in Pakistan.
- We need to work on making it legally binding for parties to elect leaders through elections in parties.
- Holding intra-party elections would give an opportunity to workers from grass root level to come in decision making positions.
- If workers are given the opportunity to run for leadership positions in parties and to vote in intra-party election, they will vehemently own their parties and work towards strengthening of democratic culture.
- National Assembly is working on the establishment of procedure for filing of public petitions in Standing Committees of the National Assembly.
- Public petitions would give National Assembly an opportunity to connect with public, academia and civil society and help it in taking more informed decisions.
- Youth should not underestimate their power, the role they can play in politics and strengthening of democracy.
- Youth are the agents of change and they will change the future of Pakistan.



### **Honourable MNA Munazza Hassan**

- The purpose of democracy is to serve people. People are the soul and core of any democracy.
- Youth is very important for the promotion of democracy. Youth should take ownership of Pakistan and work for its betterment and strengthening of democracy.
- Constitution of Pakistan is the main upholder of democracy in Pakistan, which is why it is necessary for every young person to study it.
- The Founding Father of Pakistan Mohammad Ali Jinnah was one the biggest democrat of his time. He truly believed in the principles of democracy.
- Quaid-e-Azam's speeches give a main crux of the Constitution of Pakistan which is why it is important that everyone studies it.



### **Honourable MNA Kishwar Zehra**

- It has been 70yrs since Pakistan was established and we have still failed to establish a proper democratic system in the country which is a shame for the older generation.
- I hope that what the older generation failed to achieve would be achieved by the younger generation.
- Democracy is the name of 'Freedom of Expression'. And 'Freedom of Expression' translates into votes. To strengthen Democracy we need to make our parties democratic.
- We have to make the resolve right here, right now that not only we have to save Pakistan but also work towards strengthening it.



### **Honourable MNA Shaista Pervaiz**

- There is an urgent need for introspection on the fact that if we have done justice to Pakistan and our ancestors who struggled hard for this independent nation.
- Democracy is about participation and inclusiveness. Democracy is never about one person and their will but the collective will of the masses that make it the best form of government.
- For Democracy to flourish in Pakistan, we need democratic parties. Democracy in parties will only strengthen if we join parties, take part in politics and own our parties.





- The youth needs to work hard because the responsibility of taking this country forward solely lies on them.

#### **Honourable MNA Shahida Akhtar Ali**

- Freedom of Speech and people's voice is very essential to democracy.
- Democratic institution can be stable only if we give voices to people equally.
- Pakistan is a diverse country; we cannot flourish if we keep on fighting and discriminating amongst ourselves on the basis of ethnicities.
- Thirty years of dictatorship in Pakistan has set our country behind in a lot of fields and area.
- Dictatorship is never good because it takes away the basic right of expression from human.
- We can see that from the example of Kashmir, where there is an autocratic government, there are human rights violations.
- We need to work hard and turn our democracy into true democracy in essence and practice.



#### **Honourable Senator Ayesha Raza**

- The youth of Pakistan needs to realize the importance of 1973 Constitution of Pakistan. Constitution ensures our rights and freedoms.
- We can sit in drawing rooms and complain but if we do not get involved in the political process nothing can change.
- Engage in political process and take part in the political discourse because that is what would strengthen democracy.
- Engage in political process but use your emotions positively. Be tolerant of different opinions because difference of opinion is the beauty of democracy.
- The role of Parliament is representation, legislation and oversight. Oversight is done through debates in the Parliament.





### **Honourable MNA Asad Umer**

- Pakistan is a diverse nation, which makes democracy very essential for us. Multi-ethnic societies are bound together by democracy. Diverse countries where there is no democracy are in the state of unrest and chaos.
- In Pakistan, during first phase of dictatorship we lost Bangladesh, in the second phase there was unrest in Sindh, if Benazir Bhutto had not emerged in the 1983 as a leader Sindh would have separated from Pakistan. In 1999, when dictatorship was imposed for the fourth time, we saw unrest in Balochistan.
- Pakistan is a democracy, now our battles should be about quality of democracy.



The event was concluded with a positive energy and resolve to actively engage all people including all women and youth from all classes in political processes to strengthen democratic values in Pakistan.

# Annexes

## Annexure 1: Program

### **Democracy for All – International Democracy Day Celebration**

Venue: Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services

September 19, 2019

Time	Session
10:00 am - 11:00 am	Arrival of guest/Registration
11:00 am - 11:05 am	Recitation of the Holy Quran
11:05 am - 11:10 am	National Anthem
11:10 am - 11:20 am	Welcome by Secretary WPC
11:20 am - 11:30 am	Keynote Address by Honorable Asad Qaiser, Speaker National Assembly
11:30 am - 11:40 am	Formal Launch of Competition
11:40 am - 12:30 pm	Statements by distinguished Panelists
<b>Interactive Session</b>	
12:30 pm - 01:00 pm	Importance of Inclusive Participation in Democracy
01:00 pm - 01:30 pm	Q&A Session
<b>Lunch</b>	

# JAMHORIAT HUM SE

- **Poster Competition: Women in Democracy**
- **Blog writing competition: "Democracy Vs Majoritarianism"**
- **Online Quiz – "Know your Parliament"**
- **30 Second Video Message on: Youth Participation in Democracy its importance and dynamics**

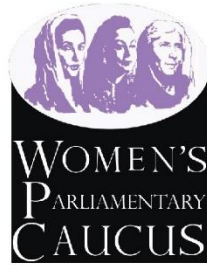
**PARTICIPANTS REWARDS:**

- **Certificates of Participation for all participants.**
- **Cash Prizes (20,000, 15,000, 10,000) for top three submissions in each category.**
- **Letter of appreciation from WPC Secretary.**
- **Exclusive meeting and Dinner with Speaker National Assembly, Secretary WPC and senior political leadership of all parties.**

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