

Media Update

7 August 2018



UNODC Press Release

First inter-province agreement on rule of law reforms

7 August 2018, Bhurban — The first inter-province consensus on rule of law reforms was achieved yesterday in Bhurban. Key members of the executives and the judiciaries including civil society from Balochistan, KP, Punjab and Sindh agreed on the importance of rule of law roadmap implementation plans, and the priority they give to key results as the means to deliver better justice outcomes for all citizens in Pakistan.

Convened by UNODC and the British High Commission, police, forensics, prosecutions, parole and probation and the judiciary from Balochistan, KP and Punjab emphasized the value of strong cross-institutional engagement in securing buy-in to the Roadmap processes, and the promising platform this provides for implementation. Sindh confirmed their roadmap will be completed by the end of the year.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Muhammad Raheem Awan, Secretary of the Law and Justice Commission, emphasised the pivotal role the Provincial Justice Committees can play in bringing all rule of law actors together around a systemic problem, for example prison overcrowding or the submission of challans. He highlighted recommendations made by the ground breaking 8th Judicial Conference – many of which resonated with those architects of the provincial roadmaps present in Bhurban.



Chief Guest, Mr. Shaukat Javed, Home Minister (Punjab), stated that:

"Improving the rule of law is not only about convicting criminals; it is also about building confidence among the citizens of Pakistan that the state can provide justice', thereby picking up on a common interest in all provincial roadmaps."

Mr. Javed further welcomed the opportunity afforded to build synergies between the provinces on common rule of law challenges and lesson learning. Going forward, Mr. Javed recommended that a list of rule of law priorities should be presented to the new Administration, and that the Federal Government should play a coordinating role at the national level. He also pointed out that Punjab, like other provinces, has introduced some path breaking reforms in the past few months, such as the Witness Protection Act and Legal Aid Act, which he hopes will improve people's experience of the justice system.

A panel discussion chaired by Mr. Tariq Khosa, Senior Rule of Law Expert with UNODC, followed the opening remarks, during which senior representatives from each province presented the strategic goals in their roadmaps and the governance structure for implementing them.

The next event will be a conference at national level, sharing the roadmaps with the new Administration, and the next provincial synergies meeting will be hosted by Balochistan.

The British High Commission supported the development of all rule of law roadmaps, including through UNODC in Baluchistan (who continue to support implementation). Susan Loughhead, on behalf of the High Commission, stated that this had been an exciting and innovative two year journey and she was delighted to see the four provinces and all judicial stakeholders discussing their roadmaps and how to implement them. Jouhaida Hanano from UNODC stressed the importance of implementation going forward, and the need to continue coordination and collaboration.

For further information or media enquiries kindly contact Rizwana Asad, UNODC Communications Officer via 0301-8564255 and/or rizwana.asad@un.org, or the British High Commission Press Office on 0300 500 5306.

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