

Media Update

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UN Women

PRESS RELEASE

UN Women, Provincial Women Parliamentary Caucus ink accord to end child marriages and women trafficking in KP

ISLAMABAD: UN Women and Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) of the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) signed yesterday evening (late evening of Monday), a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to advance women's empowerment and gender equality agenda in KP province. UN Women and WPC will make joint efforts for the promulgation and implementation of pro-women laws, with the first and foremost focus on awareness-raising and policy advocacy for legislation to end child marriages and women trafficking in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province including newly merged Tribal Districts.

UN Women Pakistan Country Representative Jamshed Kazi and Chairperson WPC Maliha Asgher Ali Khan signed the MoU in the presence of Ayesha Bano, General Secretary WPC-KP; Dr. Sumaira Shams and Humera Khatoon, Members WPC-KP; Aisha Mukhtar, Deputy Country Representative, UN Women Pakistan; Saman Ahsan, Portfolio Manager, Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, Human Rights and Governance, UN Women Pakistan; and Zainab Qaiser Khan, Head of Provincial Office UN Women KP.

UN Women is the United Nations organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN Women supports the federal and provincial governments as they strive to attain gender equality, and works closely with the government, civil society and other stakeholders to design laws, policies, programmes and frameworks needed to achieve women's empowerment and to protect the social, economical and legal rights of women, girls and excluded groups.

The Women Parliamentary Caucus KP has been established with an objective to strengthen the voice of women legislators in the Provincial Assembly through a united platform and put in joint efforts for debate and legislation on pro-women laws in the Provincial Assembly.

Under this MoU, UN Women will support the WPC on gender research, drafting gender sensitive laws, developing position papers, resolutions, declarations and reports. Moreover, UN Women and WPC will work together for awareness-raising and capacity building of local government representatives, WPC members, parliamentarians and political parties to understand better the challenges faced to advance gender equality and undertake concerted efforts to overcome those challenges.

Both the entities will also collaborate for joint commemoration of national and international occasions including International Women's Day, National Women's Day, and 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence in order to sensitize people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and their representatives on women rights and issues.

"It's a great honour for us to sign this MoU with UN Women. I'm sure that this partnership will help us build capacities of WPC members, the parliamentarians, local government representatives and the community in general to advance gender equality agenda of the provincial government," said Maliha Asgher Ali Khan.

"Our vision and mission is ideally aligned to together undertake important initiatives to improve the situation of women and girls' rights and empowerment in KP," said Jamshed Kazi, adding, "We have successfully worked with WPC-KP in the past where we were able to finalize the KP Women Empowerment Policy Framework and mainstream gender concerns in two draft bills of Internal Human Trafficking Bill and Home-Based Workers Bill.

Through current MoU, Un Women and WPC-KP will be drafting and promoting gender sensitive laws. "The Child Marriage Restraint Act of KP is an important legislation that we will prioritize to jointly review and advocate for. Child marriage remains prevalent in Pakistan and is a grave violation of fundamental human rights. Research indicates that 21 percent of girls are married before the age of 18 and three percent before 15. These important facts have made this a key direction for us to focus on the areas of human rights in Pakistan," Jamshed remarked.

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