UNFPA PRESS RELEASE

8th March – International Women’s Day

8 March 2020 (Lahore, Pakistan): International Women’s Day (IWD) celebrated on the 8th of March every year, the day is dedicated to honoring the achievements and contribution of women in the various field all over the world, and also reflect upon what more needs to be done to accelerate efforts for the gender equality and women’s rights.

This year, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Pakistan joined hands with the Women Development Department (WDD), the Government of the Punjab and brought together a diverse group of Pakistani women to celebrate their remarkable achievements in social, economic, cultural and various fields of life.

The inspiring event was held on 8 March in Lahore which attended by parliamentarians, heads of diplomatic missions, government officials, representatives from development organizations, private sector, UN agencies and media.

Speaking to the occasion, Ms Ambreen Raza, Secretary, Women Development Department shared the progress of WDD since its inception in 2012. She said, WDD is working closely with UNFPA to address gender-based violence by working towards multi-sectoral mechanism, the coordination mechanism would identify and evaluate the essential services to be delivered by key sectors i.e. health, social services, police, justice and governance. Ms Raza said, the platform will have representatives from each sector to promote coordination and reflection based on the experiences from the field and guide policy and advocacy actions to be promoted within and across the sectors.

Ms Raza further added, the Women Development Department is committed to support the implementation of the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010 within government departments while working with Ombudsperson offices and other relevant departments. Ms Raza highlighted, the Women Development Department is working with UNFPA on evidence-based policy advocacy, legislative reforms, collection and use of robust and reliable data, and establishing systems for monitoring as well as addressing women’s rights violations.
UNFPA commended work done by WDD and efforts of the Government of Pakistan for the implementation of the Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act 2010 including establishing mechanisms to address sexual harassment at workplace both at federal and provincial level. UNFPA look forward to working closely with honorable Minister, Ms. Ashifa Riaz Fatyana and Women Development Department Punjab for a meaningful, effective and close partnership.

Ms Ashifa Riaz Fatyana, Minister of Punjab for Women Development thanked UNFPA for their continued commitment and support to the ministry to putting in place the mechanism and procedures to address gender based violence.

The event also featured a panel discussion moderated by Ms Irum Bukhari, Additional Chief Secretary Energy Department, the discussion focused on Women Breaking Barriers: Safe and Dignified Workplace. The panel comprised of prominent personalities from civil society, lawyers, technical experts and women rights activists and shared reflections on their work for advocating women’s rights, changing environment with respect to dignified workplaces, and the existing challenges.

The event also marked ‘10 Years of Protection of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act 2010’ by highlighting its impact on the lives of women participating in the workforce: lessons learned over the years, the challenges that still hamper its implementation in every walk of life, and the way forward.