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‘Nusrat rendered matchless sacrifices for democracy’

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ISLAMABAD - The Aurat Foundation on Thursday organised a condolence reference to pay great tribute to Begum Nusrat Bhutto for her exemplary struggle and matchless sacrifices for democracy and women's empowerment in the country.

Participants of this reference advocated that Begum Nusrat Bhutto waged almost a decade long political struggle for restoration of democracy, the constitution and upholding of fundamental rights of Pakistani people in the most repressive period of General Zia-ul-Haq. They said she laid down unparalleled sacrifices for the supremacy of democracy and pioneered struggle for women's empowerment in Pakistan. She was a staunch supporter of women's rights, and was the first woman head of political party after ZAB's judicial murder. As a self-less member of the Women's National Guard, she rendered herself day and night into the relief operation of the millions of the uprooted refugees, feeding them, providing them shelter and succor; participants resolved.

At the occasion participants expressed their feelings and views towards the 'Iron Lady of Pakistan' and her long struggle for restoration of democracy during the most oppressive socio-political and violent times in the history of Pakistan.

Kishwar Naheed read her poem to pay tribute to Begum Nusrat Bhutto.

Further, on behalf of Anis Haroon, Chairperson National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), a participant also read her poem "Kab talak zulm rahega kamran-okamyab, waqt ley gaa ik roze khoon-e-na haq ka hisab / teri lahad key atraf mahakten haien

surkh gulab, terey pahloo mein khawbeda ik jahan-e-inqalab". Other speakers also included Senator Babar Awan, Zamurrad Khan (Chairperson Bait-ul-Maal), Senator Saeedam Iqbal (PPP), Senator Farhat Abas Syed (wife of Late Syed Qamar Abas), Nargis Faiz Malik (member National Assembly and President Women Wing of Islamabad District, Nasreen Azhar (member NCSW), Tahira Abdullah (a renowned women's rights activist), Senator Begum Surya Amir-ud-Din, Advocate Shah Khawar (former Deputy Attorney General of Pakistan) and Marvi Sarmad (human rights activist).

Ms Tahira Abdullah in her address reminded the participants that Nusrat Bhutto also served as the Chairperson of Red Crescent. Her contribution as the chairperson of the Red Crescent had gone a long way in improving the country's image. She also said that today we all should pay tribute to three brave men in the history of Pakistan' namely Justice Durab Patel, Justice Abdul Haleem and Justice Safdar Shah, who gave dissenting notes in the court judgment on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's hanging.

Participants also suggested that, in order to highlight the struggle of Nusrat Bhutto, the government shall set up a trust in her name which would also promote women's cause and support women leaders at grass root level.

They expressed that she had been a pride for Pakistani women by representing her country at various international forums. She represented Pakistan at the First UN Women World Conference held in 1975 at Mexico, and urged the global community for affirmative measures for women's empowerment.