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## ‘Women must be given right of land-inheritance’

### RECORDER REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The women of Pakistan should have equal rights of land inheritance whereas reserved seats for women in National and provincial assemblies should be increased from 17 percent to 33 percent, and should be paid based on value of their work.

This was suggested during a national consultation on ‘political parties’ manifestos - suggestions for women’s empowerment’ organised by Aurat Foundation. Sofia Naurin, from National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), Shehla Raza, Deputy Speaker, Sindh Assembly, PPPP, Marvi Rashidi, MPA, PML-F and Faiza Malik, MPA, PPP were among the participants.

Sofia Naurin said that women in agriculture shall be recognised as farmers and be given social protection. They shall be earmarked development funds at district level. Women farmers shall be allocated 1-5 acres of land in their own names. The draft suggestion also included the demand for a policy on natural resource management with full consideration of women’s rights. Women must be given their share of land-inheritance.

The suggestion on law and order situation included repeal of discriminatory laws including blasphemy law, Qisas and Diyat, law of evidence and Hadood ordinances. Formulation of personal family laws on minorities and amendment in minimum

wage ordinance 1961 were also desired.

The draft also demanded representation of women on senior level in all print and electronic media. Women workers shall be paid wages as per their work value. In order to ensure this, labor laws are required for informal economy, agriculture and domestic work. Minimum wage policy shall be formulated and implemented at all level.

The draft demanded that women’s reserved seats in national and provincial assemblies and the Senate should be protected and enhanced from 17% to 33%, and the seats shall be filled through constituency-based direct elections.

A woman has to be dependent on her husband, brother or her father to live her life in our society, she has to face physical or mental torture in their hands. Ending violence against women is an attitude that has to be taken back to homes, communities, workplaces and society at large.

Social and economic issues in Pakistan have increased annually and the overall Poverty level is increasing, at around 40 percent in 2011, and literacy is only better than Afghanistan, in Asia. A very large proportion of adults are without of jobs.

For ensuring women’s literacy and their effective participation in all development processes, allocation for education should be increased in national and provincial budgets and it should not be less than 5 percent of

GNP. All political parties should adopt girls’ education as a core priority in their manifestoes with time-bound commitments.

The draft demanded from the national and provincial governments to focus on provision of primary health and reproductive health care for all citizens with special focus on women. The parties should also ensure gender responsive budgets. Family planning services shall also be available at all health facility outlets. Elderly women shall be issued health cards for all basic health facilities coverage.

Shehla Raza said that although land reforms are currently not possible, but the PPP-led government has distributed a lot of lands among land-less farmers and women in Singh province.

Marvi Rashidi was of the view that she along with other party members would suggest Scio-political and economic reforms reference to women’s rights for their party’s manifestos.

One participant suggested that political parties should translate their manifestoes in all local languages. One of the participants, belonging to Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf, questioned that all the political parties have their manifestos, but what forbid them to implement their manifestos in true letter and spirit. On which one of the provincial women legislators replied that their party leaders didn’t listen to women.