

Civil society forum formed to project issues

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ISLAMABAD
AHMAD AHMADANI

Following the detailed deliberations and completion of consultation process, country's civil society organizations have finally formed Pakistan Civil Society Forum as a joint platform of action, coordination and engagement with government, national and international institutions.

"We resolve forming the Pakistan Civil Society Forum as a joint platform of action, coordination and engagement with government, national and international institutions. We believe this platform will be instrumental in promoting joint actions for citizens' rights and bridge the gap between government and people, advocate issues of fundamental importance to people and re-emphasise important issues in the national agenda," said a statement issued on Thursday by the civil society organizations.

A representative forum of civil society organizations from across Pakistan met here on Thursday at the Aurat Foundation's office in Islamabad to discuss ways for effective engagement with federal and provincial governments and state institutions, civil society and concerned citizens for strengthening a representative democracy, citizenship, and social and economic justice through coordinated and focused lobbying and actions.

On the occasion, leading civil society or-

ganizations have endorsed a resolution:

They resolved to recognize the significance and importance of this assembly in the backdrop of present scenario where the country is faced with serious problems of bad governance including terrorism, lawlessness, rising poverty, energy crisis and other economic challenges. They said, "We believe that neither the country's development nor its policy making adequately involves public participation. As a result of the top down development, the implementation gaps notwithstanding, issues of ownership, ecology, access to resources stand majorly compromised."

They expressed their concern over the gradual indiscernible reversal of devolution through the Constitutional Reforms (18th Amendment) that will deprive the people of Pakistan of a landmark gain through a democratic process.

"We are also troubled with issues of gender discrimination, growing intolerance against non-Muslims and the rising trends of ethnic and sectarian violence all over the country," they said.

The forum reaffirmed its commitment for continuing its struggle for citizens' rights and democratic, human and social development in the country. A national level core committee has also been formed comprising representatives of all federating units and rights-based organizations.

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