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## ■ STUDY CIRCLE FOR WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

# Enhanced role of MPs in implementation of sustainable development goals stressed

### Our correspondent

Islamabad

The Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) on Wednesday stressed on the enhanced role of parliamentarians in the implementation and oversight of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The demand came forward in a study circle for women parliamentarians organised by WPC in collaboration with Aurat Foundation (AF), Trocaire, DFAT, Trocaire and Australian Aid. The purpose of the study circle was to acquaint the women parliamentarians on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the transition to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The study circle started with

the introductory remarks by WPC Secretary Shaista Parvez and AF Director Advocacy Rabeea Hadi which was followed by in-depth presentation by Chairperson Parliamentary Taskforce on MDGs MNA Maryam Aurangzeb.

Maryam highlighted government's efforts and action plan to implement MDGs and SDGs. She highlighted some of the technical issues with the MDGs. She said that global development agenda can only succeed when it is streamlined with the national agendas and parliamentarians can play an important role in this regard.

She talked extensively about the reasons for Pakistan's failure to achieve most of the MDGs goals.

She termed lack of attention

by the governments, dearth of resources for the set targets, major shift of responsibilities as a result of devolution and lack of ownership and oversight by parliamentarians as basic reasons behind this below par performance.

Highlighting challenges to implement global development agendas, she said that after devolution, implementation of major development goals has been shifted to provinces whereas federal government is responsible to report for the international treaties. Maryam said that collection of data from provinces is a huge challenge. "Out of 41 indicators of MDGs, data for 33 indicators was not available," she said adding that there is still no forum where federal and provincial ministers

can discuss and coordinate their efforts.

Besides lack of data, she said that the government departments lack capacity to analyze the available data. She said that the government is working to improve curriculum for civil servants and judiciary to equip and aware the government machinery for emerging challenges. Maryam urged for better coordination among civil society, media and Parliamentarians for effective implementation of global development agenda.

Shehryar Ghazi from Rutgers WPF and Rabeea Hadi from AF highlighted the role of civil society organisations (CSOs) in achievement of these goals. They also discussed the need for increased interaction among

parliamentarians and CSOs to enhance their knowledge and learn from each other.

They acknowledged the essential role of parliaments in sustainable development through enactment of legislation and adoption of budgets and ensuring accountability for the effective implementation of international commitments.

They said that for Pakistan to enjoy the demographic dividend, holistic investments must be made to improve lives of adolescents and youth especially their health. They said that Pakistan has achieved key milestones in achieving gender equality including progressive laws pertaining to rights for women and policies to increase political and civic participation of women. The legislative ef-

orts (new legislation and effective implementation) must be sustained.

They pointed out that indicators of maternal health in Pakistan have experienced slow progress which has resulted in MDG5 being off-track in all provinces. "In order to improve the health status of women and young girls it is necessary to integrate maternal and reproductive health in national and provincial plans," suggested Shehryar Ghazi.

The women parliamentarians appreciated the study circle and expressed their desire to hold more study circles on women centric issues. Furthermore they agreed on raising SDGs specific issues through calling attention and questions.