

Launch of report on CEDAW

‘Govt’s efforts to improve affairs of women not effective’

By Ali Hassan

ISLAMABAD: Aurat Foundation on Thursday organised the launch of Pakistan Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) alternative report on ‘Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 2012’.

According to the report, various attempts made by the government to improve the legal, socio-economic and political status of women are commendable “but they are few in number and have proven not to be very effective”.

The agenda for eliminating all forms of discrimination against women has failed once again to make its place in the priority list of the government, it said.

UN Women-Pakistan Country Director Lena Lindberg attended the launch ceremony as guest of honour while Aurat Foundation Board of Governors member Anis Haroon presided over the session.

Maliha Zia and Riffat Butt, authors of the report, presented main findings of the report. Tahira Abdullah who wrote separate chapters of the report was guest speaker.

Aurat Foundation Chief

Operating Officer Naeem Mirza, while elaborating the process of producing the NGOs alternative CEDAW report, said that Aurat Foundation has been preparing the “shadow report” on CEDAW for a couple of years.

“Major impediments to gender equality and the elimination of discrimination are an ambivalent political will on part of the state, and resultant-ly its institutions; the absence of a firm commitment to the inherent principles and a reluctance to own the state’s obligations under the CEDAW Convention,” Mirza said.

He also criticised the government, particularly Ministry of Human Rights for not consulting the civil society and quarters concerned while preparing the government’s CEDAW report for the UN.

Expressing concerns that the ministry did not make its report public, Mirza demanded that the government “urgently make it public and seek response and opinion from the quarters concerned and women’s rights organisations”.

Tahira Abdullah talked about the lack of political will and commitment to ensure participation of rights activists in the preparation of government’s CEDAW report.

Earlier in the day, Aurat Foundation, in collaboration with Insan Foundation Trust, also arranged National Women’s Assembly. Both the organisations are working to advance women’s cause at different levels.

The event provided women from various ethnic backgrounds and cultures, activists, parliamentarians, students and academia an opportunity to share their experiences, role and contributions in promoting peace and security in all the regions of Pakistan.

The first panel on ‘Situation and Impact of Conflict on Women’ was chaired by Tahira Abdullah.

Speakers urged the policy-makers to incorporate women’s perspective in efforts to bring about social cohesion.

The second panel on ‘Role of State and Democratic Institutions in Prevention of Conflict’ was chaired by Anis Haroon.

Representatives from National and provincial assemblies spoke on the occasion.

Anis Haroon, while concluding the session, said that criticising politicians is not a good strategy but there is need to find out a solid political strategy to bring peace in the country.