

Sunday, March 27, 2011

International Women's Day celebrations

NGO screens documentary on women struggle

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ISLAMABAD – Aurat Foundation celebrated 100 years of International Women Day with the inaugural meeting of National Advisory Forum (NAF) and launch of a documentary "Main Safar Main Hoon" here in a local hotel on Saturday.

Nafisa Shah, Secretary General Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), addressing the participants expressed hope that the Gender Equity Programme would deliver effectively the much-needed financial support for women's rights. She further mentioned that the Sindh government's policy for acknowledging women's right to land entitlement. She wished and hoped the policy would also be carried out in other provinces. She stressed that National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) needed to more stronger and effective women to influence women's rights agenda, and that Women Parliamentary Caucus was also working on it.

Dr Marilyn Wyatt, wife of US Ambassador to Pakistan, Cameron Munter, told the forum that the United States had made a long-term commitment to improving the lives of women in Pakistan and that all the US development strategies reflected the importance of women's core roles in raising families, providing health care, running businesses, providing education and feeding children. "We consult women as we design our programmes and we hold our programmes accountable in terms of the impact they have on the lives of women and girls," Dr Wyatt said. "We're using our resources everywhere to create educational and professional opportunities for women - especially hard-working, ordinary women who are the bedrock of our societies."

Kamran Michale, Minister for Women's Development, Punjab, stressed the need for effective collaboration between the government and NGOs to deliver women their basic rights. Taimoor Khan, Director General, Ministry of Women's Development, while representing Samina Khalid

Ghurki, Minister for Women's Development, shared with participants that Aurat Foundation was playing a significant role in smooth running of Benazir Bhutto Crisis Centres by providing financial supports.

Talking about the plight of women in Sindh province, Tauqeer Fatima Bhutto, Provincial Minister for Women's Development, said that women in rural areas were so much caught in making bread and butter for their family that were unaware of their basic rights.

Sitara Imtiaz, Provincial Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in her address, said that people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were in a state of war, which was affecting women's human rights. She briefed the participants about the recent steps taken by the government of KP like women's crisis centre, and Bacha Khan Vocational Training Centre.

Saadia Danish, Advisor to Chief Minister, Gilgit-Baltistan, in her address highlighting the problems of women in GB said that rigid elements of GB opposed co-education, so it was necessary that government should set up colleges and university for women in GB.

Naeem Mirza, Chief Operating Officer, Aurat Foundation, briefed the participants on the Gender Equity Programme and introduced the National Advisory Forum (NAF) and its members. He said that the main role of NAF was to provide broad policy guidelines to GEP, align GEP with government's gender commitment, including international commitments, and provided guidelines for on-going cooperation with USAID. It is relevant to mention that Dr Fehmida Mirza as chairperson would head the Forum. Other NAF members include Ehsan Sadiq, AIG, Islamabad Police, Dr Nafeesa Shah, Ms Yasmeen Rehman MNA, Saadia Danish, Ghazala Gola, Sitara Ayaz, Tauqeer Fatimah Bhutto, Kamran Michael, Samina Pirzada, Dr Alya Khan, and Anis Haroon.

Meanwhile, a documentary titled as "Main Safar Main Hoon" was also screened during the event.