

Sunday, March 27, 2011

Speakers call for removing gender disparity

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a gathering on Saturday stressed the need for removing gender imbalances from the society ensuring women access to justice and human rights.

They were addressing at the launch of National Advisory Forum of USAID funded Gender Equity Programme (GEP) of Aurat Foundation here.

The programme was held in connection with the 100 years of International Women's Day and Silver Jubilee celebrations of Aurat Foundation of their struggle for women rights.

Secretary National Parliamentary Caucus, Nafeesa Shah as chief guest on the occasion said women are extending their valuable contribution in every field of life and are at the forefront in the war against terrorism.

She said women are working at every level as role models and being mother of future generation have pivotal role in national development process.

They comprise more than 50 per cent of the total population but still lack access to their basic rights including

education, health and justice.

Nafeesa said the women related departments, ministries and law enforcing departments especially women police are needed to be strengthened for ensuring their access to the basic services.

Highlighting government role for women emancipation, Nafeesa said Benazir Income Support Programmes (BISP) is especially designed to empower women who are the under privileged segment of the society, adding she said, women must be given right to land and other assets.

Representative GEP, Simi Kamal said Aurat Foundation (AF) is implementing a five year, USAID supported Gender Equity Program (GEP) is collaboration with The Asia Foundation.

The programme was aimed at closing the gender gap in Pakistan by proactively supporting the development of women and facilitate behavioral change in society by enabling women to access information, resources and institutions, and improve societal attitudes towards women's rights issues.

An inaugural meeting of National Advisory Forum of GEP was also held discussing the objective to provide broad policy guidelines to GEP, align GEP with government's gender commitment, including international commitments and provide guidelines for on-going cooperation with USAID.

US Ambassador to Pakistan, Cameron Munter's wife, Dr. Marilyn Wyatt told the forum that the United States has made a long-term commitment to improve the lives of women in Pakistan and that all US development strategies reflect the importance of women's core roles in raising families, providing health care, running businesses, providing education and feeding children.

"We consult women to design our programmes and we hold our programmes accountable in terms of the impact they have on the lives of women and girls and using our resources everywhere to create educational and professional opportunities for women, especially hard-working, ordinary women who are the bedrock of our societies." - APP