

Friday, October 28, 2011

REFERENCE

Nusrat's services for democracy, women's empowerment lauded

Our correspondent

Islamabad

Aurat Foundation organised a condolence reference to pay tributes to Begum Nusrat Bhutto for her struggle for democracy and women's empowerment.

Begum Nusrat Bhutto waged almost a decade long political struggle for restoration of democracy and the Constitution and upholding of fundamental rights of Pakistani people in the most repressive period of Dictator General Zia-ul-Haq. She laid down unparalleled sacrifices for the supremacy of democracy and pioneered struggle for women's empowerment in Pakistan. She was a staunch supporter of women's rights, and was the first woman head of political party after ZAB's judicial murder. As a self-less member of the Women's National Guard, she rendered herself day and night into the relief operation of the millions of the uprooted refugees, feeding them, providing them shelter and succour.

At the occasion participants expressed their feelings and views towards the Iron Lady of Pakistan and her long struggle for restoration of democracy during the most oppressive

socio-political and violent times in the history of Pakistan.

Kishwar Naheed read her poem to pay tribute to Begum Nusrat Bhutto. On behalf of National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) Chairperson Anis Haroon, a participant also read her poem.

Women's Right Activist Tahira Abdullah in her address reminded the participants Nusrat Bhutto also served as the chairperson of Red Crescent. Her contribution as the chairperson of the Red Crescent had gone a long way in improving the country's image. She also said, "Today we all should pay tribute to 'three brave men in the history of Pakistan' namely Justice Durab Patel, Justice Abdul Haleem and Justice Safdar Shah, who gave dissenting notes in the court judgment on Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's hanging."

Other speakers also included Senator Babar Awan, Chairperson Bait-ul-Maal Zamurrad Khan, PPP Saeedam Iqbal Senator (PPP), Senator Farhat Abas Syed (wife of Late Syed Qamar Abas), National Assembly and President Women Wing of Islamabad Nargis Faiz Malik, NCSW member Nasreen Azhar, Senator Begum Surya Amir-ud-Din, Advocate Shah Khawar (farmer

Deputy Attorney General of Pakistan) and Human Rights Activist Marvi Sarmad.

Participants also suggested that, in order to highlight the struggle of Nusrat Bhutto, the government shall set up a trust in her name, which would also promote women's cause and support women leaders at grass root level. They expressed that she had been a pride for Pakistani women by representing her country at various international forums. She represented Pakistan at the First UN Women World Conference held in 1975 at Mexico, and urged the global community for affirmative measures for women's empowerment. This was the time when the UN declared 'the 1975-1985' as the 'Decade of Women', during which women's movement spread across the world. Ironically, Nusrat Bhutto attended the first women's world conference and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto represented the Fourth UN Women World conference at Beijing in 1995, so far the last such conference. She has also received various international awards for her immense contribution to the greatest good of the largest number especially workers, women and children.