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■ GENDER EQUITY PROGRAMME

Women worst affected in disasters

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Islamabad

Desk studies conducted under the Gender Equity Programme (GEP) depict that in disaster-hit areas, women are the worst affected, as they lack information and access to relief and compensation services.

The studies were launched at an event titled 'Mainstreaming Research in Gender Interventions' organised by the Aurat Foundation. The GEP is a five-year USAID supported programme implemented by the Aurat Publications and Information Service Foundation (short titled as Aurat Foundation) in collaboration with The Asia Foundation.

The Gender Equity Programme aims at closing the gender gap in Pakistan by proactively supporting the development of women and seeks to facilitate behavioural change in society by enabling women to access information, resources and institutions, and improve societal attitudes towards women's rights issues. The studies identify current status of knowledge and actions under each objective area of the program and post-floods scenario. These studies also point out the gaps that need to be addressed.



ISLAMABAD: Senior Director Democracy and Governance USAID-Pakistan Catherine Johnson addressing the launching ceremony of studies on 'Mainstreaming Research in Gender Interventions'. — Hanif Khattak

The studies include 'Effects of the 2010 Floods on Women in Pakistan', 'Gender Based Violence in Pakistan', 'Women's Empowerment in Pakistan', 'Capacity of Pakistani Organisations to carry out Gender Equ-

ity Initiatives', and 'Gender Equity-Justice and Governance in Pakistan'. These researches were carried out by gender experts namely Dr. Rubina Saigol, Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen, Nazish Brohi and Rafiq

Jaffer.

Catherine Johnson, Senior Advisor, Democracy and Governance, USAID, was the chief guest on the occasion. She highlighted how building knowledge and data for ad-

vancing and empowering women is essential and central to USAID'S plan. She said that after keenly reading through all the studies, she sees a lot of space for policy discourse and legislation. She was also concerned how the gender-based violence in Pakistan is blocking women progress in sociopolitical and economic fields.

Aurat Foundation Chief Operating Officer (COO) Naeem Mirza said that research is a serious subject, as it provides grounds for policy discourse, awareness and good practices. "The research on gender issues is even more important work due to the much required policy and legislation," he said.

Simi Kamal, Chief of Party (CoP) GEP and expert on gender and water issues, shared with the participants the vision, objectives, strategies and matrix of the program. She also briefed the audience about the rationale of scoping studies, key finds and gaps left in the studies. The launch of research studies was followed by sharing of future research planning on gender equality. Hassan Akbar, Manger Monitoring and Evaluation, gave a detailed presentation on the upcoming research under the gender equity programme.