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Gender activists discuss devolution of women's ministry

■ DATELINE REPORT

ISLAMABAD — Gender activists discussed the highs and lows of the decentralisation of the Ministry of Women Development at a consultation arranged by the Aurat Foundation Friday.

The event titled “18th Amendment: Opportunities and Challenges for Provinces and Women” was an opportunity for the stakeholders to bridge information gap regarding post-18th Amendment scenario.

The main speakers included Anis Haroon, Chairperson of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), Jami Chandio, Executive Director of the Centre for Peace and Civil Society, Rehana Hashmi, Executive Director of the Sisters Trust and Consultant with UN Women.

The key speakers had mixed reaction to the devolution process whereas some of the participants strongly believed it would harm the cause of women development.

One of the major concerns of the participants was how the national and international commitments would be honoured and to what extent legislation would be implemented.

Some of the participants were hopeful of having better mechanisms to bring about change at the grassroots level after the devolution.

Anis Haroon also defended the devolution saying, “the opponents of the devolution did not understand the mechanisms after the process is completed.”

Jami Chandio said: “One of the major significance of 18th Amendment is it has reversed the centralization of state institutions done during the British rule. The amendment has effectively formulated the provincial autonomy.”

Rehana Hashmi expressed her disappointment over the confusion prevailing at the federal level on the devolution of the Ministry of Women Development.

She said: “The government has yet to issue notification on the financial and administrative structures after the implementation of the 18th amendment.”