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Provincial female MPs demand 10% quota in general seats

Our correspondent

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Female parliamentarians from provincial assemblies have demanded 10% mandatory quota for women in general seats to mainstream them in electoral processes before the next elections.

They were addressing a press conference after attending a two-day national consultation organised by the Legislative Watch Programme for Women's Empowerment of Aurat Foundation. The quota was demanded in addition to the already available reserved seats for women. They make part of the declaration endorsed by the participants at the end of the

consultation.

Prominent among those who attended the consultation included Shehla Raza, Deputy Speaker, Provincial Assembly, Sindh, Dr Ruqiya Hashmi, Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination, Balochistan, Ghazala Gola, Minister for Women's Development, Balochistan, Heer Soho, MPA (MQM), Sindh, Nusrat Saheer Abbasi, MPA (PML-F), Sindh, Humaira Alwani, MPA (PPPP), Sindh, Shameela Aslam, MPA (PML-N), Punjab, Faiza Malik, MPA (PPPP), Punjab, Amna Butter, MPA (PPPP), Deeba Mirza, MPA (PML-N), Punjab, Shazia Tehmas, MPA (PPPP), KP, Nargis Samin, MPA (PPP-Sherpao), KP and Noor-us-Sehar (PPPP), KP.

The women parliamentari-

ans from Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Punjab and representatives of civil society organizations re-affirmed their commitment to protect and preserve the provision of reserved seats in the constitution for women in the National Assembly, Senate and the provincial assemblies.

They believed that the provision of the reserved seats for women is the constitutional right of women of Pakistan under Articles 25, 34, 51 and 106, e.g. Article 25 (3) that states: "Nothing in this Article shall prevent the state from making any special provision for the protection of women and children."

"We believe that women parliamentarians role in Assemblies

helps to initiate debates on issues of women's empowerment both within and outside legislatures, and eventually, lead to their playing a key role in law-making on crucial issues which concern women and citizens of Pakistan," says the declaration.

They said that all important legislation (laws-bills on 'honour' killings, Women's Protection Act, Protection of Women from Harassment at Workplace, Domestic Violence Bill, Acid Control and Acid Crimes Prevention Bill and recently passed Prevention of Anti-Women Practices Bill) would have not been possible without the initiatives and consistent efforts of female parliamentarians across political parties.