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Women parliamentarians want 10% quota in general seats

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Women members from four provincial assemblies of country and representatives of civil society organisations on Saturday reaffirmed 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.

Women reiterated this step during a press conference organised by Aurat Foundation. On the occasion women parliamentarians also demand that political parties develop consensus among themselves to amend the Political Parties Act to provide mandatory quota of 10 percent of general seats of women to mainstream them in electoral processes before the next elections, in addition to the already available reserved seats for women.

The participants of the press conference were Shehla Raza, Deputy Speaker, Provincial Assembly, Sindh, Dr Ruqiyah 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 Noorus-Sehar (PPPP) from KP.

They were of the view that they believed that the provision of the reserved seats for women was the Constitutional right of women of Pakistan under

Articles 25, 34, 51 and 106, e.g. Article 25 (3) states: "Nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the protection of women and children".

They said they believe that women members role in assemblies helped 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. They vowed they would also like to reiterate the commitment made by the Women's Parliamentary Caucus at a Roundtable on 29 September 2011, that "we further commit to enhance and strengthen women's representation in legislatures by working within our respective political parties and elected representatives.