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ISLAMABAD: Aurat Foundation meeting calls for higher tobacco taxes and stronger anti-smoking measures in Pakistan.

Aurat Foundation Calls for Higher Tobacco Taxes

TIMES REPORT

ISLAMABAD : Parliamentarians, senior government officials, regulators, health experts and civil society representatives came together at a stakeholders' meeting organized by Aurat Foundation (AF) in Islamabad today, calling for stronger tobacco control measures, including increased tobacco taxation, larger graphic health warnings (GHWs) and stricter enforcement of regulations on Tobacco Advertising, Promotion and Sponsorship (TAPS).

The meeting, titled "Orientation on Strengthening Graphic Health Warnings and

Increasing Tobacco Taxation," was held at the Envoy Continental Hotel, Islamabad, with participation from parliamentarians, the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, the Tobacco Control Cell, PEMRA, health experts and civil society organizations.

Addressing the gathering as Chief Guest, Ms. Farrah Naz Akbar, Parliamentary Secretary for National Heritage, stressed that tobacco control must remain a national priority and called for collective action to protect the younger generation from the devastating health and social consequences of

tobacco use.

She said that Parliament has a critical role in translating public health evidence into effective legislation and policies, emphasizing that protecting children and young people from tobacco addiction is not merely a health responsibility but a collective national obligation.

Ms. Farrah Naz Akbar underscored the importance of using taxation as one of the most effective tools for reducing tobacco consumption. She noted that higher tobacco taxes can make tobacco products less affordable, particularly for young people, while simultaneously generating additional

resources for the government.

She also called for strengthening graphic health warnings on cigarette packs, observing that larger and more prominent warnings make the health consequences of smoking more visible to consumers and serve as an important deterrent, particularly for young and first-time users. The Parliamentary Secretary further emphasized the need for stronger implementation of restrictions on Tobacco Advertising, Promotion and Sponsorship, particularly in the rapidly changing digital environment.