

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) of Pakistan has made significant strides in 2024-2025, reinforcing its commitment to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment across the nation. Established in 2008, the WPC has emerged as a pivotal cross-party platform uniting women parliamentarians to advocate for gender-sensitive legislation and policies. Under the leadership of Secretary Dr. Shahida Rehmani, the WPC has expanded its influence through strategic initiatives, including the institutionalization of Provincial WPCs, gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), and impactful national and international engagements. Key achievements include hosting the National Women's Convention 2025, which unified federal and provincial WPCs to develop a Joint Action Plan 2025, and organizing Pakistan's first International Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Workshop. The WPC has also prioritized combating gender-based violence, enhancing women's political participation, and fostering economic empowerment through legislative advocacy and collaborative partnerships with UN Women, and other stakeholders. These efforts reflect the WPC's dedication to creating an inclusive, equitable, and just society for all women in Pakistan.

MESSAGE FROM SPEAKER NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PAKISTAN



I am pleased to acknowledge the publication of the Annual Report of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) 2024-25 and commend the WPC for its unwavering commitment to advancing gender equality, inclusive legislation, and women's empowerment in Pakistan.

I reaffirm my dedication to fostering inclusivity and forward-thinking initiatives that strengthen our parliamentary system. I appreciate the WPC's cross-party efforts on vital national issues, including legislative reforms, digital safety, gender-responsive budgeting, maternal health, and the prevention of gender-based violence.

Women's active participation in lawmaking is essential in achieving social justice and ensuring inclusive, representative legislation. The WPC's contributions have strengthened parliamentary democracy through dialogue and promoted gender-sensitive policymaking in Pakistan.

The National Assembly reiterates its unwavering support for the WPC and recognizes its pivotal role in building a more inclusive and democratic Pakistan, one where every woman can live with dignity, opportunity, and equality.

Pakistan Zindabad!

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq
Speaker, National Assembly of Pakistan

MESSAGE FROM DEPUTY SPEAKER NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PAKISTAN



It gives me immense pride to acknowledge the remarkable contributions of the Women’s Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) in championing the cause of gender equality and inclusive legislation in Pakistan. Under the capable leadership of Secretary WPC, Dr. Shahida Rehmani, the Caucus has evolved into a dynamic platform that transcends political boundaries and unites women parliamentarians for a common cause—the empowerment and advancement of women across all spheres of life.

The achievements highlighted in this report are a reflection of the dedication, vision, and collaborative spirit of WPC members who have worked tirelessly to ensure that the voices of women are not only heard but meaningfully represented in policymaking. From legislative advocacy to grassroots engagement, and from digital democracy to social protection, the WPC has tackled a wide range of challenges with purpose and integrity.

I also commend the efforts of all our development partners and civil society organizations, whose technical support and collaboration have been instrumental in driving the Caucus’s initiatives forward.

As Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, I extend my full support to the WPC in its ongoing mission to build a more just, inclusive, and gender-responsive Pakistan. Let us continue to stand together for a future where all citizens—especially women—can live with dignity, security, and equal opportunity.

Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah
Deputy Speaker,
National Assembly of Pakistan

MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY WPC



It gives me immense pride to present this Annual Report of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), capturing a year of purposeful action, inclusive dialogue, and shared commitment to the advancement of women's rights in Pakistan. Over the past year, the WPC has significantly expanded its footprint—strengthening institutional linkages, amplifying the voices of women in parliament, and advocating for inclusive and gender-sensitive legislation at both national and provincial levels.

This platform has allowed us to stand together on issues that matter most: equitable development funding, women's access to legal rights and identity, protection from gender-based violence, and enhanced political participation.

We have convened critical meetings of the General Assembly and Working Council, and launched impactful initiatives—ranging from national consultations and awareness campaigns to thought leadership workshops and international collaborations. We have also forged strong partnerships with provincial WPCs, civil society, media, and development partners to ensure our advocacy is informed, coordinated, and far-reaching.

A key achievement of this year has been our push for gender-responsive planning and budgeting, with renewed focus on addressing systemic inequalities. Through resolutions, conferences, and legislative scrutiny, WPC members have raised issues such as early child marriage, inheritance rights, and the creation of safe spaces for women across all provinces.

None of this would have been possible without the tireless efforts of the dedicated WPC team and the valuable support of our technical expert from UN Women, whose expertise greatly enriched our work. I would also like to extend heartfelt thanks to our partners for their continued collaboration and commitment to advancing gender equality in Pakistan.

As we look to the future, the Women's Parliamentary Caucus remains committed to institutionalizing the gains we have made, and ensuring that the women of Pakistan—regardless of geography, background, or belief—are empowered, heard, and represented.

Together, we will continue to shape a more inclusive, just, and prosperous Pakistan.

Pakistan Zindabad!

Dr. Shahida Rehmani
Secretary, Women's Parliamentary Caucus

MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER WPC



It is a great honour for me to serve as the Treasurer of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus during a year marked by immense dedication, progress, and collaboration. The Caucus has continued to emerge as a powerful voice for women in Parliament, ensuring that critical issues affecting women and girls are not only raised but addressed through thoughtful dialogue, legislative effort, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

As Treasurer, I have witnessed first-hand the commitment with which our members have worked to advance our shared goals. Whether it is championing gender-responsive budgeting, supporting pro-women legislation, or promoting inclusive economic opportunities, the Caucus has remained focused and united in its mission. The activities and achievements documented in this report are a testament to the teamwork, transparency, and accountability we strive to uphold in all aspects of our work.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to our Secretary, Dr. Shahida Rehmani, for her inspiring leadership, and to our partners—especially UN Women, and civil society organizations—for their continued technical and moral support. I also want to thank the entire WPC team and all members of the General Assembly for their contributions throughout the year.

Together, we will continue working for a Pakistan where every woman has the opportunity to thrive.

Ms. Shahida Begum, MNA
Treasurer,
Women's Parliamentary Caucus

WORKING COUNCIL



Dr. Shahida Rehmani
Secretary WPC



Shahida Begum
Treasurer WPC



Munaza Hassan
Member



Tahira Aurangzeb
Member



Shehla Raza
Member



Farukh Khan
Member



Rana Ansar
Member



Aliya Kamran
Member



Ayesha Nazir
Member



Samina Mumtaz
Member

INTRODUCTION

The Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) is a dynamic and inclusive cross-party forum that brings together women parliamentarians from across the political spectrum in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Founded on 21 November 2008, through a resolution of the National Assembly, the WPC aims to enhance women's participation and engagement in all parliamentary affairs. Led by an elected Secretary and a Working Council comprising women parliamentarians from both government and opposition parties, the Caucus plays a pivotal role in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the country.

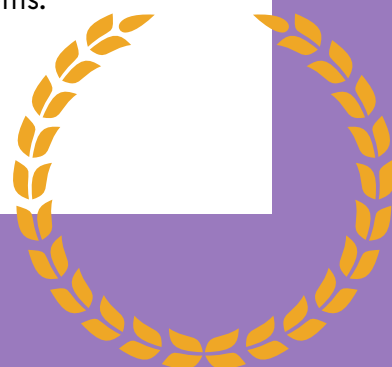
The WPC serves as a catalyst for change by carrying out a range of vital functions. It actively engages in developing gender-sensitive legislative responses to address the pressing needs and concerns of women. Through its oversight role, the Caucus ensures the review and supervision of gender-inclusive programs and policies, fostering accountability and effective implementation. Moreover, the WPC takes pride in representing the cause of women in Pakistan, acting as a strong and united voice to amplify their concerns and advocate for their rights at the highest levels of governance.

In addition to its legislative and oversight responsibilities, the WPC is committed to raising awareness on gender issues of urgent importance. By organizing campaigns, events, and awareness programs, the Caucus strives to promote understanding, dialogue, and action on critical gender-related challenges. Through these efforts, the WPC aims to shape public opinion, influence policy-making processes, and drive positive change in society.

With its unwavering dedication to the cause of women's empowerment, the Women's Parliamentary Caucus stands at the forefront of the gender equality movement in Pakistan. By fostering unity, promoting legislative reforms, and raising awareness, the WPC remains committed to creating a more inclusive, equitable, and just society for all women across the nation.

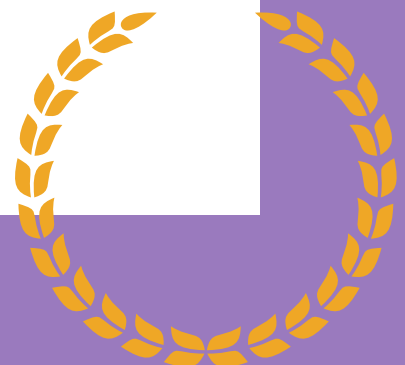
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

- National Women's Convention 2025: Held on 12-13 February 2025 in Islamabad, this historic event brought together federal and provincial WPCs from Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Gilgit-Baltistan. It resulted in the development of the Joint Action Plan 2025, focusing on legislative reforms, women's economic empowerment, political participation, combating gender-based violence, and institutional strengthening of WPCs.
- Strengthening Provincial WPCs: The WPC initiated a transformative campaign to establish and enhance Provincial WPCs, with learning exchanges in Balochistan (30-31 October 2024), Sindh (15 November 2024), and the launch of the Punjab WPC (22 January 2025), fostering inter-provincial collaboration and gender-responsive governance.
- Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB): The WPC organized two high-level roundtables (1 June 2024 and 12 June 2025) to advocate for GRB, analyzing federal budgets for gender inclusivity and proposing actionable recommendations to address systemic inequalities in education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for women.
- International Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Workshop: Hosted on 14-15 December 2024, this landmark event in Islamabad focused on gender-sensitive legislative drafting, bringing together parliamentarians from South Asia to share best practices and strengthen regional alliances for gender equality.
- 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence: On 4 December 2024, the WPC held a roundtable to evaluate Pakistan's legislative framework on gender-based violence, emphasizing stronger enforcement mechanisms and survivor-centric justice systems.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

- **Gender-Sensitive Legislation and Economic Justice:** The WPC's roundtable on 20 December 2024, titled "Poverty Has a Woman's Face," highlighted the gendered dimensions of poverty and advocated for legislative reforms to promote economic justice for women.
- **International and National Outreach:** The WPC represented Pakistan at a global gender equality event in Qatar and conducted national visits, including to NORI Hospital for breast cancer awareness and the National Incubation Center to support women's entrepreneurship.
- **General Assembly and Working Council Meetings:** The WPC convened nine General Assembly meetings and multiple Working Council sessions to address critical issues such as cybercrime against women, inheritance rights, and population growth, while planning key events like the National Women's Convention and 16 Days of Activism.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** The WPC strengthened collaborations with UN Women, UNDP, FES, and other organizations to enhance advocacy, capacity building, and policy implementation for gender equality.



STRENGTHENING NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUSES

In 2024–2025, the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) at the National Assembly of Pakistan initiated a strategic and transformative campaign to institutionalize and strengthen Provincial WPCs across the country. With an aim to foster unity, promote gender-responsive governance, and empower women legislators at all levels, the National WPC extended formal invitations and technical support to provincial assemblies. This was followed by a series of landmark learning exchanges and collaborative events in Balochistan, Sindh, and Punjab.

National WPC Outreach and Strategic Vision

Recognizing the essential role of Provincial WPCs in furthering gender equality, the National WPC, under the leadership of Secretary Dr. Shahida Rehmani, sent formal letters to the Speakers and women members of all Provincial Assemblies. These letters encouraged the establishment or strengthening of WPCs as bipartisan platforms within the legislative system. The outreach aimed to ensure that women parliamentarians across Pakistan have an institutional forum to influence policy, advance gender-sensitive legislation, and collaborate across party lines.

Learning Exchanges and Provincial Strengthening Activities

1. Learning Exchange – Balochistan Assembly (30–31 October 2024)

A delegation from the National WPC participated in a two-day workshop in Quetta to support the establishment of the Balochistan Women's Parliamentary Caucus. This initiative, in collaboration with UN Women, focused on facilitating peer-to-peer learning and sharing structural models from the Federal WPC.

Key Outcomes:

- Balochistan Assembly leadership, including Deputy Speaker Ms. Ghazala Gola Begum, affirmed their commitment to institutionalizing the WPC.
- National WPC Secretary Dr. Shahida Rehmani provided technical guidance on Rules of Business and caucus mandate.
- Interactive sessions fostered dialogue on adapting national best practices to Balochistan's unique context.
- Federal and provincial legislators aligned on developing an autonomous and functional WPC to drive gender reforms.

STRENGTHENING NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUSES

Learning Exchange – Balochistan Assembly - (30-31 October 2024)



STRENGTHENING NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUSES

2. Learning Exchange – Sindh Assembly (15 November 2024)

The Sindh WPC and National WPC jointly hosted a capacity-building and policy exchange forum with support from UN Women in Karachi aimed at enhancing the institutional effectiveness of the Sindh WPC.

Key Highlights:

- Ms. Rehana Laghari, Patron of Sindh WPC, welcomed the delegation and stressed the value of inter-caucus collaboration.
- Dr. Shahida Rehmani emphasized issues like child marriage and forced marriage as core legislative priorities.
- Ms. Tanzila Umi Habiba, Convenor of Sindh WPC, shared the province's legislative successes and underlined the need for robust implementation mechanisms.
- Sessions covered gender development in assemblies, autonomy of WPCs through defined Rules of Business, post-legislative scrutiny, and technical frameworks for operational strengthening.
- Sindh WPC identified immediate actions, including developing its Rules of Business, enhancing Secretariat functions, and improving inter-institutional coordination.

Learning Exchange – Sindh Assembly - (15 November 2024)



STRENGTHENING NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUSES

3. Curtain Raiser – Punjab Assembly WPC (22 January 2025)

The Punjab Assembly hosted a landmark event celebrating the official launch of the Punjab Women's Parliamentary Caucus. Organized in collaboration with UN Women, the event marked a significant step in institutionalizing women's leadership within the Punjab legislature.

Event Achievements:

- Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan announced progressive reforms, including women's representation in all standing committees.
- Ms. Ishrat Ashraf, Convenor of the Punjab WPC, reaffirmed cross-party unity and the caucus's legislative agenda.
- National WPC Secretary Dr. Shahida Rehmani highlighted the evolution of WPCs across Pakistan and unveiled the upcoming National Women's Convention.
- A high-level panel featured convenors from all provincial WPCs, Gilgit-Baltistan, and the National Assembly, emphasizing shared strategies and challenges.
- The Punjab WPC leadership team was introduced, formalizing the province's commitment to gender-inclusive governance.

Curtain Raiser – Punjab Assembly WPC (22 January 2025)



STRENGTHENING NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUSES



Curtain Raiser – Punjab Assembly WPC (22 January 2025)



The efforts undertaken in 2024–2025 laid a strong foundation for a unified and empowered network of Women's Parliamentary Caucuses in Pakistan. Through inter-provincial collaboration, capacity-building, and structural development, the National WPC continues to serve as a catalyst for gender equity and legislative reform. Moving forward, the focus will remain on sustaining these alliances, fostering policy coherence, and ensuring that women's voices are meaningfully represented across all tiers of governance.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONVENTION 2025 — A UNIFIED VISION FOR EMPOWERMENT

The National Women's Convention 2025, held on 12–13 February at the Parliament House in Islamabad, marked a historic milestone in Pakistan's gender equality journey. Convened by the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) and supported by UN Women, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the European Union, the convention commemorated National Women's Day by celebrating the legacy of women's democratic leadership and renewing national commitment to gender-responsive governance.

For the first time, the Convention brought together the federal WPC and the newly constituted provincial WPCs from Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Gilgit-Baltistan. This convergence signified the strengthening of a nationwide network of women Parliamentarians united by a shared legislative and advocacy agenda. The Convention served as a platform for experience-sharing, inter-provincial collaboration, and strategic planning to advance women's rights and leadership.



NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONVENTION 2025 — A UNIFIED VISION FOR EMPOWERMENT

Day 1: Strengthening Caucuses for a Shared Vision

The first day, themed "Strengthening Women's Caucuses for a Shared Vision", featured a high-level roundtable and presentations from all WPCs. Opening remarks were delivered by Secretary WPC Dr. Shahida Rehmani, who reaffirmed the importance of cross-party collaboration in enacting gender-responsive legislation. She highlighted key successes, including the Protection Against Harassment at the Workplace Act, and advocated for a 10% minimum women's voter turnout as a benchmark for electoral legitimacy.

Moderated by constitutional expert Mr. Zafarullah Khan, the National Roundtable explored the current status, achievements, and challenges of federal and provincial WPCs. Each caucus shared region-specific legislative successes and priorities—from KP's passage of child protection laws and youth engagement forums, to Balochistan's establishment of Anti-Harassment Cells and Commissions on the Status of Women.

The session reflected a strong consensus on the need for greater resource allocation, voter registration drives, digital recordkeeping, and legal reforms to protect women's rights across provinces. The first day concluded with renewed resolve to build on shared goals through collaborative planning.

Day 2: Developing the Joint Action Plan 2025

Day two, held at the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS), focused on translating dialogue into policy through the collaborative development of the Joint Action Plan 2025. Moderated by Ms. Huma Chughtai and Ms. Saman Ahsan, the workshop engaged parliamentarians in outlining time-bound actions under five key pillars:

1. Legislative and Policy Reforms – including passage of key bills (e.g., Child Marriage Restraint Bill) and Gender-sensitive property rights.
2. Women's Economic Empowerment – with proposals for financial inclusion, tax incentives, and SME support for women entrepreneurs.
3. Political Participation and Electoral Reforms – such as increasing women's party ticket quotas and improving CNIC and voter registration outreach.
4. Combating Gender-Based Violence – through expansion of helpline services, victim protection mechanisms, and gender-sensitive policing.
5. Institutional Strengthening of WPCs – including sustainable funding, integration into Assembly Rules, inter-provincial coordination, and digital capacity building.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONVENTION 2025 — A UNIFIED VISION FOR EMPOWERMENT

The Action Plan, extending into 2026, emerged as a legally binding framework, aligned with Pakistan's commitments under CEDAW and the SDGs. It prioritizes inclusivity, enforcement, and inter-provincial harmony in policy implementation.



Closing Session and Commitments

The Convention concluded with remarks by WPC Treasurer Ms. Shahida Begum and Chief Guest Dr. Nafisa Shah, Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Gender Mainstreaming. Dr. Shah commended the WPC for uniting federal and provincial bodies around a shared roadmap and stressed the need to present the Joint Action Plan to parliamentary leadership for institutional endorsement. The event also featured strong participation from UN Women, with Country Representative Mr. Jamshed Kazi linking the Convention's goals to the Pakistan Women Leaders 2024–2028 project and international gender equality frameworks.

PROMOTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

A cornerstone of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC)'s work in 2024–2025 has been the advancement of Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) — an approach that ensures public financial allocations address the specific needs and priorities of women, girls, and marginalized genders across Pakistan. GRB is central to achieving gender equity through fiscal policy and service delivery. Recognizing its importance, the National WPC organized two high-level roundtables in June 2024 and June 2025 in collaboration with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) and sectoral experts.

These roundtables provided a vital platform for Parliamentarians, civil society, and policy experts to assess how the federal budget serves women's empowerment goals, and to advocate for strategic, inclusive public investments.

Roundtable 1: Gender Responsive Budgeting for Women's Empowerment in Pakistan (11 June 2024)

Chaired by Dr. Shahida Rehmani, Secretary of the National WPC, and moderated by constitutional expert Mr. Zafarullah Khan, this roundtable convened Members of Parliament, government officials, civil society, and development partners to analyze the gender responsiveness of the 2023–24 federal budget.

Key Presentations:

- Ms. Rehmani briefed participants on the WPC's Gender Budgeting Strategy 2023, laying the foundation for a Parliamentary-led advocacy agenda.
- Ms. Rashida Dohad, Executive Director of the Omar Asghar Khan Foundation, delivered an in-depth analysis of the federal budget's gender alignment and shortfalls.

Issues Highlighted:

- Invisibility of unpaid and undocumented female labor.
- Insufficient budget allocations for women's education, healthcare, and shelter services.
- Gender bias in political representation and lack of female employment quotas in executive positions.

Key Recommendations:

- Strengthening local bodies to deliver services like health, justice, and education to women.
- Establishing women facilitation centers at police stations nationwide.
- Expanding social safety nets (e.g., BISP), especially for single mothers and rural women.
- Implementing 5% job quotas for women in industrial management and executive roles.
- Allocating funds for post-legislative scrutiny and forming a special NA committee for women and child health services.

PROMOTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

Gender Responsive Budgeting for Women's Empowerment in Pakistan - 11 June 2024



PROMOTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

Roundtable 2: Federal Budget 2025–26 – Gender-Responsive Strategies (12 June 2025)

Held shortly after the presentation of the Federal Budget 2025–26, this roundtable served as a critical review mechanism where nearly 100 Members of Parliament and subject matter experts assessed the budget's inclusiveness.

Opening Remarks:

- Dr. Shahida Rehmani reaffirmed WPC's leadership in GRB, emphasizing public investments that serve women, girls, and transgender persons. She recalled the launch of the Gender Budget Strategy in January 2023 and highlighted the WPC's continuous advocacy within parliamentary committees.

Notable Contributions:

- Barrister Aqeel Malik, Minister of State for Law & Justice, recognized the government's role in advancing gender equity but emphasized the need for sustained efforts.

- Dr. Nafisa Shah, Chair of the National Assembly's Gender Mainstreaming Committee, announced for the first time the Finance Committee's review of the Finance Bill before passage, urging WPC to submit its recommendations.
- Ms. Shaista Pervaiz underscored provincial responsibilities under the 18th Amendment, particularly for health and education delivery.

Presentation of Findings:

Ms. Rashida Dohad presented an analytical overview of the proposed federal budget's strengths and gaps in promoting gender parity. Her evidence-based insights sparked dialogue on improving resource allocation to support women's economic participation, education, and healthcare access.

Policy Recommendations Emerged:

- Create fiscal instruments that target women's economic empowerment.
- Institutionalize GRB across ministries and departments.
- Prioritize inclusive service delivery for women and transgender persons.
- Develop provincial-level GRB guidelines for harmonization.

PROMOTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

The roundtable concluded with a vote of thanks from Ms. Sidra Saeed, Programme Advisor at FES, recognizing WPC's leadership and cross-sector collaboration.

Federal Budget 2025–26 – Gender-Responsive Strategies- 12 June 2025



The consistent engagement of the WPC with Gender Responsive Budgeting reflects a systemic shift towards inclusive public finance in Pakistan. These roundtables helped:

- Foster evidence-based policy dialogue between legislators and civil society.
- Build capacity of MPs to scrutinize budgets through a gender lens.
- Generate actionable recommendations for finance committees and government agencies.
- Strengthen the institutional role of the WPC in budget advocacy.

HOSTING PAKISTAN'S FIRST-EVER INTERNATIONAL COMMONWEALTH WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS WORKSHOP

CWP Workshop - Islamabad - (14-15 December 2024)



In a historic milestone for Pakistan's legislative and gender equality journey, the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) hosted the first-ever International Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Workshop on 14–15 December 2024 in Islamabad. Themed "Advancing Gender Equality in Legislation: A Workshop on Gender-Sensitive Legislative Drafting", this landmark two-day event brought together women parliamentarians and experts from across South Asia, marking Pakistan's rising role in global efforts to mainstream gender within legislative processes.

Under the visionary leadership of WPC Secretary Dr. Shahida Rehmani, the workshop served as a platform for capacity building of parliamentarians, focusing on the integration of gender-sensitive principles into legislative drafting, implementation, and evaluation frameworks. Hosted in collaboration with the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) and supported by the National Assembly Secretariat, the workshop was attended by delegates from the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and across

Pakistan's federal and provincial legislatures.

The event commenced with welcome remarks by Executive Director PIPS, Mr. Muhammad Rashid Mafzool Zaka, followed by a keynote address from Dr. Shahida Rehmani, who welcomed international guests and underscored the importance of legislation that serves the diverse needs of women. Ms. Zainab Gimba, Chairperson of the CWP and Chief Guest, lauded the WPC for convening this groundbreaking event and praised Pakistan's ongoing progress in gender-sensitive lawmaking.

HOSTING PAKISTAN'S FIRST-EVER INTERNATIONAL COMMONWEALTH WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS WORKSHOP

The workshop comprised three thematic sessions:

- Session 1: International Standards and Legal Frameworks on Pro-Women Legislations, featuring experts such as Ms. Mehnaz Akbar Aziz, Ms. Kashmala Tariq, and Ms. Nida Ali, provided an overview of global conventions and their relevance to Pakistan's legal system.
- Session 2: Best Practices from the Region, moderated by Mrs. Samer Awais, spotlighted successful legislative models from Pakistan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka. Speakers included Dr. Nafisa Shah (MNA), MP Asma Rasheed (Maldives), and MP Chamindranee Kiriella (Sri Lanka).
- Session 3: Problem Identification and Gap Analysis, facilitated by Ms. Rabeea Anwar, included voices from regional MPs and legislative drafting experts who collectively identified key barriers to gender equality in current laws and proposed actionable strategies for reform.



Participants engaged in dynamic discussions, exchanging legislative experiences and forging regional alliances for collective advancement. The sessions emphasized institutional reforms, inclusive policymaking, and the importance of inter-parliamentary dialogue in shaping gender-equal societies.

Notable attendees included Senator Saadia Abbasi, MPAs from Balochistan, Punjab, and Sindh, and several Members of the National Assembly. The event further amplified the WPC's position as a leading national platform championing inclusive legislation, global collaboration, and democratic reform.

The success of this international workshop reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the Commonwealth's principles on gender equality and set a precedent for future engagement and leadership on gender-sensitive legislation in South Asia and beyond.

WORKSHOP ON DIGITAL DEMOCRACY AND THOUGHT LEADERSHIP – BHURBAN

Workshop on Digital Democracy and Thought Leadership- (1-2 December 2024)



On December 1–2, 2024, the Women’s Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), under the leadership of Secretary Dr. Shahida Rehmani, MNA, organized a two-day workshop titled "Digital Democracy and Thought Leadership for Strategy Development" in Bhurban, in collaboration with UNDP. The workshop aimed to strengthen the role of women parliamentarians in the digital age by enhancing their capacity to counter misinformation, promote digital inclusivity, and ensure online safety for women. Sessions focused on ethical parliamentary conduct, increasing electoral participation, and legislative effectiveness. Eminent experts including Mr. Zafarullah Khan, Ms. Muneze Hashmi, and Mr. Azaz Syed led interactive discussions. Women parliamentarians from across Pakistan shared their experiences

and challenges, fostering peer learning. The workshop concluded with a renewed commitment to strengthening digital democracy and supporting women’s leadership through informed, ethical, and resilient legislative practices.



ADVANCING GENDER JUSTICE — 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Roundtable Discussion on “From Promises to Progress: An Overview of Pakistan’s Fight Against Gender-Based Violence” - (4 December 2024)



As part of the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign, the Women’s Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) organized a Roundtable Discussion on “From Promises to Progress: An Overview of Pakistan’s Fight Against Gender-Based Violence” on 4 December 2024 at the National Assembly. The event brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including parliamentarians, legal experts, civil society representatives, and activists.

The discussion focused on evaluating the implementation of Pakistan’s legislative framework on gender-based violence (GBV), identifying persistent gaps between law and practice, and proposing strategic reforms. Participants emphasized the urgency of strengthening enforcement mechanisms, improving inter-agency coordination, and ensuring survivor-centric justice systems.

The roundtable called for increased investment in awareness campaigns, institutional support for survivors, and improved gender-sensitivity training for law enforcement and judicial officers.

Speakers from the WPC reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that legislation does not remain symbolic, but leads to meaningful change on the ground. The session concluded with a call for multi-stakeholder collaboration to advance Pakistan’s fight against GBV, aligning with national commitments under CEDAW and the SDGs.

This activity reinforced the WPC’s proactive role in national advocacy efforts during the 16 Days of Activism and highlighted its dedication to addressing GBV as a core legislative and policy priority.

GENDER-SENSITIVE LEGISLATION AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE — “POVERTY HAS A WOMAN’S FACE”

Speakers Conference Roundtable on “Poverty Has a Woman’s Face: Gender-Sensitive Legislature to Advance Gender Equality and End Poverty” - (20 December 2024)



On 20 December 2024, the Women’s Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) convened a roundtable under Speakers Conference titled “Poverty Has a Woman’s Face: Gender-Sensitive Legislature to Advance Gender Equality and End Poverty”. The event served as a compelling call to action, highlighting the gendered dimensions of poverty and the urgent need for systemic legislative reforms to dismantle structural inequalities faced by women across Pakistan.

The event brought together parliamentarians, development experts, civil society advocates, and academics to explore how gender-sensitive laws can be transformative in eradicating poverty. Participants emphasized moving beyond short-term social protection schemes toward long-term structural solutions. Key legislative priorities discussed included ensuring equal pay, protecting women’s inheritance and property rights, and enhancing

support for women-led enterprises and entrepreneurship. A strong emphasis was placed on intersectional, data-driven policymaking that considers the compounded vulnerabilities women face due to class, geography, and social norms. The importance of gender-responsive budgeting and provincial-federal coordination was also underscored as essential tools for inclusive governance.

The WPC and attendees called for legislative interventions to address deep-rooted cultural barriers such as dowry practices, child marriage, and the social coercion that forces women to forgo economic rights. The session concluded with a collective pledge to promote sustained, inclusive, and transformative legislative action, reaffirming the WPC’s commitment to making poverty eradication a feminist cause. The event encapsulated the shared resolve that poverty should no longer bear a woman’s face in Pakistan.

HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATION ON POLITICAL INCLUSION: “RAISING HER VOICE IN POLITICAL PARTIES”

High-Level Consultation on “Raising Her Voice in Political Parties” - (14 May 2025)



Women’s Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) in collaboration with the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), hosted a High-Level Consultation on “Raising Her Voice in Political Parties” at the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS), Islamabad.

The discussion highlighted critical reforms, including calls for mandatory 33% representation of women among founding members of political parties, and stronger legislative backing to ensure women’s meaningful participation in democratic processes.

Dr. Syeda Shahida Rehmani, Secretary WPC and Hon. Member National Assembly, opened the session with powerful remarks, emphasizing the need to break structural barriers and institutionalize gender equity in political spaces.



This consultation reaffirms WPC’s commitment to championing gender-inclusive reforms and building a truly representative democracy for all citizens of Pakistan.

NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON ELIMINATING INDUSTRIALLY PRODUCED TRANS FATTY ACIDS (ITFAS)

National Dialogue on Legislative Reforms for Eliminating ITFAs- (28 June 2025)



The Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), in collaboration with the Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), organized a high-level National Dialogue on Legislative Reforms for Eliminating Industrially Produced Trans Fatty Acids (iTFAs) and Banning Partially Hydrogenated Oils (PHOs) on June 28, 2025, at the Sindh Assembly in Karachi.

This significant gathering brought together legislators from all four provincial assemblies—including members of the Women's Parliamentary Caucuses of Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan—as well as public health professionals, civil society actors, and policy experts. The dialogue centered on the urgent public health risks posed by iTFAs, particularly their link to life-threatening non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular illnesses.

Participants collectively emphasized the necessity for comprehensive and enforceable legislative reforms to eliminate iTFAs from the food supply chain in Pakistan. The dialogue underscored the need for a complete ban on the use of Partially Hydrogenated Oils (PHOs) in all food products, alongside the development of strict monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.

This national dialogue marked a critical step forward in Pakistan's commitment to safeguarding public health through evidence-based policymaking, with women parliamentarians playing a pivotal role in driving the legislative agenda forward.



OUTREACH AND REPRESENTATION – INTERNATIONAL & NATIONAL VISITS

International Visit: Participation in Global Dialogue on Gender Equality

In 2024, the Secretary of the Women’s Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), Ms. Shahida Rehmani, represented Pakistan on the international stage by participating in a high-level event in Qatar. The visit marked a vital opportunity to share Pakistan’s legislative advancements on gender equality and women’s empowerment with global counterparts. During the engagement, the Secretary highlighted the role of the WPC in driving gender-responsive legislation and inter-provincial collaboration. The visit helped build networks with international parliamentarians and reaffirmed WPC’s commitment to aligning its work with global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals and CEDAW.

National Visit: Advocacy for Women’s Health – NORI Hospital Visit

On 3rd October 2024, in observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Secretary WPC Ms. Shahida Rehmani, along with Members of the National Assembly Ms. Aasia Ishaque Siddiqui, Dr. Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro, and Ms. Husna Bano, visited the Nuclear Medicine, Oncology and Radiotherapy Institute (NORI) in

Islamabad. The delegation was welcomed by NORI Director Dr. Muhammad Faheem and Dr. Humaira Mahmood, who briefed them on the institute’s services and the growing challenges of breast cancer in Pakistan.



National Visit: Visit to National Incubation Center

WPC delegation led by Dr. Shahida Rehmani, visited National Incubation Center (NIC) in Islamabad. The NIC CEO briefed the delegation on the center’s initiatives, highlighting its focus on two key sectors: health and education. The CEO emphasised that NIC’s primary objective is to foster the growth of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) through innovative startup and incubation programs.



STRENGTHENING COLLECTIVE VOICE - GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS OF THE WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS

The General Assembly of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) serves as a vibrant platform for strategic dialogue, cross-party collaboration, and the advancement of gender-sensitive legislation and policies. Over the reporting period, nine General Assembly meetings were convened under the chairpersonship of Dr. Shahida Rehmani, Secretary WPC. These meetings provided a space for women parliamentarians to collectively respond to pressing national issues, develop inclusive policy solutions, and strengthen the institutional architecture of the Caucus.

1st General Assembly Meeting

Held under the leadership of Dr. Shahida Rehmani, the inaugural General Assembly meeting welcomed newly elected office-bearers. WPC women members expressed confidence in the leadership and discussed the goals of the WPC, including gender budgeting, women's political participation, and legislative empowerment. Emphasis was placed on enhancing the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), supporting entrepreneurship, and adopting models such as Akhuwat for economic inclusion. The Chairperson of BISP, Ms. Rubina Khalid, assured members of ongoing improvements in the program's outreach and transparency.



2nd General Assembly Meeting

The session addressed the alarming rise in cybercrime against women parliamentarians. Concerns were raised about delays in implementing inheritance rights for Hindu women in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A three-day orientation workshop for women parliamentarians was proposed. Dr. Syed Aziz-ur-Rab from Greenstar presented on women's health, emphasizing birth spacing and the affordability of essential reproductive health kits. The meeting concluded with a commitment to prepare a resolution on managing population growth.



STRENGTHENING COLLECTIVE VOICE - GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS OF THE WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS

3rd General Assembly Meeting

Held on August 28, 2024, the meeting discussed a resolution condemning sexist remarks made by an MNA toward a female employee. Members proposed the formation of five key sub-committees: Health, Education, Media and IT, Legislative Scrutiny, and Sports and Culture. The Aurat Foundation presented alarming data on increasing drug use in society, prompting calls for greater action and awareness.



4th General Assembly Meeting

The September 10, 2024 meeting was marked by a strong condemnation of derogatory remarks made against women journalists and the Chief Minister of Punjab by a male counterpart. Members emphasized the growing toxicity in political discourse and the importance of women's representation in political parties. A resolution was passed demanding an apology from the male chief minister. The session also included a presentation by BISP leadership, detailing the program's reforms and future strategies.



5th General Assembly Meeting

On October 28, 2024, the WPC hosted a focused discussion on breast cancer awareness, featuring presentations by Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Malik - Coordinator to the Prime Minister on National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination (NHSR&C) and Dr. Ayesha Isani - Head of Radiology at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS). The need for expansive campaigns, better healthcare access, and community-based response frameworks was emphasized. In alignment with the "16 Days of Activism" campaign, the Secretary proposed a series of conferences and initiatives to combat gender-based violence.



STRENGTHENING COLLECTIVE VOICE - GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS OF THE WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS

6th General Assembly Meeting

The meeting held on December 19, 2024, paid homage to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. Participants reflected on her trailblazing legacy and contributions to women's empowerment. The Assembly concluded with heartfelt tributes and prayers, reinforcing the inspiration drawn from her leadership.



7th General Assembly Meeting

The 7th General Assembly meeting of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), held on 21st January 2025, was chaired by Secretary Dr. Shahida Rehmani and opened with Quranic recitation by Dr. Nikhat Shakeel. The meeting focused on sub-committee updates and preparations for the upcoming "Pakistan Women Leaders Convention" on 12th February. Members discussed finalizing the convention's theme, budgeting for travel and accommodation, and ensuring

representation of accomplished women leaders from all provinces. Key suggestions included panel discussions on gender-based violence, child marriage, and tributes to women polio workers, along with a drama by school children highlighting rural women's issues. It was agreed to write to political parties for nominations to the "Friends of the Caucus," engage Ayesha Raza Farooq - Chairperson National Commission on the Rights of Child to speak on polio eradication, and involve Lok Virsa for the proposed drama.



8th General Assembly Meeting

Held on May 13, 2025, this meeting built upon earlier discussions. Although detailed minutes are pending documentation, the continuity of discussions reflects the sustained engagement of WPC members in planning and policy advocacy.

STRENGTHENING STRATEGY AND OVERSIGHT - WORKING COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Working Council of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) convened a series of strategic meetings during the reporting period to guide policy direction, monitor implementation, and respond to emerging issues affecting women across Pakistan.

The first meeting, held on September 5, 2024, under the leadership of Secretary WPC Dr. Shahida Rehmani, introduced the Council's formation and purpose. Dr. Rehmani emphasized unity beyond party lines for the common cause of women's rights. Key discussions included the need to expand the scope of the Harassment Act beyond workplaces, the importance of uniform laws such as the Child Marriage Restraint Act across provinces, and consolidation of women's commissions to improve efficiency. The meeting also reviewed plans for the upcoming 16 Days of Activism.



In the second meeting on October 22, 2024, the Council focused on event planning, including participation in the PGA conference and CWP workshop on gender-sensitive legislation. Dr. Rehmani

outlined activities for the 16 Days of Activism—such as lighting the Parliament House, organizing a march, and hosting a conference on domestic violence. Discussions expanded to address women's mental health, support for female workers, and stronger policy monitoring mechanisms.



The third meeting, held on February 11, 2025, emphasized advocacy for a resolution on gender-based development fund allocation and drafting a letter to the Prime Minister on gender discrimination in Parliament. The Council also discussed mechanisms to monitor gender law implementation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, support for women entrepreneurs, and final preparations for the upcoming Women's Convention.

STRENGTHENING STRATEGY AND OVERSIGHT - WORKING COUNCIL MEETINGS

During the fourth meeting on March 21, 2025, the Council reviewed the WPC Rules of 2008 in detail and resolved to bring amendments in the next meeting, aiming to enhance operational effectiveness and accountability.



The fifth meeting, held on June 24, 2025, addressed women's low representation in NADRA's voter registration database. A NADRA representative briefed the Council on progress and challenges, including the requirement of birth certificates for CNICs and the launch of the "Pak Identity" mobile app. Dr. Rehmani stressed the need for women-only service counters nationwide, and NADRA informed that Fridays have been designated for female applicants. The Council resolved to visit NADRA Headquarters to further evaluate and support gender-inclusive reforms in registration services.



STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENTS AND COLLABORATIVE MEETINGS

In 2024, the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), under the dynamic leadership of Secretary Dr. Shahida Rehmani, actively engaged with various stakeholders, civil society organizations, development partners, and international delegations to strengthen its agenda on gender equality, women's empowerment, and inclusive legislative reforms.

The Secretary commenced her tenure with a landmark meeting on July 9, 2024, bringing together female employees of the National Assembly to listen to their challenges and aspirations. This engagement signified her commitment to building a supportive and inclusive workplace within the parliamentary institution.



International diplomacy was fostered through an introductory meeting with the Australian High Commissioner on August 9, 2024. The dialogue covered gender equality initiatives, legislative reforms, and international collaborations. Notable mentions included Sindh's legislative advancements and the importance of uniform child marriage laws.

On August 1, 2024, Dr. Rehmani met with the National Lobbying Delegation for Minority Rights. The discussion centered on the delayed implementation of the Rules of Business under the Hindu Marriage Act 2017 and equitable enforcement of Hindu inheritance laws. The meeting reinforced WPC's resolve to protect marginalized women's rights.



STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENTS AND COLLABORATIVE MEETINGS

A series of strategic engagements took place on August 29, 2024. In a meeting with UN Women, WPC outlined its future strategic plan and provincial collaboration. Another meeting with International Accord and Pakistan Accord introduced safety mechanisms for textile workers, acknowledging that women form a large portion of this workforce.



On same day, FAFEN representatives met with WPC to formalize collaboration on women-centric legislative drafting, electoral reforms, and a proposed partner retreat.



Furthering planning on key activities, the Secretary convened a meeting with UNDP on November 6, 2024, to finalize preparations for the "Digital Democracy Workshop and Training Needs Assessment (TNA) Retreat."

On November 6, 2025 Dr. Shahida Rehmani also chaired a planning meeting with UN Women, focusing on the Pakistan Women Leaders launch and activities for the 16 Days of Activism campaign, including a symbolic walk and a gender-based constitutional event.



STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENTS AND COLLABORATIVE MEETINGS

On November 11, 2024, Dr. Shahida Rehmani engaged with the Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) to formulate collaborative responses to gender-based violence, emphasizing the strengthening of legal frameworks and public awareness.

Diplomatic collaboration continued with a meeting on November 12, 2024, with U.S. Embassy officials, where WPC's role in cross-party gender advocacy was recognized and future cooperation was discussed.

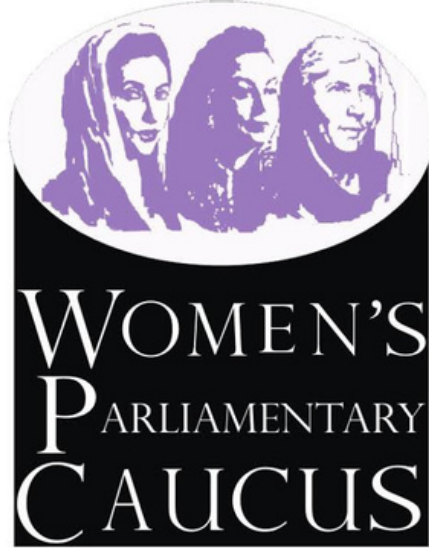
On the same day, the WPC coordinated with FAFEN again to plan a workshop for newly elected and first-time MNAs, focusing on parliamentary capacity building and inclusive legislative practices.

These multifaceted engagements reflect WPC's proactive approach in building strategic alliances, advocating policy change, and expanding its influence both nationally and internationally for the empowerment and rights of women in Pakistan.



CONCLUSION: OUR CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

The Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) of Pakistan reaffirms its unwavering dedication to advancing women's leadership and gender equality across all spheres of governance and society. The 2024-2025 period marked a transformative phase for the WPC, characterized by strategic initiatives, robust legislative advocacy, and strengthened national and international partnerships. Through landmark events like the National Women's Convention 2025, the establishment of Provincial WPCs, and the hosting of Pakistan's first International Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Workshop, the WPC has solidified its role as a catalyst for systemic change. Our focus on gender-responsive budgeting, combating gender-based violence, and promoting women's economic and political empowerment has laid a strong foundation for inclusive progress. Moving forward, the WPC remains committed to institutionalizing these gains, fostering cross-party unity, and ensuring that women across Pakistan—regardless of geography, background, or circumstance—are empowered, represented, and heard. With continued collaboration with stakeholders like UN Women, UNDP, and civil society, we will persist in shaping a just, equitable, and prosperous Pakistan where women's leadership thrives.



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