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Press Release

International Women's Day

SPEAK AND CHANGE

Equality for women means progress for all: Madadgaar National Helpline

Madadgaar National Helpline celebrated International Women's Day to show solidarity with 51 percent population of the world. Expressing their views on International Women's Day, Madadgaar team members said that Countries with more gender equality have better economic growth. Companies with more women leaders perform better. Peace agreements that include women are more durable. Parliaments with more women enact more legislation on key social issues such as health, education, anti-discrimination and child support. The evidence is clear: equality for women means progress for all.

Message of Founder of Madadgaar National Helpline Mr. Zia Ahmed Awan Advocated was also shared in which he said that there is a dire need to speak up, individually and collectively, for ending discriminations against women and girls in Pakistan, whose basic rights are taken for granted and they are treated as exchangeable commodities. He said that respect for human rights and human dignity is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. He said women comprises more than half of the population of our country and without granting them their due rights, the dream of making this country a civilized nation could never be materialized.

Awan emphasized on the implementation on International treaties signed by Pakistan and implantation of constitutional rights granted to the women. He further highlighted that concern ministries are failed in creating social safety net/ social support system for the protection of women in general.

He further elaborated Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Convention provides the basis for realizing equality between women and men through ensuring women's equal access to , and equal opportunities in, political and public life, including the right to vote and to stand for election, as well as education, health and employment. States parties must agree to take all appropriate measures, including legislation and temporary special measures, so that women can enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Zia Ahmed Awan said serious, urgent and concrete efforts are needed on every level to end discrimination and abuse of women. He demanded raising awareness about human rights at grassroots level, adding all discriminatory laws should be repealed. He suggested that bureaucracy, police, judiciary, parliamentarians, and media be sensitized about women rights. He said that more budgetary allocations should be diverted towards social sector, especially education and healthcare, as poverty and joblessness were among major causes behind violation of rights. He demanded empowerment of women and ensuring gender equality at every level. He said that constitution of Pakistan guarantees basic rights to women, but there is a need to implement laws in the letter and spirit.

He said that Malala Yousufzai, Arfa Kareem, Sharmeen Obaid Chenoy, Ayesha Farooq — the first female war-ready pilot of Pakistan- are rays of hope in our patriarchal society. We hope that on the next International Women's Day, Pakistan woman would be many steps ahead from her current social status.

