

Report of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action +30

Hp

[Company name]

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Introduction:

This National Report serves as an appraisal of Pakistan's progress over the past five years in advancing the objectives set forth in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan, in adherence to its constitutional mandates and international commitments, remains resolute in its dedication to safeguard the rights of its populace, both citizens and residents. In the wake of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, the Government of Pakistan made a steadfast commitment to implementing the Beijing Platform for Action. This commitment materialized through the formulation of the first National Plan of Action in 1998, followed by the National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women in 2002 and Gender Policy Framework 2022. Subsequent years have witnessed a series of legislative and administrative reforms, empowering institutions and political leaders to champion the cause of women's empowerment and gender equality including progressive laws on women empowerment, inclusion of women members in Board of Governors of listed companies, financial support through social safety nets, enabling work environment for both public & private sectors, ensuring property rights, enhanced participation in the political process, access to justice and health facilities, free and compulsory education for girls under age of 16 years, non-formal education facility , skill development, resilience to climate change and environmental risks reduction, inclusion in peace process and Alternative Dispute Resolution, and ending violence against women. Pakistan has taken substantive measures to institutionalize policies aimed at fostering gender equality and empowerment through robust initiatives as outlined in Pakistan Vision 2025, the Sustainable Development Goals, the National Action Plan for Human Rights, and Gender Policy Framework. The foundational principle of "People First," encapsulated within the seven pillars of Vision 2025, resonates with SDG 1 (eradicating poverty), SDG 2 (ensuring health), SDG 4 (advancing education), and SDG 5 (promoting gender equality). On administrative fronts, Pakistan has established several new regulatory and service delivery institutions in addition to strengthening the existing institutions including National and provincial Commissions on Status of Women,

provincial women Development Departments, Women protection Authorities, Women protection Centers , specialized Gender units in Planning Division and Police Departments, Women Universities, Courts for cases of Gender based Violence, Strengthening of Family courts, Child protection Institutes for girls, and working women hostels.

The Beijing Platform for Action +30 Report attests to Pakistan's strides in fortifying the frameworks and mechanisms necessary for achieving gender equality. Pakistan has devised a comprehensive multi-tier strategy, encompassing the establishment of human rights institutions, the enactment of legislation supportive of women's rights, and the formulation of holistic women-centric policies fostering inter-ministerial collaboration across governmental bodies. This narrative part of the report has been developed through deliberations and exhaustive consultative processes amongst all stakeholders including Federal and Provincial Departments involved in the implementation of government initiatives pertaining to critical areas of BPfA as primary and secondary partners, civil society organizations, academia, human rights institutions, Social Safety Nets, Entrepreneurs, Media, and Professionals.

Purpose of the Report

Keeping in view the guidelines provided by the CSW Secretariat, the primary objective of this report is threefold: to underscore achievements, to document progress, and to identify challenges encountered by Pakistan in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the UN General Assembly in 2000. This report adheres to the prescribed guidelines, drawing parallels between the Areas of Priority outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action and SDG 5 on Gender Equality. Its preparation entailed meticulous multi-stakeholder analysis and exhaustive desk review of reports from pertinent government agencies, authorities, and departments, with specific inputs solicited from provincial and national entities of significance.

Q1. Over the past five years, what have been the most important achievements, challenges and setbacks in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women?

The most important achievements include, **Enactment of women protection laws, Formulation of gender based policies, Introducing Gender Responsive Budgeting, Mandatory Inclusion in Corporate sector, Strengthening of Institutions dealing with Women Rights, Increased Financial inclusion, Increased participation in leadership and decision making positions, Increased access to Justice, Introducing Skill based Education, and Awareness among masses** to break the stereotype biases against women and girls. These achievements have been made through multipronged interventions including strong political will, increased spending and funds mobilization, stakeholders mobilization and collaborations with international partners including UN bodies working in Pakistan. The government of Pakistan enacted following new laws for protecting women rights, creating conducive environment for social well-being, ending discrimination, ensuring their participation in national life and economic development as enunciated in the constitution of Pakistan as well as under enabling provisions of CEDAW, ICCPR, ICPSR and BPfA:

- a) **Enforcement of Women Property Rights Act, 2019:** The Act empowers Federal and Provincial Ombudsperson Office to provide legal rights to women in property i.e. movable and immovable, regardless of their geographical location.
- b) The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa promulgated “Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Enforcement of Women Property Rights Act, 2019”. The legal system including Ombudsperson office are providing legal rights to women in property (movable and immovable) regardless of their geographical location. The promulgation of this Act has provided realization of the women's property rights.
- c) **Punjab women’s property Right Act, 2021:** The enforcement of this act has remained instrumental in safeguarding the proprietary rights of females. In 2020, out of the total 25.1 million agricultural landowners in Punjab, 17.2 million (68.5%)

were men and 7.9 million (31.5%) were women. In 2021, there are 25.9 million landowners in Punjab, of which 17.7 million (69 percent) are men and 8.1 million (31 percent) are female landowners.

- d) **The Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Amendment) Act, 2022:** To make more women friendly environment at workplaces, certain necessary amendments have been made and the definition of harassment is broadened. The domestic workers, artists, sports persons and intern/ trainee have also been included in the definition of employee.
- e) **The Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act, 2019:** The Act provides protection to women property rights focusing on inherited rights regarding transfer of property. Depriving the women from their inherited rights is defined as a crime.
- f) **Islamabad Capital Territory Senior Citizens Act, 2021:** In order to fulfil the constitutional guarantees 'Islamabad Capital Territory Senior Citizens Act, 2021' has been enacted to protect the rights of senior citizens at Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) level including old age women. The certain Act has award certain privileges including concessions in prescribed rates of medicines and tax exemptions to the senior citizens of Islamabad.
- g) **ICT Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2020:** The ICT Rights of Persons with Disability Bill prepared by the Ministry of Human Rights through a consultative process for protection and promotion of Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) has been enacted at ICT level. It proposes legal and institutional framework for an inclusive society where PWDs have full participation in all forms of social life, particularly in health, education and employment.
- h) **Legal Aid and Justice Authority Act, 2020:** The objective of the Act is to provide legal, financial and other assistance for access to justice to the poor and vulnerable segments of society in criminal cases.

- i) **ICT Domestic Workers Act, 2022:** The act provides protection to women domestic workers from exploitation of wages and work. The law provides formal mechanism for hiring and firing of domestic workers.

On the **Policy** front, Government of Pakistan launched a robust Gender Policy Framework in 2022 focusing on the key areas of gender equality, women empowerment, ending violence against women and enhanced participation in political process, decision making, labour force and human capital development through education and trainings. Besides, the Federal Government, the Provincial Governments have also taken policy initiatives for gender equality and women empowerment for instance, the Government of Baluchistan implemented the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Policy in 2020. The policy sets standards for coordination between the Federal Government and Provincial Government on the implementation of the Convention. Overall objectives of the Policy are to protect, advance and implement constitutionally-mandated women rights through equity-based socio-economic opportunities as well as, decision making role in public and private. The policy is also aimed at an effective deterrence to trace out/eradicate domestic and gender-based violence as well as discrimination against women.

The Government of Pakistan introduced Gender Responsive Budgeting in 2019. Finance Division has now made it mandatory that every Ministry/Department will submit budgetary demands on the bases of Gender Responsive Budget.

Pakistan had 526 listed companies till June 2023 with total listed capital of Rs 1,556 billion and market capitalization of Rs 6,108 billion. The Government of Pakistan has made it mandatory under a Statutory Regulation Order (SRO) of 2017, came into force in 2018 that every listed company shall have at least one women member in Board of Governors. This is a great achievement towards women economic empowerment, participation in decision making and being part of corporate sector. The workplace gender gap at top

organizational levels in Pakistan is gradually narrowing due to this important intervention. The proportion of listed companies with women directors shows an increase from 31 percent in 2017 to 58 percent in 2019, according to statistics compiled by the SECP. At least 33 companies are now managed by chairwomen. Previously, this number was 24, suggesting a 35.7 percent increase. About 8.7 percent Pakistani women hold board chair positions which is above the international average of 5.3 percent. The businesswomen are being facilitated and encouraged in Pakistan; the central bank has increased the concessional financing limit for women entrepreneurs from Rs. 1.5 million to Rs.5.00 million. In 2019, the returns on assets (ROA) of companies without women was 1.73 percent while it was 2.86 percent for companies with women directors on their board. Similarly, the return of equity (ROE) of companies without women was 9.4 percent and the ROE of companies with women directors was 14.83 percent

A critical area posing a great challenge for women participation in national life and development is violence against women. The Government of Pakistan taking cognizance of the issue has developed a national policy on violence against women and girls in consultations with provincial governments, civil society organizations, academia and experts. The policy is in process for approval by the Cabinet. In addition, the Ministry of Human Rights established Complaint Cells to receive and refer cases of human rights violations including Gender Based Violence.

Pakistan achieved a valued goal of strengthening the Human Rights Institutions responsible for protecting the rights of women and Girls. The National Commission on Status of Women was constituted in 2021 for its next term with enhanced human and financial resources. The National Commission on Rights of Child was established in 2019 which successfully completed its first term and the commission has been reconstituted for its second term in 2023 with provision of adequate human and financial resources to perform its functions. The Government of Pakistan also established a Child protection Institute under ICT Child Protection Act,2018 and stretched it with provision of human

and financial resources to make it fully functional. The CPI Provides shelter to the neglected and destitute children including girl child. A separate Child Protection Institute is also being established through a public sector development project. The Existing Family protection Centre has also been strengthened to provide shelter, psychosocial counselling as well as medical and legal assistance to women victims of violence.

Pakistan acknowledges the fact that empowered women and girls contribute to their families, communities, and countries, creating a domino effect that benefits everyone. In Pakistan, women's quotas have enlarged the component of women's status in political developments. This change is visible as the political power has passed from fathers to daughters instead of sons only. Therefore, while they are in parliament, they have some power to achieve change. The Election Act of 2017 criminalized any effort to hinder women's participation in elections. The Act also required political parties to have a minimum of 5 percent of their candidates contesting for general seats be women. The Constitution of Pakistan provides quota of 60 women in the Parliament. In last National Assembly (2018-2023), there were 70 women parliamentarians in Assembly of 342 members. It constituted about 21%. In the current National Assembly, 72 women returned to the Parliament including twelve contesting the General Election and 60 against the reserved quota. During 2018-23, around 29% of the Parliamentary Secretaries were women in federal Government. In local government Bodies 33 % quota in seats is reserved for women. The data from the Election Commission of Pakistan shows that there were a record number of women contesting local government elections in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa in December 2021 and showed progress for women in politics. More than 35,700 candidates contested election in tehsil, village, and neighborhood councils in the local body elections in KP of which 3,900 were women. During the first phase of the elections, 4,214 female candidates contested for 2,383 seats. In the three tribal districts, there were a total of 591 women candidates. It made history as women from highly conservative constituencies contested and won general seats. One of the Woman elected

member of the provincial Assembly has been elected as Chief Minister of the province of Punjab which is the largest province of Pakistan in terms of population.

The women have also been included in key judicial positions. In 2022, the first ever female Judge joins the Supreme Court of Pakistan. In 2023, a second woman Judge has also been appointed in the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Similarly, five female Judges are working in High Courts. In District Judiciary 565 female Judges are appointed which make 19 % of total District Judiciary.

BISP (Benazir Income Support Programme), the nation's flagship social safety net initiative. The programme offers both conditional and unconditional cash transfers, helping marginalized families to survive, escape poverty, and access opportunities for human capital development. BISP maintains National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER), Pakistan's largest socioeconomic dataset, covering over 35 million households. As a result of these efforts, the number of beneficiaries, all women, has increased from 6 million to 9.3 million. Rs. 300 billion annually are distributed amongst women across Pakistan under unconditional cash transfers.

Pakistan is cognizant of the fact that, education is fundamental to the socio-economic development of a nation. In addition to several initiatives under education policy framework, the Government of Pakistan through the BISP provided scholarships (Benazir Taleemi Wazaif) to uplift the girl child aiming at increasing school enrollment and reducing dropout rates. The scholarship support is differentiated by gender to promote higher enrollment rates: primary school boys receive Rs. 1500 per quarter, while girls receive Rs. 2000. For secondary education, boys receive Rs. 2500, and girls Rs. 3000. This approach addresses gender disparities and ensures resources are allocated for educational expenses. An impact evaluation in 2018-19 demonstrated a 10-percentage point increase in primary school enrollment due to the program. The initiative's success in breaking barriers to education for girls and promoting gender equality contributes significantly to Pakistan's educational outcomes. As of June 2023, BISP is providing CCTs

to 9,701,217 children are actively enrolled throughout Pakistan. About 47 % of the enrolled children are girls.

With regards to awareness raising amongst all population groups, the Ministry of Human Rights has adopted an integrated approach by launching of Public Sector Development Project to mobilize the community and breaking the barriers against gender equality and women empowerment through massive media campaigns, seminars and generating dialogues. The Government received a positive response and noted a meaningful impact of these awareness campaigns as during the campaigns, the Helpline established at Ministry of Human Rights received a huge number of calls. The Government of Pakistan through National Commission on Status of women has developed a National Gender data Portal, a flagship program in 2021 to make a data base of gender statistics.

Q2. Over the past five years, what have been the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country through laws, policies and/or programmes?

The Government of Pakistan has set following top five priorities for accelerating progress for women in girls:

a) Creation of enabling and conducive work environment for women

The government of Pakistan realizing the financial inclusion and economic empowerment of women enacted laws, policies and programs to deter harassment at work places including public and private sectors along with academic institutions. The government enacted Protection against Harassment of women at the Workplace (Amendment) Act, 2022. The new law introduced amendment in the earlier Protection against Harassment of women at Workplace Act, 2010, to make more women friendly environment at workplaces, certain necessary amendments have been made and the definition of harassment is broadened. The domestic workers, artists, sports persons and intern/trainee have also been included in the definition of employee. Every public and private organization is under legal obligation to constitute the departmental committees

for receiving, hearing and deciding the complaints of harassment. The federal and provincial Ombudspersons for Protection Against Harassment at Workplace, have also been strengthened to provide legal remedies to aggrieved women and girls.

b) Ending violence against women

Ending violence against women has been a priority area for Government of Pakistan. Among various forms of violence Rape is the worst form having lifelong psychological impact on victims 'lives. The government has enacted. The Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act 2021 to prevent and penalize the heinous act of rape. The federal and provincial governments in consultation with respective high courts established special courts for the trials of cases pertaining to Gender Based Violence. In Islamabad Capital territory, Human Rights court has also been designated under the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) Act,2012.

c) Skill based Education for Girls

Pakistan has priorities the girl's education under national Education Policy framework,2018 and National "Skills for all Strategy,2021. The strategy provides a roadmap for skill development in Pakistan focusing on eight intervention areas with identified gaps and actionable recommendations; Governance, Funding, Capacity enhancement, Quality Assurance, Access and Equity, Industry Ownership, Skill Development for International Marketing, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Communication Plan. The plan targets enhancement of female share in TVET from 10% to 30 %. Currently 3740 Institutions for Technical Education are working across the country with 2035 institutions for male, 1123 institutions for female and 582 for both i.e with co-education facility. The total enrollment in TVET institutes is around 433,237 with 285,426 male and 147,811 female students.

Keeping in view the immediate requirements of the sector, the Strategy recommended for increase of the funds allocations from existing Rs20 billion to a minimum of Rs. 50

billion for the TVET sector. The Government introduced Matric-Tech program to include technical in education in formal stream of secondary education. A project has been launched with cost of Rs. 315.0 million during F.Y.2019-20, 2020-21 & 2021-22 under the head namely; “TVET Sector Development Project through Technology Transfer (Knowledge Economy Initiative)” with a financial outlay of Rs 1000.0 million included in Public Sector Development Programme 2019-20. One of the objectives of the project is to Improve literacy, completion rate, enrolment rate, Girl’s empowerment etc. The pilot project is initially launched in 14 schools including 7 girl schools. Matric- Tech pilot project has been introduced by Federal government as a third stream of education to produce workforce in technically competent public sector schools/colleges in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, AJ&K and Gilgit Baltistan. In pilot project eight highly demanded trades are introduced including Data Coding, Industrial Electrician, Graphic Designing & Media Production, Plumbing, Solar Water Heating System, Fashion Designing & Dress Making, Professional Chef, Hair & Beauty Services and Tourism Expert. The project is initiated in collaboration with Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE), Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), concerned TVET and general education departments of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

d) **Poverty Eradication** (details mentioned in relevant sections)

e) **Gender Responsive Budgeting** (details mentioned in relevant sections)

Q3. Over the past five years, what specific actions have you taken to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls?

The marginalized groups of women and girls include women belonging to persons with disabilities, older women, transgender, women prisoners, widow, minorities, women belonging to under developed areas. Pakistan has taken several concrete steps to counter the challenges of discrimination and promote the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls. Such specific actions include enactment of new laws, formulation of policies Amendment in the Constitution, establishment of protection centers and increase

in minimum wages. The new legislations include: The Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act, 2019, ICT Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2020, Legal Aid and Justice Authority Act, 2020, ICT Senior Citizens Act, 2021, and ICT Domestic Workers Act, 2022. The enactment of new laws is vital for prevention of discrimination and protection of rights of citizen including marginalized groups women and girls.

The State of Pakistan introduced 25th amendment in the Constitution to mainstream the population including women of under developed Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) whereby the seven tribal areas are merged into Province of KPK. This amendment brought century old discriminatory colonial law i.e. Frontier Crime Regulations (FCR) to its end. This intervention ended discrimination against 2.4 million women living in the tribal areas. Now they have equal opportunity to access administration of justice, education, health and other services to be rendered for social uplift for the population at large. The Government of Pakistan adopted multi-prompt integrated approach through policy and actions to ensure protection of human rights of the minorities including women and has taken following necessary actions:

- The Government has established National Commission for Minorities (NCM) to address issues related to minority communities. Mandate of the NCM includes looking into issues of minority communities. The Commission is also mandated to formulate proposal for development of a national policy to promote peace and interfaith harmony in the country as well as to formulate proposals for amending laws/policies which are reported to be discriminatory towards the religious minorities. NCM has the mandate to recommend steps to ensure maximum and effective participation by the members of minority communities in all aspects of national life, ensure effective participation and association of minority communities with their religious and cultural festival and celebrations. The Commission also looks into the grievances and representations made by the members of any minority community.

- The National Assembly unanimously passed a Resolution regarding protection of minority rights. Accordingly, A Task Force to oversee the implementation of the rights of minorities were constituted under the leadership of an MNA belonging to minorities.
- M/o Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony has issued a Notification of “**Task Force on Developing Strategy for Religious Tolerance**” (dated 16th November, 2022). Now the M/o Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony has constituted the Task Force which was earlier headed by Ministry of Interior vide their Notification No.10/4/2021-Admn-I, dated 04-06-2021, issued in pursuance of the Honorable Supreme Court order, dated 19-06-2014. The M/o Interior has de-notified the Task Force constituted by them and transferred the subject matter to M/o Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony as per decision of the meeting of One-Man Commission, held on 22-09-2022.
- National Commission for Minorities Bill, 2022 is also under consideration. As per record of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, the Cabinet Secretariat vide Memorandum dated 09-12-2022 has conveyed ratification of the decision taken by the Cabinet Committee for Disposal of Legislative Cases (CCLC) in its meeting held 20-10-2022 under Case No. 256/33/2022 including “Approval of Draft Bill titled National Commission for Minorities Act, 2022”. After ratification of the Bill, the same is required to be transmitted to Law and Justice Division along with statement of objects and reasons.
- National Interfaith Harmony Policy is also under consideration. As per record of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, the Cabinet Division has forwarded the Cabinet Decision in Case No. 250/32/2022, dated 24-11-2022, wherein it has been informed that the Cabinet considered the Summary, titled “Approval of Draft Interfaith Harmony Policy” dated 21-10-2022 submitted by the said Ministry and deferred the same with the direction that the matter shall first be placed before the Sub-committee for discussion.

- Government of Sindh is planning to provide chronic poor households with solar panel and installation of complete renewable energy system. This intervention will cover 500,000 households belonging to lowest income quintile. The intervention is expected to provide benefit to 600,000 families and 3 Million individuals from extremely poor groups. It directly refers that the intervention benefit about 1.5 million women and girls belonging to marginalized groups across Sindh.
- The Government, every year announces Public & Optional Holidays for Minorities' Festivals. Religious Festivals of Minorities are also celebrated by the concerned stakeholders, in order to promote the interfaith harmony culture and eliminate discrimination/ violence against Minorities.

Marginalization on the basis of gender is a key challenge which affects the equal access of women towards health, education services, mobility, CNIC holding, rights to vote and access to justice. To ensure a level playing field and equal access of all basic rights by both genders, Government of Pakistan has adopted a comprehensive and inclusive approach through which various mechanisms/ institutions of state are contributing through their strategies and policies to provide marginalized women with equal access to health, education and justice for a conducive environment and gender parity. In this regard, various departments have taken multiple actions which are describe below:

Women and health (Addressing Malnutrition in Pakistan)

Pakistan faces significant challenges in achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, which aims for zero hunger and improved nutrition by 2030. The National Nutrition Survey 2018 highlighted high rates of malnutrition among children under five: 40% are stunted, 17.7% are wasted, 28.9% are underweight, and over half are anemic or suffer from deficiencies in essential nutrients. Concurrently, 9.5% are overweight or obese, illustrating a triple burden of malnutrition.

To combat this, the Government of Pakistan, in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), launched the Benazir Nashonuma Programme (BNP) in 2020. BNP is a health and nutrition-sensitive Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program targeting stunting prevention. It supports pregnant and breastfeeding women, girls, and children under two years old within households already enrolled in the Benazir Kafaalat Programme.

The BISP Nashonuma Programme focuses on a critical 1,000-day window from conception to a child's second birthday, aiming to prevent irreversible damage from stunting. The program's success is evident in its substantial expansion and the positive impact on beneficiaries' nutrition and health.

Education and training of women

The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) addresses these challenges through its Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) initiative, Benazir Taleemi Wazaif, aimed at increasing school enrollment and reducing dropout rates. Launched in 2012 as a pilot in five districts, in 2021 the scope of program was enhanced to all districts of Pakistan. The program now covers primary, secondary, and higher secondary education nationwide. As of June 2023, BISP is providing CCTs to 9,701,217 children are actively enrolled throughout Pakistan. About 47 % of the enrolled children are girls.

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Access to Justice

The Home Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has demonstrated substantial progress in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, reflecting key areas outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). The department's capacity-building initiatives have been robust, training 2,313 stakeholders, including 598 women, on gender concepts, human rights, and pro-women laws. These efforts have equipped key actors with the necessary tools to champion women's rights effectively. The Legal Aid and Justice Authority trained 101 pro bono lawyers, including 40 women, in mediation techniques to enhance access to justice, leading to a notable 9% increase in the conviction rates of gender-based violence (GBV) cases, thus ensuring better justice outcomes for survivors.

Q4. Over the past five years, how has the confluence of different crises affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country, and what measures have you taken to prevent their negative impact on progress for women and girls?

Pakistan faced three major crises during 2019-2024: The covid-19 pandemic, Floods of 2022 and a wave of terrorism after US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021. These crises caused economic and life losses, damages of infrastructure including health and education, internal displacement of communities, and violence against women. However, Government and people of Pakistan remained resilient to counter these crises with a strong commitment and social cohesion. Pakistan responded to these crises with effective strategies and plans of actions.

The pandemic outbreak hit Pakistan in early 2020. Cognizant of the situation, the government constituted a high-level National Coordination Committee (NCC) that evaluated the evolving situation on day-to-day basis to prevent the spread of pandemic. A Command-and-Control Center was also established to ensure effective coordination among the federal and provincial governments to control COVID-19. Due to timely measures taken by the government in collaboration with the provinces, the outbreak was prevented from getting worse. The government announced a stimulus package of Rs 1.24

trillion to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the pandemic and offered further relief measures through the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). Policy rate was also cut by 5.25 percent to 8.0 percent. The monetary and fiscal policy interventions have been made to restore the economic activity in this difficult time and to reduce negative effects on poverty and unemployment. SBP has developed a Policy i.e. “Banking on Equality: Policy to Reduce the Gender Gap in Financial Inclusion”. It aims to introduce a gender lens within the financial sector through identified pillars and specific measures, to bring a shift towards women friendly business practices. The policy defines SBP’s commitment to promote women’s financial inclusion in the country.

Job creation remained one of the key objectives of economic reform agenda of the Government for which National Agriculture Emergency Program, “Kamyab Jawan Program (low-cost loans to youth for business)”, “Naya Pakistan Housing Program” to construct 5 million houses in 5 years and Ten Billion Tree Tsunami had been launched, with a potential to create 1.5 to 2 million jobs. PSDP allocation was also increased from Rs 561.7 billion to Rs 701 billion in FY2020 stimulating private manufacturing and construction sector.

In the wake of COVID-19, the government approved a relief package of Rs 144 billion to provide immediate cash relief of Rs 12,000 to 12 million poor families under Ehsaas Program. BISP budgetary allocation was increased from Rs 102 billion in FY2016 to Rs 180 billion in FY2020 to support unconditional cash transfer to the poorest segments of the society. Unconditional Cash Transfer Programme was strengthened as Kafaalat Programme, through which monthly cash stipends of Rs 2000 were given to at least 7.0 million most deserving and poorest women all over the country. At first, 4.2 million women of BISP beneficiaries have been included in Kafalat program and further approximately 3.0 million deserving women to be added in 2020 and total number of beneficiaries increased to 7.0 million by the end of 2020. Pakistan Poverty Alleviation

Fund since April 2000 to March, 2020 has disbursed Rs 224.64 billion to its Partner Organizations in 144 districts across the country.

Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) is aiding destitute, widows, orphans and other needy persons irrespective of their gender, caste, creed and religion through its establishment at the district level. During July to March FY2020, PBM has disbursed an amount of Rs 2.705 billion through its core projects/Schemes. Workers Welfare Fund during July-March, FY2020 utilized Rs 2,426.31 million on 35,594 scholarship cases while Rs 432.27 million have been disbursed as Marriage Grant (@100,000/- which benefitted 4,323 workers' families. WWF has also disbursed Rs 476.00 million as Death Grant (@500,000/-) to 952 cases of mishaps of workers all over the country.

The women empowerment through Human Rights initiative continued in 2020. Funds amounting to Rs 142.9 million allocated in PSDP schemes of Ministry of Human Rights including Implementation of Action Plan for Human Rights in Pakistan, Institutional strengthening of Ministry of Human Rights, Strengthening of Regional Directorates of Human Rights at Lahore, Karachi, Establishment of Human Rights Information Management System and Human Rights Awareness Programme. The government under Prime Minister's Agriculture Emergency Programme developed a project "Backyard Poultry Programme" worth Rs 329.13 million over a period of four years. The key objectives included opportunity for the landless farmer, mostly women.

During July-March, FY2020, the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) managed to disburse an amount of Rs 2,469 million to its partner organizations (Pos) under its core interventions administered under various PPAF supported programmes. During the same period, a total of 3,636 community institutions were formed, and 1,317 community and PO staff members were trained (48 percent women) under Institutional Development and Social Mobilization component. Similarly, under Livelihood Enhancement and Protection (LEP) component, 4,027 individuals received skills/entrepreneurial training

(57 percent women) and 10,615 productive assets were transferred to ultra, and vulnerable poor (92 percent women), 74 Water and Infrastructure sub-projects were completed benefitting 41,240 persons (50 percent women). Under the health and education component, 9 educational facilities were supported during the reporting period, and 1,607 new students (44 percent girls) were enrolled, and 198,597 consultations visits by patients (60 percent women and girls) were treated under various ailments. 636,292 Interest Free Loans (IFLs) (46 percent women) were disbursed through the IFL scheme. Overall, these projects and interventions benefitted around 893,695 poor and marginalized populations which also includes 50 percent women beneficiaries during the reporting period. 154 Women Empowerment Centres (WECs) are providing free training to widows, orphans, and poor girls to acquire different skills, i.e., cutting, sewing, knitting, computers, and embroidery along with other trades. The trainees are being provided with free training material. An amount of Rs 354 million has been utilized from July 2019 to March 2020.

The Government of Pakistan has taken significant steps towards the progressive and sustainable return of displaced populations in the five tribal districts of erstwhile FATA through the Tribal Districts Development Program - Emergency Response Project (TDP-ERP). This initiative focuses on providing cash assistance to displaced families in a transparent manner. To facilitate this, 15 One Stop Shops (OSSs) were established in South Waziristan, North Waziristan, Khyber, Kurram, and Orakzai districts, manned by NADRA, Department of Health KP, and National Bank of Pakistan. These OSSs offer Livelihood Support Grants and Child Wellness Grants. Subsequently, the Child Wellness package was extended to Bajaur and Mohmand districts. To ensure broader coverage, an additional 12 OSSs were set up in the target districts, bringing the total to 27 sites. These OSSs have now been transformed into Citizens Facilitation Centers (CFCs), offering NADRA registration services, Civil Registration Management System, and e-Sahulat services to the public. Recently, the Child Wellness package and CFC services have been

expanded to the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with 16 new CFCs being established, totaling 43 CFCs across 11 districts.

Under the WEP, all Provincial administrative departments have formulated time bound action plans and integrated the same in their Annual Development Plans (ADPs) with allocated resources and well-defined targets. The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has successfully launched 05 ADPs till 2023. According to the Annual Development Plan 2022-2023, there are 21 ongoing schemes pertaining to women development including inter alia the development of shelter homes, establishment of innovation fund for youth and women entrepreneurs, strengthening of Ombudsman Secretariat, and establishment of women skills development centers. In addition to this, 03 new schemes on women development have also been introduced with an allocation of 82.854 million rupees.

Furthermore, the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have both mandatory and voluntary measures in place to protect women who experience intersecting discrimination in the province. One such initiative includes the 'Bolo Helpline' that receives complaints and assists Afghan women migrant workers facing gender-based violence without any discrimination.

The 2022 floods have shown Pakistan's high vulnerability to climate change despite contributing less than one percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. This disaster has demonstrated what this vulnerability looks like for the people of the country. Since June this year, the federal and provincial authorities have been working tirelessly to manage the massive relief efforts that are ongoing across the country, together with local, national, and international partners. One-third of the country has been under water, and 33 million people have been affected. Nearly 8 million people are reportedly displaced. The scale of the disaster is unprecedented in Pakistan, exceeding the damage of the 2010 floods. It will take a collective, international effort to recover from the impacts of this calamity. The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment that has been undertaken will help understand the scale

of resources required for recovery and reconstruction by calculating the damage, loss, and needs. However, the recovery and reconstruction needs are likely to exceed Pakistan's available resources and that assistance from multilateral and bilateral partners and philanthropists will be needed if the country is to rebuild itself in a sustainable and resilient manner. This comes at a time when countries around the world, including Pakistan's friends and partners, are also facing the impacts of the global economic challenges. We would therefore like to acknowledge those partners who are always ready to support Pakistan's recovery.

Women in particular have suffered notable losses to their livelihoods, particularly associated with agriculture and livestock, with attendant negative impacts on their economic empowerment and wellbeing. The floods have increased women's vulnerability to gender-based violence (GBV) due to aggravated household tensions, harassment, and abuse related to displacement and lack of secure infrastructure. Rates of early and forced marriages often increase in the wake of crises and economic security. The United Nations Population Fund estimates that 640,000 adolescent girls during the current crisis are vulnerable and at increased risk of coercions, GBV, and child marriage. Moreover, some other groups of the population might experience disproportional losses, including refugees and displaced persons from Afghanistan, since they are inadequately covered in national household surveys

Q5. Over the next five years, what are the priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country through laws, policies and/or programmes?

The Government of Pakistan aims at following priorities for the next five years to accelerate progress for women and girls;

- a) Review and update following women and girls related laws;
 - Dowry and Bridal gifts (restriction) Act,1976
 - West Pakistan family Court Act,1964
 - Muslim marriage Act,1939

- Guardian and Ward Act,1890
- b) Establishment of Gender mainstreaming Parliamentary Committee at National and Provincial level
- c) Formulation of National Policy on Ending Violence against Women
- d) Enactment of ICT Domestic Violence Law
- e) Ending Child marriages and child domestic labour
- f) Introduction of Forgery free Nikah Nama (Marriage registration form)
- g) Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship
- h) Ensuring job quota reserved for women
- i)
- j) Annual Award to Banks and Institutions providing best support to women entrepreneurs
- k) Establishment of Endowment Fund for working women
- l) Establishment of working Women Hostels
- m) Enhancing 33% Women Representation in Federal Boards, Statutory Bodies, Public Sector Organizations and Allied Committees under Federal Government
- n) Parity in Pay and wages
- o) Reducing Gender Digital Divide through disbursement of Laptop, skill development, Youth loan programs and other relevant initiatives
- p) Necessary Amendments in curricula for incorporating gender sensitivity
- q) Establishment of day Care Fund and Day care centers at national level to support working women and making their workplaces women-friendly
- r) Disbursement of grant of Rs.500 million through NPOs/NGOs /CBOs and public sector organizations
- s) Transport facility for women in Islamabad capital Territory
- t) Ensuring Smooth Transfer of Inherence property to women and rationalization of transfer fee and taxes
- u) Skilled base Education

Q6. Over the past five years, what actions has your country taken to advance gender equality in the world of work (including informal and nonstandard employment as well as entrepreneurship)?

Empowering women in the labour market and increasing women's labour force participation is among the main priorities of Pakistan. In this context, Pakistan has enacted the Maternity and Paternity Leave Act, 2023,¹ and the Day Care Centers Act, 2023.² The labor force participation by women was observed at 20.1 % Labor Force Survey 2018-19. This was increased to 21.4 % during labor force survey 2020-21. The increased labor force participation by women despite covid-19 pandemic can rightly be attributed to government of Pakistan's efforts for gender mainstreaming. The employment status indicates that 21.8 % of the working women were employed according to LFS 2018-19 whereas the coefficient increased up to 25 % according to LFS 2020-21. The situation depicts that despite the covid-19 pandemic, women employment rate has increased.

The women participation in role of manager has increased from 0.5 % previously (LFS 2018-19) to 0.6 % according to LFS 2020-21. This, though indicates a slim difference, however reflects a positive change towards attaining the aim of women as leader in the society. During the current reporting period, Benazir Income Support Program provided about 9.1 million women beneficiaries (across the country) with unconditional cash transfers. This has resulted in financial inclusion of women as well as contributed in economic empowerment of women. The economic empowerment has translated into increased role of women in household decision making (67 % of the beneficiary said this) whereas the CNIC holding by women has also increased contributing a potential increase in their participation in electoral process.

In 2021, there were 613,301 (70.7%) male participants and 253,934 (29.7%) female participants who completed the training under Digi skills, Tech Innovation, and

¹ The Act to provide for the facility of maternity and paternity leave to the employees of public and private establishments under administrative control of the Federal Government.

² Provides for the facility of day care centres in public and private establishments.

Incubation programmes led by the Ministry of IT and Telecom. The DigiSkills.pk Program is aimed at equipping our youth, freelancers, students, professionals, etc. with the knowledge, skills, tools & techniques necessary to work as a freelancer. The programme equips the participants to earn a living or to supplement the existing income by seizing the opportunities available in online job markets places especially the postCOVID-19 window of opportunity arising from the work-from-home setups.

As per the data, the total number of participants decreased by 9.5 percent from 454,193 in 2020 to 411,332 in 2021. However, the male-to-female ratio reveals that women's participation has increased. In 2021, 278,053 male participants completed the Digi skills training program as compared to 333,915 in 2020, down by 16.7 percent. 133,225 female participants successfully completed their training in 2021 which is 10.5 percent higher than 2020 participation of 120,264 female participants.

Out of the total 56 grants offered under Tech Innovation Grants in 2021, 42 were offered to males and 14 were offered to females with a GPI of 0.33. The number of participants enrolled in the NIC incubation programs increased from 62 in 2020 to 144 in 2021 (132.2 percent increase). Of the total 144 enrolled participants, 110 were male and 34 were female with a GPI of 0.31. The Federal Ministry of Industries nominates individuals for trainings conducted by Asian Productivity Organization (APO) and National Productivity Organization (NPO) on a wide range of programs/topics. For all the trainings conducted in 2020-21, 471 females participated in the trainings.

SMEDA provides need-based training related to business & trade, awareness & opportunities for upcoming businesses, entrepreneurial, financial and freelancing. The data reveals that more than 50 percent of the female trainees participated in business and trade-related workshops and training, followed by seminars and conferences on upcoming business opportunities (26 percent). SMEDA organizes training programs to help improve major performance indicators like; productivity, competitiveness, quality

and knowledge management. These training help SMEs achieve ISO compliance and WTO requirement easier and faster. In 2020, a sum of 2,228 people received training under SMEDA, which increased by 136 percent in 2021. Of the total 5,264 participants in 2021, 4,194 were male and 1,070 were female with a GPI of 0.26.

In 2020, women owned 53.1% and 53.9% of active current and deposit accounts respectively and only 17.8% of active consumer loan accounts in FWBL. Women owned a relatively larger proportion of (67.7%) corporate/SME accounts. The amount of loans disbursed for female consumer as well as corporate/SME accounts remained lower (24% and 44% respectively) as opposed to the amount disbursed to men. In the Bank of Punjab (BOP), women owned 28% and 26.8% of active deposit and current accounts respectively accounts and 10.4% of loan accounts in 2020. 2.7% and 9.4% was disbursed to women as loans and long-term loans respectively.

Microfinance Institutions and Banks under the umbrella of Pakistan Microfinance Network had 6,665,108 borrowers in 2020, of which 3,434,157 (51.5%) were men and 3,230,951 (48.5%) were women. Women, however, held 102.9 billion (32.7%) of the Gross Loan Portfolio (GLP) as opposed to the GLP of men at 211.9 billion (67.3%). In 2020, PESSI disbursed Rs. 320.15 million to its beneficiaries, of which, Rs. 273.70 million (85 percent) and Rs. 46.45 million (15 percent) were disbursed to women. In 2021, the disbursed amount increased by 25 percent to Rs. 401.14 million, however, the share of women in the disbursed amount further decreased. Of the total amount, Rs. 344.59 million (86 percent) were disbursed to men and Rs. 56.55 million (14 percent) to women.

Furthermore, the Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) also actively work towards enhancing the participation and influence of women in political and public life. The organization aims to strengthen the capabilities of female parliamentarians, advocating for gender-related issues within legislative structures. Its goal is to transform concerns

into impactful national legislation, explicitly focusing on females from minority communities.

Pakistan provides equal opportunity to women to assume leadership positions. Consequently, two female judges have been appointed in the Supreme Court of Pakistan, and three national human rights institutions in Pakistan are presently led by female chairpersons i.e. the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR); the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW); and the National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCRC). Moreover, the establishment of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) in 2020 is a clear indication of Pakistan's commitment to protecting the rights of minority and disadvantaged groups. NCM endeavors to ensure the participation of women, especially from ethnic and religious minorities, in peace, transitional justice, and reconciliation processes.

The integration of gender-responsive budgeting, regular monitoring indicators, and accountability mechanisms signifies a comprehensive approach to sustaining gender equality and women's empowerment across all sectors, reaffirming Pakistan's dedication to peace and security through inclusive and progressive measures.

Q7. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, promote work-life and family balance and strengthen the rights of paid care workers?

The Government of Pakistan enacted Islamabad Capital Territory Domestic Workers Act, 2022 and increased monthly minimum wages from Rs.25000 to Rs. 32000 for unskilled workers with an increase of 28%. The rights of paid care workers have been recognized and strengthened through the domestic workers Act whereby the employer is legally bound to provide employment letter, minimum wages as set by the Government, mandatory one day leave in a week, annual leaves, sick leave, medical examination, accommodation to the domestic worker, and ban on engagement of child

care worker below the age of 16 year. The law also provides that there would be no discrimination in remuneration or pay on the bases of sex. Both the male and female workers will be entitled for the same wages for a same nature of work. All four provinces have also enacted the laws to protect and strengthen the rights of domestic or home-based workers.

Q8. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to reduce the gender digital divide?

The potential of digital technology to empower women and promote gender equality is widely recognized. Bridging the digital divide against women in Pakistan is critical for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. In this regard, digital communication, financial inclusion, online learning, and technology-facilitated gender-based violence - are crucial to addressing the digital divide and empowering women in Pakistan. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical importance of digital technology, with many aspects of work, education, and social life moving online. Pakistan had one of the most robust growth rates in mobile internet awareness, especially among women. The gender gap in mobile internet awareness has been narrowed from 16 percent to 11 percent, and women's mobile internet use has nearly been doubled from 10 percent to 19 percent.

In order to address these challenges, the Government of Pakistan has taken several positive steps to address the digital divide and promote digital communication for women's empowerment. These initiatives aim to provide women with the skills, resources, and opportunities they need to access digital technology, learn new skills, and achieve financial independence. By promoting digital literacy, providing access to digital technology, and promoting digital financial inclusion, the Government of Pakistan is creating a more inclusive and equitable digital environment for women, empowering them to achieve their full potential. Initiatives aimed at improving women's access to technology and online communication platforms include the following:

- a) **Access to technology:** The Universal Service Fund (USF) is a government initiative that aims to provide internet access to rural areas of Pakistan. This initiative has provided internet access to 3.3 million people in over 1,000 rural communities, enabling 25,26,27 women in these areas to access digital technology. The government has also launched the “Smartphone for All” scheme that enables low-income individuals to purchase mobile phones via easy interest-free instalments, and sales can be completed with only a National Identity Card (NIC). Furthermore, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has proceeded with the PTA-Huawei MoU for Affordable Devices and Skills Development for increased accessibility to digital devices and technologies.
- b) **Digital education:** The Virtual University of Pakistan is a government initiative that provides online courses in a variety of fields. The university offers several courses aimed at promoting digital literacy and providing women **with** the skills they need to access digital technology. Using free-to-air satellite television broadcasts and the Internet, the Virtual University and Allama Iqbal Open University allow students to follow their rigorous programmes regardless of their physical 30 locations.
- c) **Digital skills training:** The National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) is a government initiative that provides vocational 33 training to women in a variety of fields. The commission offers several courses aimed at promoting digital literacy and providing women with the skills they need to access digital technology, and reserves a 35 percent quota allocated specifically for female students only. The PTA has also launched a toolkit in Urdu, the national language, to 35 provide basic Mobile Internet Skills Training (MISTT).

- d) **Digital financial services:** The State Bank of Pakistan has launched several initiatives aimed at providing digital financial services to women, including the Raast Payment System, which provides an instant digital payment service to individuals and businesses. Other digital financial services include Easypaisa and JazzCash, which use a person's mobile phone number as their banking ID, and are used through mobile devices, therefore making banking very simple. This introduction of branchless banking allows women in rural areas to access banking facilities and utilize financial solutions in locations where major banks are not operational, as well as make use of mobile wallet accounts to exercise autonomy and protect their financial assets from theft.
- e) **Online Communication:** Online communication has also played a critical role in promoting women's political participation and representation in Pakistan. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have provided women with a platform to engage in political discourse, raise awareness of women's issues, and mobilize support for political causes. Online communication has enabled women to form networks, connect with like-minded individuals, and create a virtual community, enhancing their political aspirations. The potential benefits of online communication for expanding access to education, promoting economic inclusion, and enhancing political participation are significant, and efforts to bridge the digital divide and promote digital literacy are critical in ensuring that women can take advantage of these opportunities. However, it is also essential to address the challenges that online communication presents, particularly with regard to online harassment and cyberbullying, to ensure that women can engage in online activities safely and freely.
- f) **Emergence of social media and situation of women's voices:** The emergence of social media has had a significant impact on the proliferation of women's voices in Pakistan. Social media has provided a platform for women to voice their

opinions and engage in public discourse, which was previously limited by societal norms and cultural practices. Research has shown that in countries with large gender inequities in offline life, women are more likely to have significant online presences. Social media has reshaped how people approach feminism and has provided women a platform to speak up about pressing issues that would otherwise be swept under the rug. Furthermore, due to online privacy and anonymity, women are more likely to be more vocal. The accessibility and connectivity of social media allow for establishment of the communities and support groups, as well as removal of barriers among people for mobilization towards a political agenda and feminist movement. For instance, Aurat March is an annual socio-political demonstration in Pakistani cities which is observed on International Women's Day. It first began on March 2018 as a collective movement mobilized online parallel to the Pakistani #MeToo movement. Now, the march's manifesto is uploaded online every year which garners massive support on social media platforms. Additionally, news of harassment and assault cases that are not publicized on traditional media are disseminated through digital means quickly in order to seek justice for the victims. Furthermore, in order to vote, every citizen must be registered and have a Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC). The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) offers an online application process for the issuance and renewal of the CNICs. Women with access to digital technologies can register themselves to vote without relying on someone else and exercise their own autonomy.

The Government of Pakistan has implemented several initiatives to promote women's empowerment through digital communication. For example, the government has established the "Women's Digital Empowerment Campaign" to increase women's access to digital technologies and promote digital literacy. Additionally, the "She Leads Tech" programme has been launched to provide digital training and mentorship to women entrepreneurs in the country. The government has also introduced the "Pakistan Citizen's

Portal," an online platform for citizens to file complaints and provide feedback on government services, which can be particularly useful for women who may face barriers to accessing traditional complaint mechanisms. The GSM Association, a global trade body for mobile network operators, has also been working on initiatives to enhance the effectiveness of digital communication for women's empowerment in Pakistan. In 2018, the organization launched the "Connected Women Programme" in Pakistan, which aims to increase women's access to mobile internet and promote digital literacy. The programme includes a range of initiatives, such as providing digital skills training to women entrepreneurs, promoting access to affordable smartphones and mobile internet, and developing digital content that is relevant to women's needs and interests. Digital communication has the potential to transform women's empowerment in Pakistan, but it is important to ensure that its effectiveness is enhanced through targeted strategies.

The Government of Pakistan has implemented several initiatives to promote women's empowerment through digital communication. For example, the government has established the "Women's Digital Empowerment Campaign" to increase women's access to digital technologies and promote digital literacy. Jazz, a leading digital communications company in Pakistan, has also been working on initiatives to enhance the effectiveness of digital communication for women's empowerment. One such initiative is the "Jazz Smart School" programme, which provides digital literacy training to girls in schools across the country. The programme aims to promote digital skills and knowledge among young girls, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds, and to encourage them to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

Q9. In the past five years, how has the macroeconomic and fiscal policy environment affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country, and what macroeconomic policies has your country implemented in support of a more gender-equal economy?

Though economy recovered from the pandemic (a 0.94 percent drop in FY2020) and maintained V-Shaped recovery by posting real GDP growth of 5.97 percent in the fiscal year 2022. This high growth, however, is unsustainable and has resulted in financial and macroeconomic imbalances. Political instability in the country also led to a huge increase in economic uncertainty. Uncertainty at individual, firm, and government levels is negatively affecting the economy. The coordinated monetary-fiscal policy approach after the COVID-19 outbreak has succeeded in reviving the real economic activity. Specifically, the fiscal-monetary stimulus packages have a cascading effect on growth through a revival in private investment. In addition, the accommodative monetary policy stance in FY2021, focused on the revival of the construction industry and mandatory housing finance targets by the SBP, together with the rebound in external demand has set the stage for stronger growth momentum in FY2022.

Pakistan's economy has shown a strong recovery after being depressed due to the pandemic which resulted in lockdown. For FY2022, real GDP (GVA at basic prices 2015-16) posted a growth of 5.97 percent on account of 4.40 percent growth in Agriculture, 7.19 percent growth in the Industrial sector, and 6.19 percent growth in the Services sector. This growth is slightly above the growth of 5.74 percent recorded for FY2021.

Pakistan Baitul Mal (PBM) is providing financial assistance to the destitute, widows, orphans, and other needy persons at the district level. During FY2022, Rs 6.505 billion has been allocated to PBM for its core projects/schemes. Workers Welfare Fund (WWF) during July-March, FY2022, disbursed Rs 1.43 billion on 15,004 scholarship cases, while Rs 244.07 million was utilized as marriage grants @ Rs 200,000 per worker, benefitting 1819 workers' families. The WWF has also disbursed Rs 420.4 million as a death grant @Rs 600,000 per worker covering 804 cases of mishaps all over the country.

Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) also helps in micro-credit, water, health, education, and livelihood. Since its inception in April 2000 till March 2022, PPAF has disbursed approximately Rs 237.56 billion to its Partner Organizations (POs) in 147 districts across the country. A total of 8.4 million microcredit loans have been disbursed with 60 percent loans to women and 80 percent financing extended to rural areas.

With a particular focus on improving the nutritional status of women and children, the Pakistan Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2018-25 (PMNS) and Pakistan Dietary Guidelines for Better Nutrition (PDGN) were prepared and launched. Leveraging public-private partnerships, a Food Fortification Programme is being implemented across 1,100 flour mills, and a Universal Salt Iodization (USI) Programme is operational in 110 districts. Pakistan's provinces have also spearheaded a range of initiatives to improve nutrition. The Punjab MultiSectoral Nutrition Strategy (MNSC) 2015 augments the Health Integrated Reforms Programme and the Stunting Prevention Nutrition Programme. The province of Sindh is implementing an ambitious Nutrition Support Programme, backed by an Accelerated Action Plan for the Reduction of Stunting and Malnutrition. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, two notable initiatives include the Health Integrated Reforms Programme and the Stunting Prevention Rehabilitation Integrated Nutrition Gain (SPRING) project. Balochistan is implementing the Balochistan Nutrition Programme for Mothers & Children (BNPMC), alongside a Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Specific and Sensitive Interventions Programme. Other key initiatives include:

- Tax exemptions on imports of food fortification equipment;
- Bio-fortified, zinc-rich variety of wheat, "Zincol 2016", to increase intakes of zinc and iron;
- Enactment of Balochistan's and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Protection and Promotion of Breastfeeding and Child Nutrition Acts, as well as the Punjab Infant Feeding Act;

- Initiation of a wheat flour food fortification programme with the use of iron, folic acid, zinc, Vitamin B12, and the fortification of edible oil ('ghee') with Vitamins A and D;
- Initiation of formulation of a National Policy Framework on Early Childhood Development (ECD);
- Utilizing evidence of the National Nutrition Survey 2017-18 for policy planning and programming; and
- Increased investments in nutrition-specific interventions and nutrition-sensitive approaches in the health, agriculture, social protection, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sectors to overcome malnutrition and stunting.

Pakistan has designed a comprehensive National SDG Framework which was approved by the National Economic Council (NEC), the country's highest economic policy-making forum, in March 2018. This Framework sets baselines and targets for SDG indicators and will feed into the SDGs' Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The framework is now guiding the provinces to determine their development priorities, based on local needs. To bolster the implementation of the SDGs, the provinces have instituted Technical Committees and Thematic Clusters. The nomination of focal persons at all levels of government, down to the districts, is helping them to align their development priorities with the 2030 Agenda. This institutional arrangement has been instrumental in guiding the alignment of federal and provincial national policies, sectoral plans and growth strategies with the contours of the 2030 Agenda. National data collection tools have been modified to improve data availability, with a focus on the inclusivity, equity and sustainability aspects of the SDGs. Pakistan is the first country in the world to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of its national development agenda through a National Assembly Resolution. Learning from the experience of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Pakistan's national and provincial assemblies established SDG Taskforces to oversee progress on the goals. The 12th Five Year Plan and provincial medium-term development strategies are all aligned with the 2030 Agenda.

Pakistan is progressing on several fronts – such as reducing poverty and child stunting, improving transparency and accountability, and promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment. Pakistan’s political commitment to these priorities supports the 2030 Agenda. Over the past 10 Voluntary National Review – Pakistan 2019 ten years, the poverty headcount has fallen by 26 percentage points and multi-dimensional poverty by 16 percentage points. The national poverty alleviation programme, Ehsaas (compassion), was launched in 2019 to expand social protection, safety nets and support human capital development throughout the country. This programme complements and expands the on-going, robust social protection programme for poor women. As the national resolve to eliminate poverty is firm, the size of assistance for the lowest strata has been enhanced. The National Socioeconomic Registry is being updated to target the poorest more effectively and to ensure that no one is left behind. The prevalence of skilled birth attendance has improved by 17 percentage points while the neonatal mortality rate has fallen by 10 percentage points during the same period. The Lady Health Workers Programme, with its grassroots presence, has been instrumental in achieving these improvements. A new universal health coverage initiative, the Sehat Sahulat Programme, was launched in 2019 to provide health insurance coverage for those in need. Health sector reforms are underway, entailing a centralized integrated disease surveillance system and a strong inter-provincial information sharing mechanism. Improving access to, and the quality of, education is a key national priority for Pakistan. Its focus is on improved school monitoring mechanisms, along with targeted interventions for out-of-school children. While the female literacy remains low, rising gross enrolment figures for girls’ education show that Pakistan is on track to eliminate gender disparities in education. The results of promoting women’s empowerment through education are being felt in other sectors, as women’s labour force participation increases, unemployment among young women decreases, and a rising share of senior and middle management and professional positions are held by women.

Q10. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls?

The Poverty Alleviation and Social Security Division (PASS) is managing several social security schemes to alleviate poverty. The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP)/Ehsaas Kafaalat Programme (EKP) provides unconditional cash transfers to eligible families. During the pandemic, the Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme was launched to help poor families affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and an amount of approximately PKR 180 billion to around 14.9 million beneficiaries @ PKR 12,000/- per beneficiary was disbursed. Moreover, BISP has designed and launched a pilot project for opening of savings accounts and provision of financial literacy to Ehsaas Kafaalat beneficiaries.

The Government of Punjab has also undertaken a number of poverty alleviation measures such as Humqadam Programme; income generation and graduation scheme for PWDs; Sila-e-Fun Program for elderly artists; Nayee Zindagi Program for Acid-attack victims; Ba-himmat Buzurg Program for poor senior citizens; Punjab Human Capital Investment Project (PHCIP) for pregnant and lactating mothers and young parents; and Masawaat Program for Transgender Persons. Drafting of Punjab Social Protection Policy for socio-economic empowerment of the vulnerable and marginalized through cash assistance, active labour market programs and contributory/non-contributory pensions is also underway. The Government of KP also provides skill development and income generating trainings and activities to the local communities. The new projects include Poverty Alleviation through development of rural poultry in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (PSDP), The Government of Sindh is running a Peoples Poverty Reduction Program. It was formerly known as Union Council Based Poverty Reduction Program.

Q11. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve access to social protection for women and girls?

Pakistan falls among those few developing countries whose constitution delineates social security as the civil right of every citizen. As indicated in Article-38 of the constitution of

Islamic Republic of Pakistan, it's the responsibility of the state to provide social security. Other basic amenities include housing, clothing, food, medical relief and education irrespective of the caste or race, creed and sex. In Pakistan, owing to the government's welfare orientation and commitment towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), social protection has gained high priority, and the government is determined to prepare and implement all-inclusive social protection policies that have transparent and manageable targeting system. In the post devolution scenario (in wake of 18th Amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan), both federal and provincial governments are jointly working towards the achievement of optimal social protection and minimum social exclusion. Pakistan's multi-sectoral poverty reduction strategy encompasses targeted interventions, such as the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), alongside private philanthropy and improved access to microfinance. Key social safety initiatives include Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, Zakat, and Ushr programmes, Employees Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI), the Worker's Welfare Funds (WWF) and provincial Employees' Social Security Institutions.

Pakistan is committed to poverty alleviation in line with the SDGs target Goal-1 "No Poverty" in all its manifestations everywhere by 2030. According to the Planning Commission, the poverty headcount ratio was 24.3 percent by estimating the poverty line for this period as Rs 3,250.28 per adult equivalent per month, which represented around 50 million people living below the national poverty line in 2015-16. The national poverty headcount ratio at \$1.90 a day (2011 purchasing power parity, % of the population) showing a declining trend from 6.1 percent in 2013-14 to 3.9 percent in 2015-16.

The government during 2019-20 has taken following initiatives to reduce poverty, provide income security, and to increase the population's access to social protection:

- Creation of a dedicated Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety Division to synergize the efforts of various organizations working for poverty alleviation and social protection in public and private sectors;

- Launch of Ehsaas Programme which, inter alia, includes inflation-adjusted BISP / Ehsaas Kafaalat cash transfers, asset ownership programme for graduation out of poverty, access to finance for the youth, graduate and undergraduate scholarships for the poor and needy students;
- Introduction of a Relief Package of Rs 144 billion, in the backdrop of COVID-19, to provide immediate cash relief of Rs 12,000 per household for four months to almost 12 million poor families under Ehsaas Programme;
- Re-orienting PSDP to include pro-poor and less-developed areas focused on projects;
- Expanding coverage of Prime Minister's Health Insurance scheme by launching the first phase of the countrywide Sehat-Insaf Card Scheme to provide free medical treatment to approximately 80 million people including women and girls;
- Finalization of the National Nutrition Programme in order to upscale nutrition and ensure food security;
- Launch of Ehsaas-Saylani Langar Scheme, with an aim to reduce hunger and provide hygienic food to the poor, under the government's Ehsaas Programme;
- Construction of 'Panagahs' in major cities to provide shelter to the homeless
- Extension of Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Programme (Waseela-e-Taleem) to another 50 districts during 2020 which involves a cash transfer of Rs 750 and Rs 1000 per quarter to boys and girls respectively;
- Capitalizing on Tele-health and Tele-education Facilities to expand health and education coverage.

During 2021, PPAF completed its COVID-19 Economic Revival Assistance Programme across 21 districts falling in the Extreme Poverty Zones which benefitted 66,590 households through provision of livestock fodder, food packages, agricultural inputs, emergency interest free loans as well as through small enterprise and kitchen gardening. The programme was extended so that the target population can restore their livelihoods, survive this crisis and strengthen their resilience. The total funding included Rs 432.5

million, contributed by the PPAF COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund (Rs 413 million) as well as by the Citi Foundation (Rs 19.5 million).

PPAF completed the Revitalizing Youth Enterprise (RYE) project with the financial support of the Citi Foundation, through one of its partner organizations BRSP in districts Ziarat and Killa Saifullah in Balochistan. The 300 youths including 150 young men and 150 young women were trained on technical skills. After imparting technical skills, 200 of them were provided internship/apprenticeship opportunities in the local market.

Under Programme for Poverty Reduction (PPR), an MoU was signed between PPAF and University of Malakand to support university students in their endeavors to accelerate socio-economic development in their respective areas funded by the Italian Government through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS).

PPAF in collaboration with the UNDP Pakistan, Forest and Wildlife Department and the Government of Balochistan, initiated a mass tree plantation campaign called 'Chand Meri Zameen, Phool Mera Watan'. The tree plantation campaign implemented by PPAF's Partner Organization Taraqee Foundation, targets multiple cities of Balochistan including Quetta, Pishin and Nushki.

An MoU was signed between PPAF and Engro Foundation who pledged to contribute Rs 70 million to the Ehsaas Amdan Programme to support the deserving families, whose incomes have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

During FY2021, an amount of Rs 6.105 billion has been allocated to Pakistan Bait ul Mall for implementation of schemes; i.e. Dar-ul Ehsaas (orphanage), Women Empowerment Centres. School for rehabilitation of child labor, Ehsaas Kada (for shelter less senior citizen), Child Support Programme, Individual Financial Assistance etc.

Development expenditures grew by 85.7 percent during 2022 to Rs 724.1 billion, compared to Rs 390.0 billion in 2021. The significant rise in development expenditures has been witnessed mainly in the areas of health, recreational culture & religion, housing & community, economic affairs, social protection, environment protection, and general public services etc.

Following key actions /Steps have been taken during 2022 for social protection;

- a) Expansion of Ehsaas Kafaalat Programme: BISP is currently disbursing payments to around 5.7 million regular beneficiaries under its Ehsaas Kafaalat Programme. During FY2022, the number of regular beneficiaries has been enhanced to 8.0 million.
- b) Ehsaas Cash Assistance Programme Phase-II: Keeping in view the increase in economic hardships due to the 3rd wave of COVID-19, second phase of Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme (ECAP-II) has been launched in June, 2021. As of 30-03-2022, an amount of Rs 30.18 billion has been disbursed to 2.50 million additional beneficiaries (other than UCT beneficiaries) @ Rs 12,000/- per beneficiaries to ever-married women of the eligible families having valid CNIC.
- c) Zakat is an important institution in an Islamic economic framework for poverty alleviation and economic welfare. In Islam, Zakat is a religious obligation to pay a part of wealth and production to the government. Zakat has emerged as the government's central programme of social safety instruments. However, its potential and scope in fighting poverty is yet to be fully realized. The federal government is responsible for the collection of Zakat and its distribution to the provinces/federal areas in accordance with the Zakat distribution formula approved by the Council of Common Interests (CCI). A total amount of Rs 6,190.37 million has been distributed during FY2022.
- d) During July 2021-March 2022, a total of 389,238 interest free loans (**61% loans to women**) amounting Rs 14.41 billion have been disbursed to the borrowers through Interest Free Loan Program (IFL) under PPAF. The programme is being executed

through 768 Loan Centers/Branches in about 75 districts by 21 partners organizations across the country. During July 2022 to March 2023, a total of 365,408 loans (62% women) amounting to Rs.14.93 billion have been disbursed to borrowers whereas cumulatively July 2019 to March 2023, a total of 2,303,046 loans (52% women) amounting to Rs 85.16 billion have been disbursed. The programme is being executed through 736 Loan Centers/Branches in about 81 districts by 26 POs across the country. PPAF has launched an Emergency Flood Relief Programme with an initial allocation of Rs 250 million in 31 affected districts of the country to address the immediate needs of the flood-affected population in the poorest communities, improve their coping capacities for early recovery and rehabilitation and strengthen their resilience to climate induced disasters. Province-wise and sector wise detail of relief operation in 31 flood affected district of the country

The Federal and Provincial Judicial Academies convened 67 training, capacity building and sensitization programs, during the reporting period, for an estimated 3500 judges, prosecutors, judicial officers, women protection officers, psychologists, law enforcement officials, lawyers, medical staff and front desk officers on gender sensitive issues including gender-based violence, reporting and registration of complaints and prosecution with detailed description of available legislation.

The Police Department of all four Provinces convened 43 training sessions on gender-based violence, investigation of GBV cases, special courses on handling sexual offense/harassment child abuse, forensic analysis and prosecution of GBV cases. In these courses 1172 officials were provided with trainings out of which 367 were female officers.

Shelter homes for gender-based violence (GBV) victims have been set up in all Divisional Headquarters across the provinces, each with a capacity to accommodate a minimum of 35 to 50 women. These shelters aim to support women who are victims of various forms

of violence, such as domestic abuse, physical and psychological harm, rape, cases involving 'vanni' and 'sawara' traditions, forced marriages, as well as emotional and economic abuse. Women with children, who are also victims of violence, are provided accommodation in these shelters. Legal aid was provided to 29,745 women including their children. Medical services were provided to 44884 women along with their children through shelter / protection centers.

The Federal Government in 2019 introduced the Draft National Policy on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls to address incidents of all forms of violence against women by adopting a zero-tolerance policy. The policy provides an overarching framework of prevention, response, implementation, and evaluation, monitoring and reporting on violence against women and girls.

The Federal Government also introduced the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2020 that aims to establish an effective system of protection, relief and rehabilitation of women, children, elders, and any vulnerable person against domestic violence. However, legislation on domestic violence exists in all provinces.³ In order to effectively implement criminal laws and provide speedy justice to victims of GBV in a gender-sensitive manner, 95 specialized gender-based violence courts⁴ with 116 Judicial Officers have been designated across the country.

Furthermore, institutional mechanisms have been set up to protect women from abuse. All provinces have established *dar-ul-amans* (shelter homes) for women and children that provide shelter, medical and psychological rehabilitation and legal counseling to victims of violence without any discrimination. The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has established 10 *dar-ul-amans* (shelters) that have aided 4719 women from 2020 to 2023.

³ The Balochistan (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2014; the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Prevention and Rehabilitation) Act, 2021, the Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Act, 2016, and the Sindh Domestic Violence (Protection and Prevention) Act, 2013.

⁴ GBV Courts breakdown across Pakistan: 02 in Islamabad, 01 in Balochistan, 29 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 36 in Punjab, and 27 in Sindh.

As per data collected by the Gender Crime Cell (GCC) of the National Police Bureau (NPB), a total of around 33,623 cases of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) were reported in the country from June 2018 to June, 2021. An estimated 8,7933 cases were reported in the year 2020 as compared to 9326 cases reported in 2019. The trend analysis shows that there is a slight decline in crime cases of GBV in 2020 (6% down from 2019).

Government and non-government entities are providing trainings and awareness raising sessions on gender issues and laws. The Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan started special training sessions in 2019 for Judicial Officers and Prosecutors on gender issues. The FJA has also initiated a nation-wide sensitization program of judges with a focus on gender sensitization. MoHR also conduct sensitization sessions for prosecutors and court officials on women specific laws. At the provincial level 22 training programs were held in Punjab to sensitize 1,168 judges and court staffs on gender related laws from 2016–2019.

The Government of Punjab has consistently undertaken initiatives for making female approach to courts, police and protection centers easier. The Shaheed Benazir Bhutto (SBB) Human Rights Centers provide aggrieved women with adequate redressals including temporary shelter, first aid, legal assistance and counselling. Between 2020 and 2021, the number of women receiving assistance from the Centers increased by 81%. Other avenues of redressal have also been operating successfully. In 2021, installations of the PSCA Women Safety Mobile Application increased by 70% and its active users also grew by 73%. A similar project by the Punjab Government is the Punjab Women's Helpline 1043 which receives complaints from women 24/7 and aids in matters of domestic violence, harassment, property disputes, inheritance rights etc. in 2021, the complaints received by the Helpline increased by 53% and the majority of them (46%) were regarding violence. Punjab Government initiatives such as the Punjab Women's

Helpline 1043, the Violence against Women Center and PSCA Women Safety Mobile Application have made some impact.

In Balochistan, a One-Stop Complex for Victims of Crimes against Women has been set up to provide in-house services including 24/7 helpline, medical examination, legal consultation, psychosocial support, referral service to long-term shelters, and policy protection to survivors of GBV.

Similarly, the government of Sindh has established Women Complaint Centers (WCC) and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Centres for Women through which, during last two years, more than 500 victims of domestic violence and honor killing rape, acid throwing, child custody and dissolution of marriage have been given legal aid and sociopsychological counseling. They have also provided 154 women with psycho-social counseling in cases of violence, 150 women received psycho-therapeutic counseling, 64 received legal counseling and 27 received free legal aid. Seven complaint cells have also been established to respond to victims of gender-based violence. In addition, safe homes and protection centers have also been established at district level in Sindh under the supervision of the Deputy Commissioners of the districts to provide shelter and relief to women victims of violence.

The efforts of the GoP also include administrative and institutional interventions. A Gender Protection Unit (GPU) was established at the Islamabad Police Facilitation Centre in May 2021 to encourage women victims of sexual harassment, rape, and bonded labour to report offences in the presence of a well-trained team of female police officers, legal officers, psychologists, and medical officers.

Q12. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve health outcomes for women and girls in your country?

The Constitution of Pakistan guarantees the right to life and personal liberty to all citizens, and this includes the right to health care. The Constitution also states that the government is responsible for providing basic necessities of life to its citizens, including food, clothing, shelter, and health care.

The health statistic reveals that there is an annual decrease of 3.2% in maternal mortality ratio from 2006-07 to 2019.⁵ The full immunization rate was observed at 60% during 2014-2018, which has now been observed at 70%²⁷. Whereas, the immunization rate for provinces was observed highest at Punjab with 81%, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 69%, Sindh with 52% and Balochistan with 35%.

In Pakistan, overall, 77% of mothers who had given birth in the last three years went for pre-natal consultations during their last pregnancy⁶ whereas it was observed at 73% in PSLM 2014-15. Pre-natal consultations have stagnant at 86 percent in urban areas but have increased to 72 percent in 2019-20 as compared to 67 percent in 2014-15 in rural areas. Punjab has the consultation rate with 83 percent in 2019-20 as compared to 78 percent in 2014-15. In Balochistan, the consultation rate has increased to 63 percent in 2019-20 from 47 percent in 2014-15. In Islamabad, 97 percent women went for pre-natal consultation.

The attended birth rate (assisted by skilled birth attendants) for the previous reporting period was recorded at 58% of the total deliveries (PSLM 2014-15). This has been increased to 68% attended birth during the current reporting period according to (PSLM 2019-20). Post-natal consultation in 2019-20 has increased to 39 percent as compared to 29 percent in 2014-15.

⁵ According to SDGs Status Report, 2021 published by Planning Commission of Pakistan ²⁷ according to (PSLM 2019-20)

⁶ according to PSLM 2019-20

Pakistan Flagship Social Safety Net has started a comprehensive conditional cash transfer program associated with attendance of health awareness sessions by pregnant women and lactating mothers. The program provides with specialized nutritious food to ensure adequate nutrition of mother and child. The program started in 2019 and has so far aided 0.93 million women across Pakistan. The Economic Affairs Division (EAD) is also running a conditional cash transfer program in 11 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including 7 newly merged districts and 4 southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The program offers conditional cash to pregnant and lactating mothers associated with attendants of health awareness sessions in which mother and child health is described to participants in detail. According to EAD biannual report 2022, 1.313 million mothers attended the health awareness session and 89% of those who attended the session opted for immunization of children available at same facility/ center established by EAD under Temporarily Displaced Persons - Emergency Recovery Project (TDP-ERP).

The provisions of federal penal law, the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 deals with termination of pregnancy, and exceptions thereto. Moreover, the proposed law of Punjab Reproductive Health Rights and Family Planning Bill, 2021 also strengthens the access to free, consensual and nondiscriminatory reproductive health services to all persons. In 2020, GoP introduced its flagship program to provide free, quality, basic health services to all through a micro health insurance scheme. This Sehat Sahulat Program (SSP) ensures that the identified under-privileged citizens across the country get free access to their entitled medical health care in a swift and dignified manner.

Infant Mortality Rate in Pakistan has declined to 54.2 deaths in 2020 from 55.7 in 2019, while Neonatal Mortality Rate declined to 40.4 deaths in 2020 from 41.2 in 2019. Maternal Mortality Ratio fell to 186 maternal in 2020, from 189 in 2019. Percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel increased to 69.3 percent in 2020 from 68 percent in 2019.

According to SDGs Status Report, 2021 published by Planning Commission of Pakistan there is an annual decrease of 3.2% in maternal mortality ratio from 2006-07 to 2019.

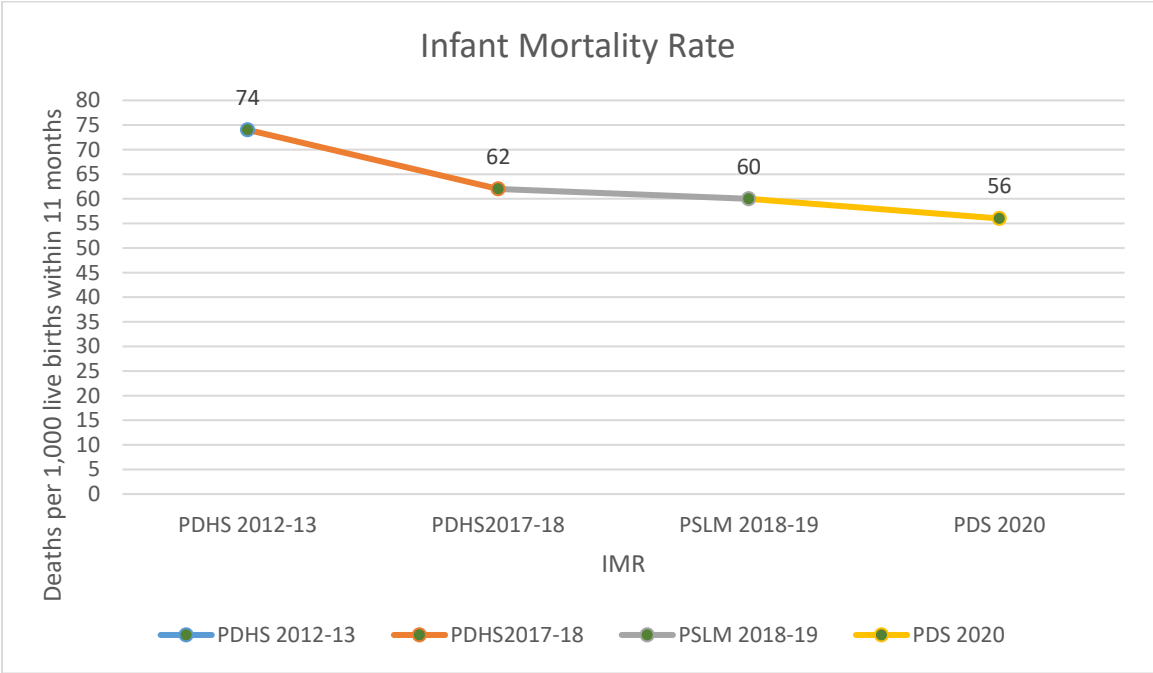
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The uptake of Tetanus Toxoid injections by pregnant woman was observed at 75% during previous reporting period (PSLM 2014-15) whereas the same was recorded at 77% during current reporting period according to PSLM 2019-20. The Tetanus Toxoid injections protect infants from neonatal tetanus (a major cause of infant death) and protect women from developing tetanus themselves or suffering from sepsis. The full immunization rate during the previous reporting period was observed at 60% (PSLM 2014-15) which has now been observed at 70% according to (PSLM 2019-20).

The Infant Mortality Rate which was 74 per 1,000 live births in previous reporting period (PDHS 2012-13) reduced to 62 per 1,000 live births in 2017-18 (PDHS). The IMR was further decreased to 60 per 1,000 live births according to PSLM 2018-19. The latest figure on IMR is by Pakistan Demographic Survey (2020) which indicates that IMR has been reduced to 56 per 1,000 live births. The increased uptake of immunization and enhanced proportion of attended births reflect the increased awareness levels by masses and increased coverage of health facilities in Pakistan. The neonatal mortality declined from 55 according to PDHS 2012-13 to 42 PDS 2020 whereas the post-natal mortality reduced from 20 (PDHS 2017-18) to 14 (PDS 2020). The under-five mortality declined from 89 previously (PDHS 2012-13) to 74 (PDHS 2017-18).



Q13. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls, including in sectors where they are underrepresented?

The government is committed to achieve Goal 4 of SDGs i.e. “Quality Education”, which stipulates equitable education, removal of discrimination, provision and upgradation of infrastructure, skill development for sustainable progress, universal literacy, numeracy

and enhancement of professional capacity of teachers. As per Article 25-A of the Constitution of Pakistan “State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years” therefore, the government is working on various initiatives to provide quality education to its citizens.

The major actions taken by the government include development of a single national curriculum, spending more on girls’ education, enhancing school enrollment, facilitating higher education, enhancing skill-based education and providing digital platform for learning. A Single National Curriculum (SNC) has been designed with the vision of one system of education for all, in terms of curriculum, medium of instruction and a common platform of assessment, so that all children have a fair and equal opportunity to receive high quality education. SNC has been implemented in three phases, Phase I: Development of SNC and textbooks for Pre-I-V classes in March 2021, Phase II: Development of SNC and textbooks for VI-VIII classes in March 2022 and Phase III: Development of SNC and textbooks for IX-XII classes in March 2023.

The overall education situation based on the key indicators, such as enrolments, number of institutes and teachers have shown improvement. The total number of enrolments during 2018-19 was recorded at 52.5 million as compared to 51.0 million during 2017-18, which shows an increase of 2.9 percent. It is estimated to increase to 55.0 million during 2019-20. The number of institutes recorded at 273.4 thousand during 2018-19 as compared to 262.0 thousand during 2017-18. However, the number of institutes is estimated to increase to 279.4 thousand in 2019-20.

Similarly, there were 1.76 million teachers in 2018-19 as compared to 1.77 million in 2017-18. The number of teachers is estimated to increase to 1.80 million during 2019-20. The overall education budget, across all governments, increased by 19% from 2019-20 to 2021-22, with the federal government increasing its allocation by 35%. This indicates a positive

trend in funding. In 2021-22 there were total 65,165 formal institutions for girls across the country including Schools and Colleges.

The National Education Policy, 2018 prioritizes out-of-school children (OOSC) and increased access to schools particularly at the secondary level. Accordingly, the policy identifies challenges, and proposes measures to be taken by Federal and Provincial Governments in order to attain educational improvements, such as increasing access to secondary schools particularly for girls, either through the establishment of new schools, through school up-gradation, and through the provision of transport in remote areas; and providing girls stipends for transition to secondary schools. Additionally, the policy provides for the restructuring and improvement of existing programs to deliver non-formal education and accelerated learning programs in targeted areas for re-entry of girls into schools, as well as community mobilization for bringing OOSC in schools, increased school enrolment and retention.

Furthermore, the Education Sector Plans⁷ developed by all the provinces are gender responsive. The plans recommend a number of strategies for addressal of gender disparities and removal of gender stereotypes from the curriculum, textbooks and learning materials. Furthermore, the provincial Education Departments regularly review the curriculum and textbooks from gender lens and makes every effort that the textbooks do not promote any sort of discrimination or gender stereotyping.

In the year 2023, about 86,000 Out of out-of-school children (OOSC) were enrolled in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). M/o FE&PT has launched PKR 25 billion National Fund for Out of School Children. Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has recently launched the drive to cater the disadvantaged and Out of School Children (OOSC) back to normal school in public/private sector. Both public and private

⁷ The Balochistan Education Sector Plan 2020–2025; the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Sector Plan 2020–2025; the Punjab Education Sector Plan 2019–2024; and the Sindh Education Sector Plan 2019–2024.

educational institutions are playing a significant role for the identification and enrolment of disadvantaged, out-of-school children in public and private schools of Islamabad.

In Punjab, the Government initiated the Zever-eTaleem Programme in 2017 to improve enrolment, attendance, and retention of secondary school girls. Under this program a monthly stipend of PKR 1,000 is given to female students of grade 6-10 who comply with 80% attendance rate in public sector middle and secondary schools of 16 low-literacy districts of Punjab. 813,123 girls have received cash benefit from this programme since 2017. Additional incentives include provision of free textbooks up to matric level, no fee at matric level just FTF of only 20 rupees per month, and provision of uniform to needy students. In Sindh stipends totaling up to 1,500 million rupees for over 350,000 Girl Students are being provided to support transition in secondary classes through branchless banking. Girls of public and private institutions in KP are also being given scholarships on equality and merit basis.

The Punjab Province Education Sector Plan (PESP) 2019/20 - 2023/24 was developed to tackle enduring education challenges in Punjab, such as equity, inclusion, quality, and governance. The plan focuses on several areas to promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination in education. Moreover, this department has ensured implementation of the Punjab Fair Representation of Women Act, 2014 in all educational institutes of Punjab. Government of Punjab has earmarked a budgetary allocation of Rs. 442 billion for educational development in FY 2021-2022. The spending plan has considered laudable initiatives such as Insaaf Afternoon School Program and Taleem Ghar Program that were instituted during the pandemic to mitigate the challenges posed by e-learning. In an attempt to make education truly accessible and inclusive, transgender students are given formal education evening classes using an Accelerated Learning Programme module, the curriculum for which is a combined effort of the GoP's Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education (NFBE) Department, Punjab Textbook Board and Japan International

Cooperation Agency (JICA). This is an exceptional step to help enhance academic reach and impact.

Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has enacted Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Free Compulsory Primary and Secondary Education Act, 2017, to provide by law the mechanism for free compulsory primary and secondary education to all the children from the age of five to sixteen years in the province in conformity with aforesaid Article. The Government of KP launched Second Shift at schools' program in 2021 to reduce the dropout rate and balance the number of students in the overcrowded schools. Under this programme, primary schools were given the status of middle, middle ones that of high, and high schools to higher secondary schools. In the first phase, the second shift programme will start in 120 schools in 16 districts of KPK including 76 boys and 44 girls' schools.

Moreover, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Digital Policy 2018-23 seeks to achieve a 50% increase in number of women in technology sector and aiming at providing better opportunities, access and services for women and marginalized groups. In 2018 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the number of females who appeared for and passed the preengineering exam was as follows: 2,932 females appeared for the exam, compared to 43,070 males. Among them, 2,196 females successfully passed the exam, while 31,521 males achieved the same.

As per Education Management Information System (EMIS) (2022), there are 15096 Government of Schools in Balochistan, which are facilitating the education of 1,119,925 children. The breakup of schools is Primary-12194, Middle-1608, Secondary-1149 and Higher Secondary-45. Moreover, the breakup of enrolled children (level-wise) is Primary 451,797, Middle-193,816, Secondary & Higher Secondary-474,312. The breakup of enrolled children (gender-wise) is: girls-484,075 and boys-635,850. Furthermore, there are only 34,869 (19%) children enrolled in early childhood education (ECE) as compared to

Katchi Class (Foundation Class) (149,945, 81%) in Government Schools. Apart from the above, the ratio between Government Schools and population of children (5-16 years) is 1:287 in Balochistan, while the ratio of Government Schools between rural and urban is 2:1 (Rural: 10,074, Urban: 5,022). Moreover, the ratio between students benefitting from the Government Schools in rural and urban areas is 1:1 (Rural: 562,485, Urban: 557,440). Additionally, the ratio between Primary Schools to Middle is 8:1, while the ratio between Middle and Secondary Schools is 1.24:1.

The Government of Sindh has upgraded 54 girls' schools, and completed construction of 29 schools with further 25 girls' schools under construction. Other initiatives include Girls' Right to Education Program by UNESCO being implemented by School Education & Literacy Department Sindh in district Tharparkar; a Girls' Transition Program in Mithi, Diplo, Kaloi, Nagarparkar & Islamkot; a Girls' Can project by AZCorp and Wins by UNICEF. Sindh School Education and literacy department has taken significant measure to ensure the women have access to education, especially in rural areas. From 2013 the recruitment ratio of female teacher is continuously increasing which is in 2023 is 36% of all teachers recruited from 2013 to 2023. The College Education Department has established the intermediate & degree level colleges across the province to provide the education to girls/women at taluka / tehsil level. In this regards, 15 new ADP schemes have been reflected in the budget book 2023-24 for the establishment of girl's colleges to empower the women through education.

Q14. What actions has your country taken to ensure that economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic closes gender gaps in poverty, employment, social protection, education, and/or health that the pandemic has exacerbated?

Smart lockdown in March 2020 to May 2020 and in the next few months for numerous businesses led to decline in economic activity in the last quarter of 2019-20. The drop-in activities were so severe that normal expected GDP growth has decline from 3.3 percent

to negative 0.47 percent, which was partly cushioned by the introduction of the construction sector package in June 2020.

However, Pakistan's economy experienced a strong recovery and grew 5.6 percent in Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) due to the government's measures to mitigate the adverse socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Economy of Pakistan recovered and rebounded strongly in FY2021 posting a growth of 3.94 percent which is not only substantially higher than the previous two years (-0.47 and 2.08 percent in FY2020 and FY2019 respectively) but also surpassed the target (2.1 percent for FY2021). Despite strict fiscal constraints, timely and appropriate policy measures taken by the government resulted in a V-Shaped economic recovery. The actions and measures taken by Government include increased size of PSDP, better containment of pandemic along with roll-out of vaccination and continuation of Ehsaas Programme. These actions kept momentum of the economic growth. The Government announced an Economic Support Package for economic recovery from the pandemic. The package included;

- Elimination of import duties on imports of emergency health equipment
- Relief to daily wage workers (Rs 200 billion)
- Cash transfers to low-income families (Rs 150 billion)
- Accelerated tax refunds to the export industry (Rs 100 billion)
- Financial support to SMEs (Rs 100 billion)
- Resources for an accelerated procurement of wheat (Rs 280 billion)
- Financial support to utility stores (Rs 50 billion)
- Relief in fuel prices (Rs 70 billion)
- Support for health and food supplies (Rs 15 billion)
- Electricity bill payments relief (Rs 110 billion)
- An emergency contingency fund (Rs 100 billion) and a transfer to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) for the purchase of necessary equipment to deal with the pandemic (Rs 25 billion).

State Bank of Pakistan also come up with several initiatives. The objective behind the stimulus package is to support investors, exporters and other traders who were severely affected due to CVOID-19. These incentives included;

- Payment of principle on loan obligations deferred for 1 year;
- Margin call requirements against bank financing reduced from 30% to 20%;
- Criteria for classification of trade bills relaxed by 6 months; Banks overall pool of loanable funds increased; Criteria for re-structuring/re-scheduling of loan relaxed;
- Relaxing credit requirements for exporters & importers and relief for individual borrowers;
- Two new refinancing facilities: first, the 'Temporary Economic Refinancing Facility' (TERF) worth Rs 100 billion in bank refinancing to stimulate investment in new manufacturing plants and machinery at 7 percent fixed for 10 years; second, the "Refinance Facility for Combating COVID-19" (RFCC) worth Rs 5 billion to support hospitals and medical centers the purchase of equipment to detect, contain and treat COVID-19;
- Reduced capital conservation buffer by 100 basis points to 1.5 percent;
- Increased regulatory limit on extension of credit to SMEs by 44 percent to Rs 180 million;
- Relaxation of the debt burden ratio for consumer loans from 50 percent to 60 percent.

Following the announced interventions/incentives by the SBP, discount rate was reduced from 13.25 percent to 7 percent in June 2020. In addition, the reduction in maximum end user rate from 7% to 5% on July 08, 2020 under Temporary Economic Refinance Facility (TERF) resulted in bringing significant increase in number. Despite lower economic growth, the requested amount in the last one year has increased from Rs 36.1 billion by end April 2020 to Rs 690 billion at maturity¹⁴ while over the same period approved financing has reached to Rs 435.7 billion from Rs 0.5 billion.

All the segments of customers including corporate / commercial and retail borrowers show positive response to the debt relief scheme. Out of 1.883 million applications received 1.825 million applications (96.92 %) were approved¹⁵. These loans include 1.717 million approved applications from the customers of microfinance banks involving an amount of Rs 121 billion. Out of total 910 billion deferred and restructured loans, Rs 717 billion was taken by corporate and commercial borrowers.

The Rozgar scheme aimed to prevent layoff by financing wages and salaries of employees for six months, i.e., April 2020 - September 2020. Under the risk sharing scheme 2603 SMEs and Small corporates with sales turnover up to Rs 2 billion have applied for financing of Rs 69.4 billion against which Rs 56.2 billion have been approved. The scheme prevented layoff of 1.849 million employees of 3,331 businesses till end September 2020.

Ministry of Planning, Development Special initiatives allocated Rs 70 billion especially for COVID-19 related expenditures that mostly included upgradation of health facilities and WASH related measures. Numerous hospitals had submitted their proposal from all over the Pakistan that were approved at the Planning Commission that mostly includes increase in the health provision facilities. These projects ensured the long-term better provision of better public sector health facilities in Pakistan.

The Poverty Alleviation and Social Security Division (PASS) is managing several social security schemes to alleviate poverty. The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP)/Ehsaas Kafaalat Programme (EKP) provides unconditional cash transfers to eligible families. During the pandemic, the Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme was launched to help poor families affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and an amount of approximately PKR 180 billion to around 14.9 million beneficiaries @ PKR 12,000/- per beneficiary was disbursed. Moreover, BISP has designed and launched a pilot project for

opening of savings accounts and provision of financial literacy to Ehsaas Kafaalat beneficiaries.

In the pandemic preparedness and response plan, special attention was paid to the maintenance of routine health services in the Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) areas. Service utilization declined as the pandemic instilled fear among the masses and deterred women and children from braving the lockdown and reaching health facilities. Under the circumstances, the Ministry of National Health Services Regulation and Coordination (MoNHSR&C) took several measures to ensure the safety and protection of women and children.

The MoNHSR&C re-activated the RMNCH Technical Working Group in which all stakeholders participated actively to counter the effects of the pandemic on the pregnant mother by developing Guidelines for providing clinical care to the pregnant mothers with Covid-19 cases to the un-infected population by isolation of the patient and quarantine of the contacts. Specific facilities were identified or specific wards marked for the care of the Covid-19 patients who needed emergency care/ delivery care. In addition, a Case Reporting Form was developed to gather data from pregnant patients suffering from Covid-19 and to develop a database relevant to such patients. In addition, women were encouraged to consult doctors/ healthcare staff using social media websites and through Skype calls-in many tertiary care hospitals, Telemedicine centers were established after training of doctors to provide Telemedicine service.

Another important issue that was highlighted during the pandemic was the lack of contraceptive commodities for women of reproductive age group. The MoNHSR&C engaged with partners who joined hands to provide counselling services through webinars in which experts advised women on what would be the best options for women in need. In addition, they also advised women of all age groups and adolescents in particular how to cope with increased stress during the pandemic which was brought on

by increased responsibilities due to school closures and in some cases, violence at the hands of husbands who were laid off as a result of lockdown-induced unemployment. A helpline 1166 was also created that advised women on measures to protect their children and themselves from Covid-19 and the attendant difficulties.

Data collected through the District Health Information System (DHIS) was monitored by the Health Planning, System Strengthening and Information Analysis Unit (HPSIU) that led to detection of the declining pattern in the use of the routine services and brought attention of the MoNHSR&C to engage partners to mitigate the damaging effects of the pandemic on women and children.

Empowering women in the labour market and increasing women's labour force participation is among the main priorities of Pakistan. In this context, Pakistan has enacted the Maternity and Paternity Leave Act, 2023,⁸ and the Day Care Centers Act, 2023.⁹ The labor force participation by women was observed at 20.1 % Labor Force Survey 2018-19. This was increased to 21.4 % during labor force survey 2020-21. The increased labor force participation by women despite covid-19 pandemic can rightly be attributed government of Pakistan efforts to gender mainstreaming. The employment status indicates that 21.8 % of the working women were employed according to LFS 201819 whereas the coefficient increased up to 25 % according to LFS 2020-21. The situation depicts that despite the covid-19 pandemic, women employment rate has increased.

Q15. Over the past five years, which forms of gender-based violence, and in which specific contexts or settings, has your country prioritized for action

The government of Pakistan focused on critical forms of gender-based violence such as Sexual abuse, harassment at workplace, cyberstalking and harassment, trafficking and domestic violence. The Federal and Provincial Governments continue to raise awareness

⁸ The Act to provide for the facility of maternity and paternity leave to the employees of public and private establishments under administrative control of the Federal Government.

⁹ Provides for the facility of day care centres in public and private establishments.

regarding the detrimental effects of the harmful discriminatory practices against women. Accordingly, during 2019 to 2023, 58 advertisement campaigns were run on 17 mainstream media channels on violence against women. Furthermore, the Government also ran awareness content on violence against women and available remedies in 19 print, social, electronic and digital media and SMS campaigns, and displayed 2100 streamers across the country. The Government also convened 60 awareness sessions from 2019 to 2023 with 3471 beneficiaries recorded.

Furthermore, the Government is also in the process of developing a Policy Guideline and Strategic Framework on Ending Violence against Women and Girls to create a violence free society, where all forms of violence against women and girls regardless of origin, ethnicity, disability, religion or any other criteria is eliminated.

The Action Plan for Human Rights, 2016 prioritizes protection of women rights and elimination of gender-based violence, and harmful practices. The Action Plan proposes six actions including the formulation of a National Policy Guidelines on Gender-Based Violence; review of all discriminatory legislation against women which give impetus to gender-based violence; establishment of new Crisis Centers for women and strengthening/standardization of existing centers/services at district level in collaboration with civil society organizations to provide rehabilitation services for victims and survivors of violence; design and execute Men Engage Model Program to eliminate gender-based violence, anti-discriminatory and harmful practices against women; and provide directions for uniform Women's empowerment package for the federal and provincial governments.

Q16. In the past five years, what actions has your country prioritized to address gender-based violence?

The Government of Punjab established a GBV Court in Lahore in 2019. The specialized court was designed to be a speedy, sensitized redressal system for gender based crimes.

The Court allow for special protection measures, such as in-camera trials, testimony through video-link or pre-recorded video testimony, use of screens/curtain in order to ensure that the victims/survivors and vulnerable witnesses do not have to face the accused persons etc. Further, the Helpline 1043 and the Protection Authority help the women to access to justice. Furthermore, the law of legal aid provides the legal assistance without discrimination. The Punjab Witness Protection Act was enacted in 2018. Under the Act, Witness Protection Units are developed to provide vulnerable victims with provision of close protection service, relocation to a temporary safe house, change of identity etc. Similarly, initiatives like the gender-based violence court provide female victims with protected trial processes to avoid intimidation and residing of victim/witness.

Legal framework in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa explicitly promotes and protects women's rights, including provisions that prioritize judicial remedies over informal dispute resolution mechanisms. The provisions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) Act provides that if ADR fails the matter shall be decided by the court. Similarly, the outcome of ADR shall be submitted in the court on the basis of which the court will announce judgement. Moreover, the laws and policies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, prohibit discrimination against women and girls in parallel legal systems and informal dispute resolution mechanisms. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Women Empowerment Policy 2017 aims to promote gender equality and empower women in all spheres of life. It includes specific provisions to address discrimination against women and girls in the parallel legal systems and informal dispute resolution mechanisms.

Women and girls who have been discriminated in the parallel legal systems and informal dispute resolution mechanisms can file a complaint with the relevant authority, such as the police, the courts, or the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on Status of Women. They can also file a petition with the High Court or the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Women and girls who have been subjected to domestic violence can file a petition with

the Family Court for a protection order. The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provides legal aid to women through the Bolo Helpline of the Department of Social Welfare Special Education & Women Empowerment Department, Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and through the legal pro-bono lawyers of the Ombudsperson office for Harassment of Women at Workplace and Enforcement of Property Rights.

Sindh also has a helpline (0800-70806) and the Sindh Legal Advisory Call Centre to provide legal advice to women and victims of gender-based violence. In Sindh Province, three main and functioning committees have been formed to provide the citizens with free legal aid and assistance by the Sindh Government.

Women Development Department Sindh has undertaken extensive province wise ADR programs for women in collaboration with Karachi Centre for Dispute Resolution and pro bono lawyers. Furthermore, free legal aid and advisory services are being provided through the public private partnership mode (with LAS) in 11 Districts of Sindh. Four crisis centers are also giving out legal aid, with dedicated panels of pro bono lawyers. The Social Welfare Department, Balochistan provides free legal aid and financial compensation to victims of discrimination, women with disabilities and religious minorities. Meanwhile, in January 2021, the Balochistan government launched 'Balochistan Women Helpline: 1089' for registration of complaints against women harassment at home and work place. The women could register their complaints on the helpline regarding harassment, domestic violence, harassment at work place and property issues.

As per data collected by the Gender Crime Cell (GCC) of the National Police Bureau (NPB), a total of around 33,623 cases of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) were reported in the country from June 2018 to June, 2021. An estimated 8,7933 cases were reported in the year 2020 as compared to 9326 cases reported in 2019. The trend analysis shows that there is a slight decline in crime cases of GBV in 2020 (6% down from 2019).

Government and non-government entities are providing trainings and awareness raising sessions on gender issues and laws. The Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan started special training sessions in 2019 for Judicial Officers and Prosecutors on gender issues. The FJA has also initiated a nation-wide sensitization program of judges with a focus on gender sensitization. MoHR also conduct sensitization sessions for prosecutors and court officials on women specific laws. At the provincial level 22 training programs were held in Punjab to sensitize 1,168 judges and court staffs on gender related laws from 2016–2019. The KP Judicial Academy also conducted.

The Government of Punjab has consistently undertaken initiatives for making female approach to courts, police and protection centers easier. The Shaheed Benazir Bhutto (SBB) Human Rights Centers provide aggrieved women with adequate redressals including temporary shelter, first aid, legal assistance and counselling. Between 2020 and 2021, the number of women receiving assistance from the Centers increased by 81%. Other avenues of redressal have also been operating successfully. In 2021, installations of the PSCA Women Safety Mobile Application increased by 70% and its active users also grew by 73%. A similar project by the Punjab Government is the Punjab Women's Helpline 1043 which receives complaints from women 24/7 and aids in matters of domestic violence, harassment, property disputes, inheritance rights etc. in 2021, the complaints received by the Helpline increased by 53% and the majority of them (46%) were regarding violence. Punjab Government initiatives such as the Punjab Women's Helpline 1043, the Violence against Women Center and PSCA Women Safety Mobile Application have made some impact.

In Balochistan, a One-Stop Complex for Victims of Crimes against Women has been set up to provide in-house services including 24/7 helpline, medical examination, legal consultation, psychosocial support, referral service to long-term shelters, and policy protection to survivors of GBV.

Similarly, the government of Sindh has established Women Complaint Centers (WCC) and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Centres for Women through which, during last two years, more than 500 victims of domestic violence and honor killing rape, acid throwing, child custody and dissolution of marriage have been given legal aid and sociopsychological counseling. They have also provided 154 women with psycho-social counseling in cases of violence, 150 women received psycho-therapeutic counseling, 64 received legal counseling and 27 received free legal aid. Seven complaint cells have also been established to respond to victims of gender-based violence. In addition, safe homes and protection centers have also been established at district level in Sindh under the supervision of the Deputy Commissioners of the districts to provide shelter and relief to women victims of violence.

The efforts of the GoP also include administrative and institutional interventions. A Gender Protection Unit (GPU) was established at the Islamabad Police Facilitation Centre in May 2021 to encourage women victims of sexual harassment, rape, and bonded labour to report offences in the presence of a well-trained team of female police officers, legal officers, psychologists, and medical officers.

Q17. In the past five years, what strategies has your country used to prevent gender-based violence?

The Government has introduced several amendments in the criminal laws. The Government has also introduced the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2021 that expands the definition of the offence of rape and its punishment. It also introduces a new offence of gang-rape punishable with imprisonment for life and fine.

Furthermore, the promulgation of the Anti-Rape (Trial & Investigation) Act 2021 provides for expeditious redressal of rape and sexual abuse crimes in respect of women and children. The Act provides for the establishment of special courts; creation of anti-

rape crises cells in public hospitals; use of modern devices during investigation and trial; and a public reporting mechanism.

Apart from legislative steps, numerous mechanisms have also been set in place across provinces nationwide to facilitate victims of GBV such as the establishment of gender units and women helpdesks across various police departments. Moreover, the Government of Pakistan has also taken steps to foster digital transformation whereby leveraging technology to create Women Safety and Zainab Alert Applications across various provinces provide convenience to citizens for filing and reporting GBV incidents online.

The Government of Balochistan has established three crisis centers in the province that provide shelter, legal aid, medical aid, socio-psycho support to victims of gender-based violence. A GBV Helpline 1089 has been established and integrated with the Police Helpline 15 and Women Safety App to provide support to victims of GBV.

The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa promulgated the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Domestic Violence against Women (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2021 along with its Rules offering greater protection to women against domestic violence.

The Government of Punjab has established Women Protection Center in Multan to deal with all type of violence, harassment and rape cases with the provision of all services under one roof, including the lodging of FIRs, medico-legal examination, prosecution, mediation and rehabilitation along with free legal aid. Furthermore, the Government also promulgated the Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence (Amendment) Act 2022, authorizing existing Women Protection Centers to deal with all types of violence cases. The Government of Sindh also operates Women Complaint Cells, a helpline (1094), safe houses, and shelter homes for vulnerable women.

The Government regularly provides in-person and online training, in collaboration with international organizations, police training colleges, federal and provincial prosecution departments, judicial academies, social welfare departments, labor inspectors, and child protection bureaus on trafficking investigations, anti-trafficking enforcement, laws, and SOPs for victim identification and referral.

The FIA trained 3,238 officials from various departments from 2021 to 2022. Provincial governments trained 36,850 officials on anti-trafficking enforcement laws, including 22,290 in Punjab, 2,853 in Sindh, 510 in KP, and 64 in Balochistan.

Sensitization workshops with National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) officials were held in various regions, and consultative meetings with transgender leaders at grassroots level were organized. A Transgender Citizens Complaint Management System (Helpline 1099) was launched to address grievances and connect transgender individuals with relevant authorities in cases of violence.

In addition, the Federal and Provincial Governments have organized 44 capacity-building sessions from 2019 to 2022 for 1649 government officials and other stakeholders to protect rights of women.

The Federal and Provincial Judicial Academies convened 67 training, capacity building and sensitization programs, during the reporting period, for an estimated 3500 judges, prosecutors, judicial officers, women protection officers, psychologists, law enforcement officials, lawyers, medical staff and front desk officers on gender sensitive issues including gender-based violence, reporting and registration of complaints and prosecution with detailed description of available legislation.

The Police Department of all four Provinces convened 43 training sessions on gender-based violence, investigation of GBV cases, special courses on handling sexual offense/

harassment child abuse, forensic analysis and prosecution of GBV cases. In these courses 1172 officials were provided with trainings out of which 367 were female officers.

Shelter homes for gender-based violence (GBV) victims have been set up in all Divisional Headquarters across the provinces, each with a capacity to accommodate a minimum of 35 to 50 women. These shelters aim to support women who are victims of various forms of violence, such as domestic abuse, physical and psychological harm, rape, cases involving 'vanni' and 'sawara' traditions, forced marriages, as well as emotional and economic abuse. Women with children, who are also victims of violence, are provided accommodation in these shelters. Legal aid was provided to 29,745 women including their children. Medical services were provided to 44884 women along with their children through shelter / protection centers.

The Federal Government in 2019 introduced the Draft National Policy on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls to address incidents of all forms of violence against women by adopting a zero-tolerance policy. The policy provides an overarching framework of prevention, response, implementation, and evaluation, monitoring and reporting on violence against women and girls.

The Federal Government also introduced the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2020 that aims to establish an effective system of protection, relief and rehabilitation of women, children, elders, and any vulnerable person against domestic violence. However, legislation on domestic violence exists in all provinces.¹⁰ In order to effectively implement criminal laws and provide speedy justice to victims of GBV in a gender-sensitive manner, 95 specialized gender-based violence courts¹¹ with 116 Judicial Officers have been designated across the country.

¹⁰ The Balochistan (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2014; the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Prevention and Rehabilitation) Act, 2021, the Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Act, 2016, and the Sindh Domestic Violence (Protection and Prevention) Act, 2013.

¹¹ GBV Courts breakdown across Pakistan: 02 in Islamabad, 01 in Balochistan, 29 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 36 in Punjab, and 27 in Sindh.

Furthermore, institutional mechanisms have been set up to protect women from abuse. All provinces have established *dar-ul-amans* (shelter homes) for women and children that provide shelter, medical and psychological rehabilitation and legal counseling to victims of violence without any discrimination. The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has established 10 *dar-ul-amans* (shelters) that have aided 4719 women from 2020 to 2023.

Q18. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to prevent and respond to technology-facilitated gender-based violence (e.g. online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images)?

The Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act, 2023, amends the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016, PPC, and Qanun-e-Shahadat, 1984, and criminalizes child sexual abuse content and cyberbullying;

Section 36 of PECA provides that if a court is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the content of certain information is needed for a specific criminal investigation, the court may order a designated agency to collect or record that information from a service provider. This must be done in coordination with the investigation agency under prescribed manner.

It is pertinent to note that the Judiciary is the sole competent authority to authorize law-enforcement agencies for real-time collection and recording of information.

Personal Data Protection Law

The Government is in the process of drafting a Personal Data Protection Bill to protect user's data privacy. The consultative process for the new bill demonstrates a definite dedication to inclusivity and transparency in the legislative process. The law has provisions on hate speech which align with the ICCPR, prohibiting incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence. Concerns about freedom of expression are

addressed through specific clauses, ensuring that fair criticism and true assertions are not penalized.

The Government of Pakistan introduced necessary amendments in the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 to rectify its scope and to prevent the misuse of the law. Over the Past five years, the Government of Pakistan sternly implemented the law. The awareness campaigns were launched among the masses educating them to invoke the law in case of online harassment. The personnel of law enforcement agencies including police and judicial officers have been imparted necessary trainings for their sensitization and capacity building to handle and prosecute the cases efficiently and diligently. Additionally, the National Human Rights Institutions have been strengthened to take cognizance of the complaints filed by aggrieved women and conduct inquiries and investigations accordingly for redress of the complaints. An efficient complaint and referral mechanism among these institutions have been developed besides providing legal aids and psychosocial support. The ICT Police and provincial police departments have also established Gender crime units and women desks to aid women victims of online sexual harassment, stalking and non - consensual sharing of images. The Ministry of Human Rights has also strengthened its helpline 1099 to receive and refer the complaints as well as provide legal advice to the complainants.

Q19. In the past five years, what measures has your country taken to resource women's organizations working to prevent and respond to GBV?

The Constitution and the domestic legal framework guarantee freedom of association. The CSOs and NGOs, are registered under the relevant laws. Administrative mechanisms of CSOs are in place to ensure compliance with the laws. All organizations that meet the legal criterion are registered without discrimination. NGOs' registration requests are only rejected based on legal grounds, and representatives can appeal to the appropriate forums.

The 'INGO Policy 2015' was formulated for registration, working, funding, monitoring and other related aspects pertaining to all types of NGOs functioning in Pakistan. To make the process transparent, three committees have been constituted i.e., Scrutiny Committee, INGO Committee and the Special Committee.

In 2018 registration applications of 19 INGOs were regretted, out of which 17 filed representations before the Special Committee, and were given an opportunity of personal hearing in 2019. In 2020, the Special Committee cleared 09 out of the 17 INGOs. Status of the remaining NGOs is under deliberation by the Special Committee.

Moreover, the Government is also cognizant of importance of students' unions. The Government of Sindh in 2022, promulgated the Sindh Students Union Act which provides an effective system for the establishment and regulation of Students Unions in the Province. The Act allows all educational institutes to have a student union for promoting the general interests of its members or other matters relating to the affairs of the students in educational institutions.

Statistical Data

Registration of NGOs <i>*includes numbers of pending applications from 2010</i>					
Year	Applications	Rejected	Pending	Processed	Grounds for Rejection
2019 - 2020	86	0	40	46	Corrupt practices, incomplete documentation, non-responsiveness, and non-compliance with regulatory requirements
2020 - 2021	205	0	142	63	
2021 - 2022	282	58	176	118	
2022 - 2023	355	37	148	170	
Dec 2023	169	61	1	107	
Total	1097	156	507	504	

Securities and Commission of Pakistan

The Government is cognizant of the issues of women human rights defenders. Pakistan has a vibrant media which enjoys great independence in its work. Article 19 of the Constitution of Pakistan has provided freedom of press, expression, and speech subject to few reasonable restrictions.

The Government has promulgated the Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act, 2021, which safeguards journalists and media professionals to carry out their work without threats, intimidation, harassment, or fear of persecution or targeting. It obliges the Government to take all steps to protect journalists and media professionals from all forms of abuse, violence, and exploitation at the hands of any person, institution (private or public), or authority.

The Act provides for establishing the Commission for Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals who shall report their findings to the Government on any institution or organization involved in violating or attempting to violate the rights of journalists and media professionals. Furthermore, the Act empowers the Commission to provide redressal to journalists by inquiring into their complaints of threats or acts of torture, killing, violent attacks, arbitrary arrest, arbitrary detention, and harassment and determining cases that are eligible for compensation from relevant federal and provincial funds.

At the provincial level, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and Punjab, an effort is being made to provide a legal umbrella of protection to journalists and media professionals. The Government of Sindh has promulgated the Sindh Protection of Journalists and Other Media Practitioners Act, 2021, to promote, protect, and effectively ensure the independence, impartiality, safety, and freedom of expression of journalists and other media practitioners. In December 2022, the Government of Sindh notified the Commission for the Protection of Journalists and other Media Practitioners (CPJMP). The Commission provides legal assistance to journalists and other media practitioners. It has

the power to take suo moto notice of any attack on a journalist or media practitioner and probe into the complaints against acts of harassment, sexual harassment, violence, and threats of violence to a journalist or media practitioner.

In addition, the NCHR in 2022, in collaboration with the civil society organization Digital Rights Foundation (DRF), has also launched a complaint cell to protect female journalists and their rights to freedom of expression.

With respect to the work of INGOs, the Policy for Regulation of INGOs in Pakistan 2015 provides that all INGOs should be registered with the Ministry of Interior. It allows for 08 areas of work including (i) vocational education and training; (ii) health, (iii) poverty alleviation; (iv) culture protection; (v) environment protection; (vi) national disaster reduction and management; (vii) science and technology; and (viii) sports.

Presently, 110 INGOs are registered to operate in Pakistan.

Q20. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media, including social media?

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, provides all citizens equal rights without discrimination.¹² Article 25 of the Constitution provides that all citizens are equal before the law and that there is no discrimination among them on the basis of sex. Accordingly, laws promulgated in Pakistan must observe the principle of equality pursuant to the Article 8 of the Constitution, which provides that any law, custom or usage having the force of law that is inconsistent with the fundamental rights conferred in the Constitution shall be void, and that the State must comply with the provisions of the Constitution when making any law. However, the Constitution allows for affirmative action to protect women and children.

¹² Article 263 of the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973.

Furthermore, the Constitution,¹³ the Criminal Procedure Code, 1898 (Cr.P.C) and the Civil Procedure Code, 1908 (CPC) allows individuals without any discrimination to appeal before the High Court and Supreme Court of Pakistan to enforce any fundamental right.

Paragraph 18: Visibility of the Convention

Pakistan has developed programmes and activities to raise women's legal awareness of their rights. In 2020, the Federal Government launched the Human Rights Awareness Programme (HRAP) to advance and facilitate awareness and sensitization campaigns on the rights of women and children throughout Pakistan in collaboration with civil society organizations. Between 2020-2023, the Federal Government conducted 34 training sessions for multiple stakeholders, augmenting their understanding of their fundamental rights under international law, including CEDAW and the applicable domestic legislation. The Program mainly focuses on empowering women in remote regions of Sindh, Balochistan, Southern Punjab, and the recently amalgamated Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Human Rights actively collaborates with the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, as well as regulatory bodies like the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) and Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), to disseminate relevant publicity material and content through various media platforms, including print, social, electronic, and digital media, as well as SMS campaigns on human rights, with a particular focus on the underprivileged sections of society, especially children and women. Between 2020 and 2023, 17 media channels, 11 radio stations, and 14 newspapers ran publicity material on women's rights.

¹³ Article 184 and 199 of the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973.

The Ministry of Human Rights, as part of the activities, associated with the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign and international human rights days run an awareness campaign on women rights under international law, and the domestic legal framework. The objectives and programmes of the campaign, are presented in the social media, with a view to rapidly and easily spreading the campaign's message. The principal campaign activities were broadcasting awareness-raising messages in the media, designing educational posters to protect women, disseminating motivational phrases for women and conducting sessions with successful women speakers.

The government also conducts trainings across Pakistan the Convention for various stakeholders. From 2019 till 2022, the Government of Pakistan has conducted 43 training sessions and capacity-building programmes benefiting 352 judges, 205 prosecutors and 88 law-enforcement officials (LEAs) on the application of the provisions of the Convention, and how to directly apply and interpret national legislation in line with the Convention. Moreover, the Ministry of Human Rights also conducted 10 sessions on CEDAW in 2023 as part of its activities on the preparation of this report for federal and provincial ministries, line departments, government agencies, and civil society actors.

Over the past five years, Pakistan has taken several measures to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination, and gender bias in the media, including social media. Here are some key actions:

National Gender Data Portal: Established in 2021 by the National Commission on the Status of Women in collaboration with UN Women Pakistan, this portal consolidates gender-disaggregated data to aid in formulating evidence-based policies and programs aimed at advancing gender equality. This initiative helps monitor trends and progress related to women's issues, including media representation (UN Women).

Legislation and Policy Changes: Pakistan has implemented domestic laws aligned with international commitments like the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on

the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). These laws are designed to protect women's rights and address gender discrimination in various sectors, including the media (CIVICUS Global Alliance).

Media Monitoring and Advocacy: Reports such as the Global Media Monitoring Project have highlighted gender biases in media coverage. Civil society organizations have actively advocated for more balanced and fair representation of women in media. Efforts include campaigns to increase awareness and training for media professionals on gender-sensitive reporting (UN Women) (CIVICUS Global Alliance).

Civil Society and Private Sector Initiatives: Numerous civil society organizations (CSOs) and private sector entities have launched initiatives to combat gender bias in media. These include providing platforms for women's voices, creating content that challenges stereotypes, and supporting women-led media enterprises. Programs have also focused on providing legal aid and mental health services to women facing violence exacerbated by biased media portrayals (UN Women) (CIVICUS Global Alliance).

International Collaborations: Pakistan has worked with international bodies such as UN Women to promote gender equality in media. Initiatives include training sessions, workshops, and conferences aimed at enhancing the skills of women journalists and ensuring their fair representation in media content and decision-making roles (UN Women).

Gender Equality in Media Campaigns: The government and various organizations have launched campaigns to address gender stereotypes and promote positive portrayals of women and girls in media. These campaigns often involve partnerships with media houses to create and broadcast content that reflects women's diverse roles and contributions to society (CIVICUS Global Alliance).

Q21. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken specifically tailored to address violence against marginalized groups of women and girls?

The Government is in the process of drafting a Personal Data Protection Bill to protect user's data privacy. The consultative process for the new bill demonstrates a definite dedication to inclusivity and transparency in the legislative process. The law has provisions on hate speech which align with the ICCPR, prohibiting incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence. Concerns about freedom of expression are addressed through specific clauses, ensuring that fair criticism and true assertions are not penalized.

The Government in 2020 established the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony comprising of 12 members including two Muslims, three Hindus, three Christians, two Sikh and one each Parsi and Kalash.

In 2023, the National Assembly of Pakistan passed the National Commission for Minorities Bill, 2023 which paves the way for the establishment of an independent, statutory Commission. The draft Bill will be reintroduced in new Parliament. The NCM will encompass advocacy for rights of minorities, addressing their pertinent concerns, and promoting interfaith harmony through policy and operational measures.

Furthermore, the Government also prioritizes the protection of the rights of minorities, and investigates all cases of violence against religious minorities. Following the vandalization of churches and homes of Christians in Jaranwala in 2023, the Punjab law enforcement agencies executed a comprehensive investigation into the matter including issuing arrest warrants of accused persons, and deployed 3000 police personnel to control the law-and-order situation. The Government also provided compensation of Rs. 2 million to 94 families whose houses were destroyed. The NCHR also initiated an investigation into the attack and submitted its recommendations to the Government.

The Government has also taken administrative measures for the protection of minorities, including the notification of a Task Force on Developing Strategy for Religious Tolerance in 2022. Furthermore, Interfaith Harmony Committees have been established by Provincial Governments at District level. Parliamentary Committees also provide oversight functions on human rights violations of minorities. Furthermore, extra protection is provided by police on worship places of minorities. Additionally, a Council of Complaints have been established under Section 26 of PEMRA Ordinance, 2002 to review and redress public/ individual complaints related to operation of electronic media.

Prevention of Misuse or Abuse of Blasphemy Laws

It is pertinent to note that the blasphemy laws are applicable to every citizen of Pakistan without any prejudice. However, the Government has undertaken efforts to prevent the misuse or abuse of blasphemy laws, through amendments in the legal procedure. The preliminary inquiry in blasphemy cases is now carried out at the level of District Police Officer to ensure safety of citizens.

There is also an effective process of appeal in case of conviction. If any accused is convicted and awarded capital punishment by Court of Sessions, the same is required to be confirmed by two judges of the High Court otherwise it cannot be implemented. After the decision of the High Court, the convict has the remedy to appeal to the Supreme Court of Pakistan. If the apex Court upholds the verdict of the High Court, a mercy petition can be submitted to the President of Pakistan.

It may be noted that the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill 2023 pertaining to amendments in the blasphemy laws has not yet been passed into law, and lapsed due to the completion of the tenure of the previous Government.

Statistical Data

Complaint Status on Blasphemy 2018 - 2023			
Complaints	Prosecutions	Convictions	Acquittals

748	747	09	64
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Provincial Police Departments

The Government has made amendments in the FIA Schedule wherein any complaint under section 295-A, 295-C, 298 and 298-A of PPC will fall within the purview of the FIA which will have the powers to check misuse of blasphemy cases parallel to the provincial police departments.

Complaint Status on Cases of Blasphemy 2018 - 2023				
Year	Prosecutions	Convictions	Acquittals	Under Trial
2018	16	0	0	16
2019	12	1	0	11
2020	41	1	1	39
2021	46	3	0	43
2022	71	1	2	68
2023	74	1	5	68
Total	260	07	08	245

Disaggregated Data of False Accusation of Blasphemy 2018-2023					
Male	Female	Over 18 years	Below 18 years	Muslim	Non-Muslim
395	03	398	0	392	06

Federal Investigation Agency

Article 25 of the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973 provides for equal rights before the law and their entitlement to equal protection without discrimination, including but not limited to discrimination based on sex. Furthermore, Article 8 of the Constitution holds that all laws in Pakistan need to uphold the principle of equality i.e., any law, custom, or usage that contradicts the fundamental rights granted in the Constitution will be considered invalid.

The Federal Shariat Court's ruling on Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018

The Federal Shariat Court (FSC) is a constitutional court established under Article 203C of the Constitution to examine and review laws in the light of Islamic injunctions. The

FSC in its ruling acknowledged that Islamic injunctions recognized the existence of intersex persons and eunuchs. The judgement only struck down Sections 2(1)(n)(iii), 3 and 7 of the Act related to definition of transgender, self-perceived identity and inheritance. The third part of the definition related to transgender man, transgender women and *khawaja sira* whose gender identity or gender expression differ from social norms and cultural expression based on sex at birth has been declared un-Islamic.

However, it is pertinent to note that the fundamental rights of these persons are still protected in the Constitution as citizens of Pakistan and in other related laws, e.g., their right to inheritance. Accordingly, the Government has filed an appeal against the FSC's ruling in the Supreme Court, and the matter is currently *sub judice*.

Decriminalizing Consensual Same-Sex Relations

Article 227 (1) of the Constitution explicitly declares that no law shall be enacted repugnant to the Islamic injunctions. Therefore, the State cannot legislate to decriminalize same sex relations.

Stigmatization, Harassment, Violence and Discrimination against Transgender Persons

The Government of Pakistan has made significant progress in supporting the transgender community. The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2021, and the National Implementation Committee showcase efforts to enforce the Transgender Persons Act, 2018.

The Government has also established a Transgender Protection Center at Islamabad to provide temporary shelter, rehabilitation, referral services and other medical and psychological care to transgender community.

Services Provided by Transgender 2021 - 2023
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Shelter	Legal Aid	Medical Assistance	Psychological Counselling	Complaints Redressal
142	200	192	155	50

Transgender Protection Center

The Government has also since 2021 conducted 15 sensitization sessions and consultative meetings with the benefitting 150 law enforcement officials on the Transgender Persons Acts and Rules. Police Guidelines for Engagement with Transgender Persons were shared with the concerned police officials for effective implementation of the Act.

Financial support to deserving Transgender Persons is evident through the inclusion of transgender persons in the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). Health Cards for transgender persons in Pakistan were launched with assistance from the Ministry of Human Rights and the Ministry of National Health Services Regulation and Coordination.

Sensitization workshops with National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) officials were held in various regions, and consultative meetings with transgender leaders at grassroots level were organized. A Transgender Citizens Complaint Management System (Helpline 1099) was launched to address grievances and connect transgender individuals with relevant authorities in cases of violence.

To promote reporting acts of violence and discrimination against transgender persons, facilitation desks have been established at all major police stations across the country. For instance, 'tahaffuz' reporting and 'khidmat markaz' is the first of its kind for transgender people in Punjab. This facility employs a transgender person who acts as a bridge between trans-community and the police. This therefore facilitates timely reporting of cases of violence as evident from the following data:

Violence Against Transgender Persons 2018 - 2023			
Year	Complaints	Prosecutions	Disposal

2018	25	25	03
2019	11	11	0
2020	39	38	01
2021	102	90	08
2022	116	103	11
2023	131	90	38
Total	424	357	61
<i>Provincial Police Departments</i>			

Q22. In the past five years, what actions and measures has your country to promote women’s participation in public life and decision-making?

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1973 states that all citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law and there shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex.¹⁴ It further provides that no citizen otherwise qualified for appointment in the service of Pakistan shall be discriminated against in respect of any such appointment on the ground only of race, religion, caste, sex, residence or place of birth.

Under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Civil Servants Rule, 1989 10% of all posts are reserved for women as quota in public service employment. Furthermore, 22 out of 145 seats are reserved for women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly. Out of the total Membership of the Assembly, 17% seats are reserved for women which are filled in accordance with law through proportion representation system of political parties' list of candidates. Women are also elected to general seats. Moreover, 24% membership is given to women in the Standing Committees of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly with each Standing Committee having at least 3 women members elected. From 2018-2022 the number of women in a number of committees exceeded the minimum criteria. Apart from this fair membership was also given to women Members in all other Committees of the Assembly.

¹⁴ Article 25, Constitution of Pakistan, 1973.

Furthermore, the number and proportion of women appointed in the Provincial Assembly Secretariat of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are 27. In the reporting period, 12 women have been appointed in leadership positions to different Government bodies.

Under the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Women Empowerment Policy 2017, the Department of Social Welfare and Women Empowerment Department, the Women Parliamentary Caucus of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Assembly, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women further work to promote the inclusion of women in governance in the province.

The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also has ensured that the 10% quota in all government services is observed for the Judiciary. There are 150 female judges, including 03 in the Peshawar High Court, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that make up 23.65% of the total judges working in the province.

Article 8: Participation at International Level

175. Pakistan has taken appropriate measures to ensure to women opportunity to represent the Government at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations. 114 female officers are currently serving at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and diplomatic missions across the world. Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar served as the first woman and youngest Foreign Minister of Pakistan from 2011-13.

Ambassador Tehmina Janjua, who also served as Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva and Ambassador in Italy, became the first woman Foreign Secretary in 2017. Currently six women Ambassadors are representing Pakistan in Bulgaria, Ghana, Malaysia, Kenya, Singapore and Vietnam. We also have two women Consuls' General in Milan and New York.

Article 51 of the Constitution ensures women's participation in the political sphere through their reserved seats in both houses of Parliament and the four Provincial Assemblies. The Senate has 17 reserved seats for women, and 60 in the National Assembly. Moreover, the Provincial Assemblies of the four provinces also have a total of 132¹⁵ reserved seats for women. Whereas, 33 percent seats are reserved for women in the local government.

The Elections Act, 2017 includes women-specific provisions to encourage women participation in the political and electoral roll process. The Act mandates that returns from any constituency where women's turnout was less than or equal to 10 percent be nullified. During the 2018 elections, the ECP declared the elections of one provincial constituency in KPK null and void on the ground that no women voters came out to vote in the said constituency. The Act further criminalizes the practice of preventing a woman from in or contesting an election.¹⁶ Moreover, all political parties are to list female candidates in at least five percent of their non-reserved national and provincial assembly seats.¹⁷

The Election Commission Pakistan (ECP) took several initiatives during the 2018 elections to increase the role of women in the electoral roll process. It introduced a column in the Statement of the Count requiring information on the number of women voters who cast their votes at each polling station enabling ECP to ascertain the number of women who exercise their right of vote across the country. Furthermore, every constituency in the Pakistan has established women-only polling stations with female staff to encourage female voter turnout. A Gender Desk has also set up to receive complaints from women, persons with disabilities, transgender, minorities, female candidates, female polling staff and female polling agents.

¹⁵ Province-wise breakdown of reserved seats for women: 11 in Balochistan, 26 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 66 in Punjab and 29 in Sindh.

¹⁶ Section 9 of the Elections Act, 2017.

¹⁷ Article 206 of the Elections Act, 2017.

During the period of 2018 to 2022, a 17% increase is recorded in the registration of female voters with 54.9 million female voters registered in 2022, compared to the 46.8 million in 2018. Furthermore, during the 2018 elections, the highest number of female candidates were recorded to have run for parliament.

Q23. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)?

Digital Skills Training and Empowerment Programs: Pakistan has launched various programs aimed at enhancing digital literacy and skills among women and girls. These programs focus on training women in information and communication technologies (ICT), enabling them to participate more actively in the digital economy and media sectors (UN Press) (UN Women).

Policy Reforms and Gender-Sensitive Media Representation: Efforts have been made to reform policies to promote gender-sensitive media representation. This includes encouraging media houses to adopt gender equality policies and to portray women positively and accurately in media content (BioMed Central) (UN Women).

Support for Women Entrepreneurs in ICT: Special projects and initiatives have been implemented to support women entrepreneurs in the ICT sector. For instance, significant efforts have been directed towards empowering women through e-commerce platforms, providing them with the tools and training needed to succeed in the digital marketplace (UN Press).

Inclusion in Decision-Making Roles: The Oxford Policy Management (a third-party research firm) indicated that 67 % of the women said that cash assistance from BISP has positively contributed in their role in household decision making. To ensure women's

voices are heard in media and technology sectors, there have been initiatives to include more women in decision-making roles within media organizations and ICT companies. This involves leadership training and creating opportunities for women to take on executive positions (UN Press) (UN Women).

Combating Online Violence and Ensuring Safety: Recognizing the challenges posed by online harassment, there have been actions to combat online violence against women. These include legal reforms, awareness campaigns, and the establishment of support systems to ensure women's safety in cyberspace (BioMed Central) (Women in Displacement).

The Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act, 2021 promotes, protects, and effectively ensures journalists' and media professionals' independence, impartiality, safety, and freedom of expression;

Q24. Please describe your country's current national women's machinery (government entity exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women) and describe the measures that your country taken over the past five years to establish and/or strengthen it.

Pakistan formulated the National Security Policy 2022-2026,⁵ which seeks to advance the agenda of women, peace, and security. The policy aims to incorporate gender equality into national security narratives by facilitating women's active and meaningful involvement in decision-making processes, law enforcement, the justice sector, and peacekeeping efforts.

Furthermore, the Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) also actively work towards enhancing the participation and influence of women in political and public life. The organization aims to strengthen the capabilities of female parliamentarians, advocating for gender-related issues within legislative structures. Its goal is to transform concerns

into impactful national legislation, explicitly focusing on females from minority communities.

Pakistan provides equal opportunity to women to assume leadership positions. Consequently, two female judges have been appointed in the Supreme Court of Pakistan, and three national human rights institutions in Pakistan are presently led by female chairpersons i.e. the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR); the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW); and the National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCRC). Moreover, the establishment of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) in 2020 is a clear indication of Pakistan's commitment to protecting the rights of minority and disadvantaged groups. NCM endeavors to ensure the participation of women, especially from ethnic and religious minorities, in peace, transitional justice, and reconciliation processes.

The integration of gender-responsive budgeting, regular monitoring indicators, and accountability mechanisms signifies a comprehensive approach to sustaining gender equality and women's empowerment across all sectors, reaffirming Pakistan's dedication to peace and security through inclusive and progressive measures.

Q25. In the past five years, what other mechanisms and tools has your country used to mainstream gender equality across sectors? (e.g. gender focal points in the Executive, Legislature or Judiciary; inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms; gender audits, consultations with women's organizations)

In the past five years, Pakistan has undertaken several specific actions and interventions to mainstream gender equality across various sectors:

National Gender Policy Framework: Launched on International Women's Day in 2022, this framework was developed through extensive consultations with multiple stakeholders, including ministries, provincial departments, development partners, and women's organizations. It focuses on evidence-based strategic priorities for accelerating

gender mainstreaming and improving gender equality metrics across the country (Planning Commission).

Gender Focal Points and Units: The government has established gender focal points and units within various ministries and departments to ensure the integration of gender perspectives in policy formulation and implementation. These focal points serve as key coordinators for gender-related initiatives within their respective sectors (UNESCO).

Gender Audits: Pakistan has conducted gender audits in different sectors to assess the extent to which gender considerations are integrated into policies, programs, and budgets. These audits help identify gaps and provide recommendations for enhancing gender responsiveness (UNESCO).

Inter-Ministerial Coordination: To enhance collaboration and coherence in gender equality efforts, Pakistan has implemented inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms. These mechanisms facilitate the sharing of best practices, resources, and monitoring progress on gender-related goals across various government bodies (UNESCO).

Capacity Building and Training: The government has prioritized capacity building for public officials and stakeholders on gender equality issues. This includes training programs and workshops aimed at enhancing their understanding and ability to implement gender-sensitive policies and programs (EEAS).

Consultations with Women's Organizations: Regular consultations with women's organizations and civil society groups have been institutionalized to ensure that the perspectives and needs of women are adequately reflected in national policies and programs. These consultations provide a platform for women to voice their concerns and contribute to decision-making processes (UNESCO) (EEAS).

Q26. If there is a national human rights institution in your country, what measures has it taken to address violations of women's rights and promote gender equality?

Pakistan created the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) in 2012 in line with the Paris Principles to promote and preserve human rights as enshrined in the Constitution and the numerous international treaties to which Pakistan is a state party or will become a state party. The NCHR, as an impartial state body,¹⁸ functions independently of the government and is directly accountable to Pakistan's Parliament. It exercises full financial autonomy and has strong summoning and investigative powers. The NCHR's primary functions and powers include, among other things, conducting investigations into allegations of human rights abuse(s), either through petitions filed by individuals or institutions or through suo-moto action; reviewing existing and proposed legislation concerning human rights principles; conducting research and advising on policy matters on the situation of human rights in Pakistan; and contributing to national human rights awareness-raising and advocacy.

As per the mandate of the NCHR, it has the authority to investigate complaints about violations of women's rights. NCHR's Complaint Redressal function involves a quasi-judicial role, an investigative role, and a monitoring role.¹⁹ Other than the NCHR, the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) also has the authority to monitor mechanisms and institutional procedures to redress violations of women's rights and individual grievances.

In addition, the NCHR also works in close coordination with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI)/ UNDP to further strengthen its functioning with an ultimate aim to address the grievances of vulnerable sections of society, and is currently negotiating with GANHRI for accreditation.

¹⁸ Section 16 of the National Commission of Human Rights Act, 2012.

¹⁹ Rule 3 of the National Commission of Human Rights (Complaint) Rules, 2015.

The new Chairperson and members of the NCHR, following the expiry of the last Commission's tenure in May 2019, have been appointed, and the Commission has started functions with an allocation of Rs. 70.8 million for the Financial Year 2021-22 to carry out its mandate.

Q27. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda?

Pakistan formulated the National Security Policy 2022-2026, which seeks to advance the agenda of women, peace, and security. The policy aims to incorporate gender equality into national security narratives by facilitating women's active and meaningful involvement in decision-making processes, law enforcement, the justice sector, and peacekeeping efforts.

Women play an active role in Pakistan's peacekeeping endeavors, as is evident through the inclusion of female peacekeepers by the Pakistan Army and the remarkable achievements of Pakistan's Female Engagement Teams (FETs) in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Pakistan is one of the leading contributors to United Nations peacekeeping missions, with a significant deployment of approximately 200,000 troops across various regions globally over the past six decades. Notably, 17% of these deployed peacekeepers are women. Pakistan's deployment of female peacekeepers exceeds the United Nations' mandated goal of 15% representation. The Pakistan Army initiated the inclusion of female peacekeepers in 2017.

As of 2023, 450 women peacekeepers from Pakistan have actively participated in various international peacekeeping operations (PKOs) across the globe. Some civilian women also volunteer for UN Peacekeeping missions. Two Foreign Exchange Traders (FETs) from Pakistan are presently deployed on a PKO in the Central African Republic and the

Democratic Republic of Congo. The initial deployment of the first Pakistani FET took place in South Kivu, Congo, in June 2019. These endeavors exemplify Pakistan's commitment to fostering gender equality and facilitating the active involvement of women in advancing peace and security on a global scale.

Furthermore, the Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) also actively work towards enhancing the participation and influence of women in political and public life. The organization aims to strengthen the capabilities of female parliamentarians, advocating for gender-related issues within legislative structures. Its goal is to transform concerns into impactful national legislation, explicitly focusing on females from minority communities.

The National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) liaises with Provincial Commissions and concerned provincial organisations in carrying out its mandate. Accordingly, the NCSW has also established provincial chapters across Pakistan. Additionally, the NCSW regularly convenes Inter Provincial Ministerial Group (IPMG) meetings for the close coordination and collaboration with the provincial departments and Women Commissions. This facilitates to assess situation, sharing and mutual support on women laws, policies and issues to ensure true implementation of pro-women laws in the country. The meeting brings together Secretaries of Women Development Departments (WDDs), Social Welfare Departments (SWDs) and Chairpersons of Provincial Commissions on the Status of Women (CSW) having potential and effectiveness in supporting the women empowerment and gender equality in line with country's national and international commitments. Three IPMG meetings were held during the given time period.

At the federal and provincial level, various initiatives are being undertaken to eradicate and combat trafficking and forced labour. The Government of Pakistan have circulated the Prevention of Trafficking Rules, and the Prevention of Smuggling of Migrant Rules

in 2020 in consultation with relevant ministries, line departments, law enforcement officials, and civil society. In addition to this, the Federal and Provincial Governments regularly provide trainings to judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officials, and other relevant stakeholders on trafficking of persons and smuggling of migrants. Since enactment of these laws, there have been more than 1,000 human trafficking investigations and 161 convictions.

Pakistan has also concluded a number of bilateral, trilateral and quadrilateral agreements on Human Trafficking related Law Enforcement Cooperation with Afghanistan, Australia, Azerbaijan, Greece, Iran, Turkey, Oman, and the UK. Moreover, in December 2020, the Government adopted the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Migrants Smuggling for the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

Q28. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to increase the leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action and crisis response, at decision-making levels in situations of armed and other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis settings?

In the past five years, Pakistan has implemented several key actions to increase the leadership, representation, and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action, and crisis response at decision-making levels. Here are some notable interventions:

National Security Policy Inclusion: Pakistan's first National Security Policy (2022-2026) includes 'gender security' as a key pillar. This policy aims to integrate gender equity into national security narratives, ensuring the full and meaningful participation of women in decision-making, law enforcement, the justice sector, and peacekeeping operations (UN Women).

Women Peacekeepers: Pakistan has actively participated in UN peacekeeping missions, including deploying female engagement teams. This not only supports global peacekeeping efforts but also enhances the visibility and role of Pakistani women in international conflict resolution and peacebuilding (UN Women).

Training and Capacity Building: There have been initiatives to engage women and youth in local-level conflict prevention efforts. Programs focus on leadership training, conflict management, and implementing local peacebuilding initiatives. These efforts aim to reduce economic marginalization and promote social integration (BioMed Central).

Support for Women-Led Organizations: UN Women Pakistan has worked closely with civil society organizations, particularly those led by women, to strengthen their capacity in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. This includes supporting grassroots efforts to build social cohesion and respond to crises (UN Women) (BioMed Central).

Health Systems and Peacebuilding: Recognizing the critical role of women in health systems, Pakistan has focused on integrating women into leadership roles within health governance. This approach links health system strengthening with peacebuilding efforts, ensuring that women play a central role in both domains (BioMed Central).

Q29. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to enhance judicial and nonjudicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response?

In the last five years, Pakistan has undertaken several specific actions to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and the human rights of women and girls in conflict and crisis settings. Here are some notable interventions:

Legislation and Policy Reforms: Pakistan has made efforts to align its national laws with international human rights standards. For example, the government has introduced laws aimed at protecting women's rights and preventing gender-based violence. This includes the enactment of the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Ordinance 2020, which mandates the establishment of special courts to handle rape cases and provides guidelines for the investigation and prosecution of such crimes to ensure speedy justice (Human Rights Watch) (OHCHR).

Special Courts and Judicial Commissions: The establishment of special courts for gender-based violence cases are a significant step. These courts are designed to expedite trials and ensure that cases involving violence against women are handled with sensitivity and efficiency. Additionally, judicial commissions have been set up to investigate specific incidents of human rights violations, ensuring that there is a formal mechanism for accountability (Human Rights Watch) (OHCHR).

Training and Capacity Building: Pakistan has conducted training programs for law enforcement and judicial officers to enhance their understanding of international humanitarian law and human rights. These programs aim to improve the capacity of these officers to handle cases involving violations of women's rights effectively and to ensure proper implementation of laws and policies (OHCHR).

Collaboration with International Bodies: Pakistan has worked with international organizations such as the United Nations and Human Rights Watch to monitor and report on human rights violations. This collaboration has included efforts to document cases of violence against women and girls in conflict settings and to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable through both judicial and non-judicial means (OHCHR).

Public Awareness Campaigns: The government and non-governmental organizations have launched public awareness campaigns to educate the public about the rights of women and the importance of reporting violations. These campaigns aim to reduce the stigma associated with reporting gender-based violence and to encourage victims to seek justice (Human Rights Watch) (OHCHR).

Q30. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child, including adolescent girls?

The Federal and Provincial Governments continue to raise awareness regarding the detrimental effects of the harmful discriminatory practices against women. Accordingly, during 2019 to 2023, 58 advertisement campaigns were run on 17 mainstream media channels on violence against women. Furthermore, the Government also ran awareness content on violence against women and available remedies in 19 print, social, electronic and digital media and SMS campaigns, and displayed 2100 streamers across the country. The Government also convened 60 awareness sessions from 2019 to 2023 with 3471 beneficiaries recorded.

Furthermore, the Government is also in the process of developing a Policy Guideline and Strategic Framework on Ending Violence against Women and Girls to create a violence free society, where all forms of violence against women and girls regardless of origin, ethnicity, disability, religion or any other criteria is eliminated.

The Action Plan for Human Rights, 2016 prioritizes protection of women rights and elimination of gender-based violence, and harmful practices. The Action Plan proposes six actions including the formulation of a National Policy Guidelines on Gender-Based Violence; review of all discriminatory legislation against women which give impetus to gender-based violence; establishment of new Crisis Centers for women and strengthening/standardization of existing centers/services at district level in

collaboration with civil society organizations to provide rehabilitation services for victims and survivors of violence; design and execute Men Engage Model Program to eliminate gender-based violence, anti-discriminatory and harmful practices against women; and provide directions for uniform Women's empowerment package for the federal and provincial governments.

Q31. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and land degradation?

In recent past, Pakistan is severely hit by adverse effects of climate change encountering with flash floods and droughts. The vulnerable population including women and children are the directly affected from climate change. The Government of Pakistan realizing the negative impact of natural disasters on population, has taken several actions to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies. Such key actions include Ban on (Manufacturing, Import, Sale, Purchase, Storage and Usage) Polythene Bags Regulations, 2019, National Electric Vehicle Policy (2019), National Climate Change Policy 2021, National Hazardous Waste Management Policy 2022, Single-use Plastics (Prohibition) Regulations, 2023, National Clean Air Policy (NCAP),2023 and National Adaptation Plan (NAP),2023. The Government has invested through Public Sector Development Projects to achieve the goals of various environmental policies. The key projects include Climate Resilient Urban Human Settlements Unit,2019, Ten Billion Trees Tsunami Programme - Phase-I Up-scaling of Green Pakistan Programme (Revised),2021 and Capacity Building on Water Quality Monitoring and SDG 6 (6.1) Reporting,2023.

The National Climate Change Policy with the Framework (2014-2030) for implementation clearly chart out policy measures that empower women to enhance their role in the planning and implementation process. Pakistan Health Vision and National Food Security Policy also include holistic strategy to cater to climate change impacts and

capacity building of women to adapt to the direct and indirect effects. The policy outlines two types of interventions – adaptation and mitigation – to address Gender & Climate Change environmental issues. the adaptation type includes the sectors of water resources, livestock, forestry, health, vulnerable ecosystems, disaster preparedness and socioeconomics, while energy, transport, forestry, town planning and waste management were included in mitigation policy intervention, whereas the sector of agriculture was included in both adaptation and mitigation intervention. Pakistan is working with international organizations under various international treaties and protocols. During disaster related emergencies, responsibilities of women for bringing stability to the home including dependent children is disproportionately high. Vulnerability, from this perspective, is primarily cultural and organizational. Refugee women and girls with disabilities are at higher risk of violence due to misconceptions, negative attitudes and social exclusion.

In Pakistan, various institutions are playing their role in advocacy of gender equality and climate change effects on gender, yet their efforts are not channelized thus creating a mild effect to culminate the issue of gender vulnerability in terms of climate change. The National Network on Climate Change (NNCC) can be utilized in the specific scenario to involve multisectoral network to channelize the database and policy implications to have an enhanced effect of gender sensitive approach regarding climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Q32. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction and building environmental and climate resilience?

Ministry of Climate change has extended the scope of research and development through GCISC to build the capacity in integrating climate change with socioeconomic sectors. Enhancing technical efficacy to deal with disasters is very important to create gender inclusive climate change adaptation plan. The National Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

Policy recognizes that DRR needs of women and children, in particular the poor, are often overlooked perpetuating patterns that lie at the heart of their current vulnerability and lead to greater disaster losses in Pakistan. While mechanisms need to be culturally appropriate, DRR requires the involvement of women as stakeholders to build resilient communities. After 2010 super floods, JICA and UNESCO have collaborated with Pakistani government to introduce Strategic Strengthening of Flood Warning and Management Capacity of Pakistan, which has entered in the second phase of implementation. A Specialized Medium Range weather Forecasting Centre (SMRFC) has been installed with grant aid of JICA to strengthen the weather forecasting system in Pakistan along with building short and medium range forecasting capacities. A Weather Surveillance Radar project in Karachi is in the final stage of completion along with its future projections in Multan and Sialkot. Similarly, a meteorological office has been established at Islamabad International Airport with modern equipment; the system has been extended to Faisalabad Airport. For seismic activity monitoring, there are 20 remote seismic monitoring stations with the capability to disseminate information within 3 minutes of earthquake. Marmara Research Centre, Turkey is assisting PMD to develop tsunami early warning systems, deployment of 5 GPS systems along Makran Coastline, and installation of 3 sets of classified sites for risk assessment. There are various other projects under implementation.

Gender mapping helps understand societal behavior towards different genders. NDMA has completed gender mapping in Pakistan with the help of Gender Task Force. The mapping report spells out on how women form vulnerable gender in Pakistan and reports that one out of 3 women face physical or sexual violence in their lifetimes. In case of emergencies, women become more vulnerable because of the high ratio of dependent children. Girls with disabilities face greater risk because of ill intentions and social exclusion. Gender Task Force has led to assistance of UNWOMEN and UNFPA to address the issues relevant to gender inequality. In this process, various national and international NGOs have played their part to develop a database on gender vulnerability

and its possible solutions by introducing a draft on Inter Agency Standing Committee Gender Alert.

Pakistan at federal and provincial levels has always responded to the situations requiring special measures aimed at accelerating equality between men and women such as in natural disasters including floods, epidemics and displacement. Government of Pakistan has prioritized the protection and rehabilitation of women in such circumstances. The elimination of malpractices affecting the enjoyment of equal rights by women have always been focused as priority. In 2017, the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa introduced the Women Empowerment Policy (WEP)²⁰ to create conducive socio-cultural, economic, political and legal environment to allow women to practice their fundamental rights and participate fully in all spheres of public and private life, to effectively mainstream women empowerment policy into sectoral policies, strategic planning, structures, processes, projects, human and financial resource allocation, performance monitoring, reporting and decision making at all levels, build and strengthen stakeholders' participation and partnership for women empowerment; and strengthen monitoring, evaluation, audit and data system and reporting to bridge the gaps.

Under the WEP, all Provincial administrative departments have formulated time bound action plans and integrated the same in their Annual Development Plans (ADPs) with allocated resources and well-defined targets. The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has successfully launched 05 ADPs till 2023. According to the Annual Development Plan 2022-2023,²¹ there are 21 ongoing schemes pertaining to women development including *inter alia* the development of shelter homes, establishment of innovation fund for youth and women entrepreneurs, strengthening of Ombudsman Secretariat, and establishment

²⁰ The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Women Empowerment Policy, 2017. <https://swkpk.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/WomenEmpowerment-Policy-2017.pdf>

²¹ The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Annual Development Plan 2022-2023. <https://www.pakp.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/ADPBook2022-23.pdf>

of women skills development centers. In addition to this, 03 new schemes on women development have also been introduced with an allocation of 82.854 million rupees.

Furthermore, the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have both mandatory and voluntary measures in place to protect women who experience intersecting discrimination in the province. One such initiative includes the 'Bolo Helpline' that receives complaints and assists Afghan women migrant workers facing gender-based violence without any discrimination.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, women are involved in post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation processes through their representation in the provincial Assembly and Cabinet which are the highest decision-making fora. Moreover, the women-led nongovernment organizations have the full freedom to take part in the reconstruction efforts.

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²² The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Women Empowerment Policy, 2017. <https://swkpk.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/WomenEmpowerment-Policy-2017.pdf>

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²³ The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Annual Development Plan 2022-2023. <https://www.pakp.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/ADPBook2022-23.pdf>

Q33. Please describe your country's national strategy or action plan for gender equality, including its name, the period it covers, its priority, funding and alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the targets under SDG 5.

The Government of Pakistan has launched a comprehensive policy, National Gender Policy Framework, 2022 which is aligned with Pakistan's vision 2025, and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Pakistan has also adopted SDGs as its National Agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognize the importance of women empowerment as a cross-cutting theme. Goal 5 i.e. "achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls" is applicable to all its three dimensions i.e. economic, social and environment. The targets for this goal seek to end all forms of discrimination, eliminate violence against women and girls in all its manifestations such as health and reproductive rights, political, social and economic inclusion, recognition and value of unpaid family support and removal of socio-cultural impediments that hinder accessibility. Targets 5.4, 5(a) and 5(b1) are particularly relevant to enabling women's economic empowerment. Women's right to information is emphasized through greater use of information technology along with protection of women's land rights.

Since women comprise almost half of total population of Pakistan, the sustainability in three dimensions can only be achieved through inclusion and their empowerment. Thus, the focus on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment corroborates with the thrust on economic growth and development.

Potential Benefits of the Policy

Invest in creating economic opportunities for women because:

- Increasing female labor force participation to 50 percent can increase the national labor value added to GDP by 27 percent.
- Completely closing the gender gap can boost the national GDP by 30 percent i.e., \$85.2 billion today⁹³.

- Development of the 4th Industrial Revolution adoption roadmaps for key sectors can exponentially increase employment and address under-employment, specifically for females.
- Digital technology and social media platforms will enable everyone to engage in safe public spaces and contribute to the overall national narrative, striving towards digital equality, gender equality, and regional equality. In addition to providing safe spaces for constructive exchange, social media platforms will provide opportunities for e-commerce allowing women to generate income by tapping into digital markets.
- Economic agency is closely related to the reduction in Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). The relationship between the two is closely interlinked but not linear. Economic empowerment can reduce the risk of violence by improving women’s financial autonomy, bargaining power and self-esteem which are often frequent factors in domestic violence

Objectives of the Policy

Based on the extensive nation-wide consultations held between March and August 2021, the categorization of global gender development indices and priorities highlighted by experts for gender development, a total of six primary objectives have been identified, as detailed below.

Objective 1 Governance | Establish gender responsive governance structures, lead gender equal institutional transformation, strengthen the Government’s capacity to mainstream gender in its policies and programs, and ensure institutionalization of gender equality principles in the government priorities and action plans.

- Promote gender-responsive data analysis, planning, programming, budgeting, and monitoring across all programs and all ministries • Advocate for accountability at highest levels
- Promote gender-responsive leadership
- Standardize, collate, and harmonize collection of data on gender development

- Convene holistic multi-sectoral partnerships
- Stimulate evidence guided gender mainstreaming initiatives

Objective 2 Equality and Quality in Education:

Create enabling environments for women and girls to learn and become equipped with employable and high-income generating skills.

- Deter drop-out and accelerate enrollment of OOS children with particular focus on girl students
- Advance digital skills and employability for girls
- Incentivize and support higher qualification pathways with focus on female youth
 - Institutionalize gender-sensitive education
- Provide Career counselling and guidance
- Generate Employability skills to ensure financial inclusion

Objective 3 Employment & Economic Empowerment

Promote equitable access to work opportunities with conducive workplaces, enabling enterprising environment and necessary business skills.

- Provide relevant employment opportunities by matching skilled female applicants to employers who are scaling up
- Provide local working experiences to near graduating female students to equip them with sectoral experience and sensitize around employable/ growing skills
- Create Entrepreneurship opportunities for females by enhancing local capacities and generating synergies across the ecosystem
- Tackle gender stereotypes in the workplace to promote female-friendly policies

Objective 4 Agency, Political Participation and Meaningful Engagement

Creating avenues for and advance female leadership, mentorship and engagement to meaningfully integrate their voices in program design and policy decisions.

- Accelerate female voter registration to ensure female political participation
- Facilitate women’s access to micro-finance institutions and promote financial inclusion
- Advance mentorship and leadership for females in enterprise development and entrepreneurship
- Address harmful social norms and attitudes through advocacy activities and engaging men and boys (work with social influencers and mobilizers, including youth, men, community, religious leaders, men parliamentarians) for gender equality”
- Create safe public and digital spaces for women to encourage dialogue and sharing of views and opinions on social, political, and economic issues
- Eliminate violence and harassment at the workplace

Objective 5 Health and Well-being

Integrate gender sensitive health elements in cross-cutting services, including health.

- Contextualize available health services for female
- Integrate personal health and reproductive health in formal education streams
- Protect and promote female mental health
- Strive for gender equality in health leadership
- Provide hygiene and sanitation facilities in educational institutions, workplaces, and markets

Objective 6 Safety & Security

End Gender-based violence and mainstream gender protection across systems, policies, processes, and programs.

- Provide gender conducive work environments for women to operate in
- Ensure women’s vulnerability are addressed in climate policies and programs
- Integrate gender protection and support across the system, including law manifesting entities

- Raise awareness on women protection, discrimination, GBV and gender-equitable masculinities
- Enhance access to justice for women and less privileged/marginalized gender groups through establishing gender-responsive infrastructure.
- Promote women's active role in initiatives to promote peace and social cohesion in erstwhile conflict. Strengthen institutional compliance with laws to counter harassment at workplaces and cyber spaces in the government offices and ministries.

Q34. Please describe your country's system for tracking the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting), including the approximate proportion of the national budget that is invested in this area?

The Government of Pakistan is cognizant of the fact that gender equality is essential for national development and securing the rights of people as enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan. In last five years the Government including provincial governments have made significant progress to bring gender equality through more financial allocations for the purpose. Since Financial Year (FY) 2019 -2020, the Government of Pakistan has taken gender responsive budget initiative. Ministry of Finance secured technical assistance from UN Women for Gender responsive Budgeting. During preparation of annual budget for FY 2024-25, the Finance Division has made it mandatory that every Ministry/Department will submit budgetary demands on the bases of Gender Responsive Budget. The focused areas of GRB are; Generating Employability skills to ensure financial inclusion, Institutionalizing gender responsive education, Advancing digital Skills and Employability for girls, Incentivizing and supporting higher qualification pathways with focus on female youth, Striving for gender equality in health, Implementing occupational safety and health (OSH) at workplace, promoting gender responsive leadership, tackling gender stereotypes in the workplace to promote female friendly policies, ensuring female political participation , facilitating women access to micro-finance institutions ,and eliminating violence and harassment at workplace. The

federal and provincial Governments also conducted workshops for Gender Responsive Budgeting.

The overall expenditure during 2019-20 had been estimated at Rs 8,238.1 billion, out of which the current expenditure was Rs 7,288.1 billion. The expenditure on General Public Services was estimated at Rs 5,607.0 billion, which is 76.9% of the current expenditure. The development expenditure outside PSDP has been estimated at Rs 85.8 billion in the budget 2019-20. The size of Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for 2019-20 is Rs 1,613 billion. Out of this, Rs 912 billion has been allocated to provinces. Federal PSDP has been estimated at Rs 701 billion, out of which Rs 348.2 billion for Federal Ministries/Divisions, Rs 348.2 billion for Corporations, Rs 5 billion for Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA), Rs 17 billion for Relief and Rehabilitation of IDPs, Rs 53 billion for Security Enhancement, Rs 5 billion for Prime Minister's Youth Skill Development Initiative, Rs 2 billion for Clean Green Pakistan Movement/Tourism, Rs 1 billion for Gas Infrastructure Development Cess, Rs 48 billion for Merged Areas of FATA 10 Years Development Plan and Rs 24 billion for Pakistan Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Community Development Programme. Current Exp. on Revenue Account. To meet expenditure, bank borrowing has been estimated for 2019-20 at Rs.339 billion, which is lower by 688.7 billion than the revised estimates 2018-19 reflecting decrease at 75%. The women being almost half the population (48.9 %) are direct beneficiary of all public delivery services under current budget and Public Sector Development Projects (PSDP) schemes.

The Government allocated Rs.110 billion for Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) under Ehsaas programme using unconditional cash transfer intervention with Rs.5,000 per quarter to 5.7 million poorest of the poor families. Government enhanced the quarterly stipend from Rs.5,000 to Rs.5,500. National Socio-economic targeting data is being updated and expected to be completed by May 2020 with coverage of 32 million households and 200 million population. 3.2 million children of BISP beneficiary families

in 50 districts are receiving conditional cash transfer of Rs.750 per quarter helping government to reduce the drop-out ratio.

Rs.58 billion were allocated in budget for human development. Health, education, attainment of development goals, and climate change. For higher education across the gender, record funds of Rs 43 billion were allocated. 6 million women to get stipends in their saving accounts and increased access to mobile phones. In addition, 500 Kifalat centres to be provide online access to free courses to women and children. The government allocated Rs. 220 million for Refinance and Credit Guarantee Scheme for Women Entrepreneurs, RS.100 million for Anti Rape Fund (Investigation & Trial) during FY 2022-23

During last 5 years i.e 2019-20 to 2023-24, the government enhanced the budget out lay from **Rs 8,238.1billion** to **Rs.14484 billion** with **75.8%** increase. Government allocated RS. 2709 billion for PSDP with almost 100 % increase as compared with allocation of 2019-20. Government allocated Rs.9000 million for PM Youth Business & Agriculture Loan Scheme, Rs.100 million for Student Loan & Aid Initiatives / Schemes, and Rs.200 million for Gender Initiative. Further, **Rs.5 billion** has been allocated for women empowerment in the budget. In this regard, projects like skill development, cheap loans for businesses and trainings for running a business. Tax rates have also been relaxed for women entrepreneurs. In the financial year 2021-22, Rs.250 billion were allocated for BISP program. The government increased the budget to Rs.360 billion in 2022-23. During the financial year 2023-24, this amount was further increased by Rs.40 billion to Rs.400 billion. The Government increase approximately 300 % funds allocation for BISP during last five years to benefit the poor women and girls. The scope of Benazir Education Scholarship Program has been increased from 6,000,000 children to about 8,300,000. 52% of them are girls. More than Rs.55 billion have been earmarked for this purpose. 92,000 students are to be given Benazir undergraduate scholarship for which Rs.6 billion has been allocated. An amount of **Rs.90 billion** has been allocated for achieving the SDGs.

Q35. What formal mechanisms are in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

The formal mechanisms for implementation and monitoring of BPfA include National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF), and a network of focal persons from all stakeholders established by Ministry of Human Rights. An SDG unit has been established at Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives to coordinate for and monitor implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition to these mechanisms the an inter-Provincial Ministerial Group (IPMG) has also been formed under NCSW, Ministry of Human Rights which oversee the implementation and challenges related to policies and initiatives for promotion and protection of women rights including critical areas covered under CEDAW and BPfA. Moreover, the Treaty Implementation cells working at federal and provincial level also play a role in coordinating with stakeholders for implementation of GSP Plus plan of Actions ,various conventions, Universal periodic Review (UPR) including BPfA an SDGs.

Q36. Please describe how stakeholders have contributed to the preparation of the present national report.

The Ministry of Human Rights having mandate of coordination, implementation, and reporting on BPfA has taken a lead to engage all stakeholders including federal Ministries, National and provincial Human Rights Institutions such as NCSW and Provincial Commissions on Status of Women, Regional Directorates of Human Rights, provincial women development Departments, and civil society organizations. The Ministry of Human Rights developed a matrix on BPfA and shared with all stakeholders seeking information on questions for Survey and Narrative report. The MoHR conducted 15X consultative sessions with relevant stakeholders and deliberated on data related to implementation of actions on all critical areas of BPfA. In the sessions, the stakeholders shared the implementation status, outcomes of their interventions and challenges faced by them. The representatives/focal persons of federal/Provincial Departments and civil

society organizations delivered their formal presentations during the sessions and also shared the detail information and data in response to questions. All the senior level officials of Government and CSOs participated in the sessions.

Q37. Please describe your country's action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women

The Government of Pakistan has already implemented its action plans on recommendations of CEDAW committee and UPR. The report on CEDAW was accomplished in January ,2024 which was due in February 2024. However, it was conveyed by the CEDAW committee that as Pakistan has adopted list of issues method of Reporting, therefore, it is likely that report will be considered now in 2025.

The government of Pakistan presented it 4th UPR report on 30th January 2023 in Human Rights Council, Geneva. The report was reviewed by the relevant committee and Government of Pakistan has recently received the Recommendations on 4th UPR report and the next report will be submitted in 2027. On receipt of the recommendations in April,2023, Ministry of Human Rights developed a matrix of indicators and shared with the stakeholders for its implementation. Th MoHR also conducted 5 Consultative sessions with relevant provincial departments with the request to prepare action plan and share with MoHR in June 2024. However, the MoHR has developed a plan of Action under which Annual progress review will be conducted.

Obligation to Eliminate Discrimination

Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan provides equal rights and the chapter on Principles of Policy underlines the principle of equal rights and equal treatment to all citizens/ persons, without any discrimination including on the basis of sex. Following articles of Constitutional of Islamic Republic of Pakistan broadly cover the women rights

and anti-discrimination mechanisms thereto: Article 3 calls upon the State to eliminate all forms of exploitation; Article 4 provides for the right of individual to enjoy the protection of law and to be treated in accordance with the law; Article 25 ensures equality before the law and equal protection of the law and states that there shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex alone; Articles 25(3) and 26(2) allow the state to make special provisions for the protection of women and children; Article 26 & 27 provide for equal access to public places and equality of employment in the public and private sector; Articles 11 & 37 (g) prohibit trafficking in human beings as well as prostitution; Article 32 makes special provisions for the representation of women in local Government; Article 34 directs the state to take appropriate measures to enable women to participate in all spheres of life and social activities; Article 35 asks the state to protect the marriage, the family, the mother and the child; Article 37(e) directs the state to make provisions for securing just and humane conditions of work ensuring that children and women are not employed in vocations unsuited to their age or sex, and for ensuring maternity benefits for women in employment; Articles 51 & 106 provide for the reservation of seats for women in the legislatures.

Pakistan through in its national agenda "Pakistan Vision 2025" has incorporated women empowerment and anti-exploitation. The strategy envisions to achieve targets such as promoting women's self-worth, protecting their right to choose, making opportunities and resources more accessible to women, promoting and safeguarding their autonomy over life decisions inside and outside the house etc.

The Government of Punjab published the Punjab Women Development Policy, 2018 to enable and uplift women by honoring the Constitution and Pakistan's international obligations. The Policy is intended for women empowerment across key areas such as health, education, reduction of gender-based violence, female economic participation, and climate change and information technology.

The Government of KP has enacted key legislation pertaining to protection against discrimination, protection against harassment, provision of day care, maternity leave, and equal pay for equal work. The KP Home Based Workers (Welfare and protection) Act 2021 was enacted to address the rights, duties and problems of home-based workers. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Domestic Violence against Women (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2021 comprehensively covers all aspects of women related crimes, reporting cognizance, prosecution as well as victim and witness protection.

The Government of Balochistan implemented the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Policy in 2020. The policy sets standards for coordination between the Federal Government and Provincial Government on the implementation of the Convention. Overall objectives of the Policy are to protect, advance and implement constitutionally-mandated women rights through equity-based socio-economic opportunities as well as, decision making role in public and private. The policy is also aimed at an effective deterrence to trace out/eradicate domestic and gender-based violence as well as discrimination against women.

Article 3: Implementation of the Convention

Pakistan has taken all appropriate measures to ensure the full development and advancement of women for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a bases of equality with men. The provinces also adhere to the principle of development an advancement of the women.

In Punjab, the provincial government launched the Punjab Women Development Policy 2018 to enable and uplift women by honoring the Constitution and Pakistan's international obligations particularly the implementation of CEDAW Convention. The Policy is intended for women empowerment across key areas such as health, education, reduction of gender-based violence, female economic participation, climate change and

information technology. In this regard, Punjab Women Development Policy Implementation Framework 2020- 2024 was developed. The Implementation Framework includes carrying out awareness drives for those affected by the policy as well as other stakeholders that can facilitate the policy and also assist in monitoring and enforcement. Interventions planned under the Framework include gender-disaggregated data collection across Punjab, awareness regarding the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) Women Safety App, departmental gender policy and guidelines development, awareness campaigns for parents regarding sexual abuse of children, low-cost progress and replication of Violence against Women Centers.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the mandate of women empowerment is being executed through a separate women empowerment department titled 'Social Welfare, Special Education and Women Empowerment'. The Social Welfare, Special Education & Women Empowerment Department enforce and monitor women rights in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The District Human Rights Committees headed by Deputy Commissioner in each district also oversees situation human rights protection and enforcement at district level. The Ombudsperson established under the Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2010. The Ombudsperson enforces women property rights under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Enforcement of Women Property Rights Act, 2019. The District Protection Committees established under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa domestic Violence against Women (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2021, looks into the protection of women against domestic violence in the province.

Government of Balochistan has adopted and implemented policies that are consistent with CEDAW. It includes: The Balochistan Women Empowerment and Gender Policy 2020-24; The Balochistan Women Development Sector Plan 2022-27; The Balochistan Commission on the Status of Women Act, 2017. Moreover, Office of Chairperson, on Balochistan Commission on the Status of Women is fully functional that enforce and monitor women's rights at provincial level. The Chairperson overviews the

government's already existing laws, rules and regulation and policies from gender lens. Chapter III of the Act of Balochistan Commission on the Status of Women clearly defines the coordination mechanisms for reporting on the UN Conventions. Moreover, Balochistan Women Development Departments and Balochistan Commission on the Status of Women are functional to uplift women rights in the province.

The Government of Sindh has undertaken notable efforts to implement the CEDAW Convention and promote women empowerment through several departments and entities. These include the Sindh Commission on the Status of Women, the Sindh Women Development Department, and the Regional Directorate of Human Rights, which actively work to formulate policies, execute initiatives, and monitor the implementation of women's rights and gender equality measures in the province. In addition, the Sindh Human Rights Commission plays a critical role in ensuring the protection and promotion of human rights, including those related to women, within the region. Legal measures, such as the Sindh Domestic Violence Act and the Sindh Women Agricultural Workers Act, underscore Sindh's dedication to creating an environment that empowers women and safeguards their rights, contributing to gender equality and social progress in the province.

Q38. What are the most important areas in which your country has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level?

Pakistan has made significant progress in successfully enhancing the coverage of Social Safety nets. The flagship Social Safety Net has enhanced its targeting efficiency through re-survey of 35 million households of Pakistan. This has allowed reducing the inclusion and exclusion errors, of previous data repository, attributed to aging of socio-economic repository and transient nature of poverty.

The benefit which was provided to 5.57 million women (during the previous reporting period) has now been extended to 8.3 million women across Pakistan. The Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) initiative, Benazir Taleemi Wazaif, aimed at increasing school enrollment and reducing dropout rates. Launched in 2012 as a pilot in five districts, In 2021 the scope of program was enhanced to all districts of Pakistan. The program now covers primary, secondary, and higher secondary education nationwide. As of June 2023, BISP is providing CCTs to 9,701,217 children are actively enrolled throughout Pakistan. About 47 % of the enrolled children are girls.

The government allocated Rs. 220 million for Refinance and Credit Guarantee Scheme for Women Entrepreneurs, RS.100 million for Anti Rape Fund (Investigation & Trial) during FY 2022-23

There is an annual decrease of 3.2% in maternal mortality ratio from 2006-07 to 2019.²⁴ The full immunization rate was observed at 60% during 2014-2018, which has now been observed at 70%²⁷. Whereas, the immunization rate for provinces was observed highest at Punjab with 81%, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 69%, Sindh with 52% and Balochistan with 35% only.

In Pakistan, overall 77% of mothers who had given birth in the last three years went for pre-natal consultations during their last pregnancy²⁵ whereas it was observed at 73% in PSLM 2014-15. Pre-natal consultations have stagnant at 86 percent in urban areas but have increased to 72 percent in 2019-20 as compared to 67 percent in 2014-15 in rural areas. Punjab has the consultation rate with 83 percent in 2019-20 as compared to 78 percent in 2014-15. In Balochistan, the consultation rate has increased to 63 percent in

²⁴ According to SDGs Status Report, 2021 published by Planning Commission of Pakistan

²⁷ according to (PSLM 2019-20)

²⁵ according to PSLM 2019-20

2019-20 from 47 percent in 2014-15. In Islamabad, 97 percent women went for pre-natal consultation.

The uptake of Tetanus Toxoid injections by pregnant woman was observed at 75% during previous reporting period (PSLM 2014-15) whereas the same was recorded at 77% during current reporting period according to PSLM 2019-20. The Tetanus Toxoid injections protect infants from neonatal tetanus and protect women from developing tetanus themselves or suffering from sepsis.

The attended birth rate (assisted by skilled birth attendants) for the previous reporting period was recorded at 58% of the total deliveries (PSLM 2014-15). This has been increased to 68% attended birth during the current reporting period according to (PSLM 2019-20). Post-natal consultation in 2019-20 has increased to 39 percent as compared to 29 percent in 2014-15.

Q39. Over the next five years, what are your country's priorities for strengthening national gender statistics?

Over the next five years, Pakistan has outlined several priorities for strengthening national gender statistics to better monitor and support progress toward gender equality. These priorities include:

Enhancing Data Collection Systems:

Developing Comprehensive Surveys: Pakistan aims to improve and expand the collection of gender-disaggregated data through comprehensive household and labor force surveys. This includes integrating gender-specific questions to capture nuanced information on women's economic activities, health, education, and social status (Planning Commission).

Administrative Data Improvements:

Strengthening administrative data systems to collect more accurate and detailed gender statistics from various government sectors such as health, education, and justice.

Capacity Building:

Training for Data Producers and Users: Providing training and capacity-building programs for statisticians, researchers, and policymakers to enhance their ability to collect, analyze, and use gender data effectively. This includes workshops and technical assistance on gender statistics methodologies and data utilization (Planning Commission).

Institutional Strengthening:

Supporting institutions like the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) to develop expertise in gender statistics and improve their data collection and analysis capabilities (Planning Commission).

Policy and Framework Development:

Gender Data Frameworks: Establishing frameworks and guidelines for the consistent collection and reporting of gender statistics. This includes setting standards for gender indicators and integrating these into national statistical systems and SDG monitoring frameworks (Planning Commission).

Regular Reporting:

Ensuring regular and systematic reporting of gender statistics in national reports, such as the Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) survey and other relevant publications.

Data Dissemination and Use:

Public Access to Data: Enhancing the dissemination of gender statistics through public databases and reports to ensure accessibility for researchers, policymakers, and the general public. This includes creating user-friendly online platforms for data access (Planning Commission).

Evidence-Based Policy Making:

Promoting the use of gender statistics in policymaking and program design to address gender disparities effectively. This involves using data to inform gender-responsive policies and development plans (Planning Commission).

Collaboration and Partnerships:

International Collaboration: Engaging with international organizations, such as UN Women and the World Bank, to adopt best practices and leverage technical support for improving gender statistics (Planning Commission).

National Stakeholder Engagement:

Collaborating with national stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, and academic institutions, to ensure a coordinated approach to collecting and using gender data (Planning Commission).

Q40. What gender-specific indicators⁷ has your country prioritized for monitoring progress on the SDGs?

In monitoring progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Pakistan has prioritized several genders-specific indicators. These indicators are designed to track and improve various aspects of gender equality and women's empowerment across multiple SDG targets. Here are the key areas and indicators Pakistan focuses on:

Poverty and Economic Participation:

Employed population below international poverty line by sex and age (SDG 1.1.1): This measures the proportion of men and women earning below the international poverty line.

Proportion of population living below the national poverty line (SDG 1.2.1) and poverty in all dimensions (SDG 1.2.2): These indicators track the overall poverty levels among men, women, and children.

Health and Wellbeing:

Maternal mortality ratio (SDG 3.1.1) and proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (SDG 3.1.2): These indicators are critical for monitoring maternal health. Adolescent birth rate (SDG 3.7.2) and proportion of women who have their need for family planning satisfied (SDG 3.7.1): These focus on reproductive health and family planning.

Education:

Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex (SDG 4.3.1): This tracks gender disparities in access to education and lifelong learning opportunities.

Gender Equality and Empowerment:

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and local governments (SDG 5.5.1): This indicator measures women's participation in political decision-making. Proportion of women in managerial positions (SDG 5.5.2): This tracks women's representation in leadership roles across various sectors.

Economic Resources and Employment:

Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex (SDG 5.a.1): This indicator assesses gender equality in land

ownership. Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment (SDG 5.c.1): This reflects the commitment of public systems to gender budgeting.

Violence Against Women:

Proportion of women and girls aged 15 and older subjected to physical, sexual, or psychological violence (SDG 5.2.1): This crucial indicator monitors gender-based violence.

Technology and Infrastructure:

Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex (SDG 5.b.1): This indicator helps track gender disparities in access to technology.

Q41. Which data disaggregations are routinely provided by major surveys in your country?

The Government of Pakistan, acting through its competent authorities, foremost among them the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), the National Institute of Population (NIP), the National Gender Data Portal (NGDP), and the National Police Bureau (NPB) has been striving to collect administrative data, disaggregated by sex. The institutions have been urged through legislation to maintain their databases to improve Pakistan's data collection processes further.

The Government is also improving its collection of data processes and expanding the same to encompass disaggregated data. In this respect, the Government introduced the Human Rights Information Management System (HRIMS) in 2021 to strengthen Pakistan's human rights reporting and support evidence-based policy-making and planning. The system sets out nationally contextualized human rights indicators, developed through a consultative process based on international best practices on the Human Rights-Based Approach to Data that allows provincial and federal governments

to interpret and measure progress in human rights implementation. The HRIMS digitally links relevant federal ministries and provincial line departments with the MoHR, thus facilitating coordination and transparency of information. Since the inception of the HRIMS portal, the Government has conducted 21 capacity-building sessions of relevant stakeholders between 2021 and 2023 on data collection measures.

Furthermore, the Government of Punjab has had an operational Gender Management Information System (GMIS) since 2015 that tracks gender disparity in the province against approximately 300 indicators categorized under six thematic areas, i.e., demographics, governance, health, education, economic participation and opportunities, and justice. The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is also developing a comprehensive Gender Management Information System (GMIS). The system, once established, will provide gender-disaggregated data on approximately 250 indicators encompassing critical aspects of women's lives.

Q42. What are the priority actions to accelerate the implementation of the BPfA and the 2030 Agenda, notably as part of the Decade of Action for sustainable development?

To accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as part of the Decade of Action, Pakistan has identified several priority actions. These actions are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aim to address various challenges and gaps in gender equality and sustainable development. Key priorities include:

Strengthening Institutional Frameworks: Enhancing the capacity of national and provincial institutions to effectively implement and monitor SDG-related activities, especially those focused on gender equality (SDG 5). This includes the establishment of SDG support units at federal and provincial levels to guide the implementation and monitoring processes (United Nations Pakistan).

Enhancing Data Collection and Monitoring: Improving the collection, analysis, and dissemination of gender-disaggregated data to better understand and address gender disparities. This also involves the development and use of innovative technologies for more efficient data management and reporting (UN SDGs) (UNDP).

Promoting Inclusive Economic Growth: Implementing policies that promote women's economic empowerment, including access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. This includes targeted initiatives to support women entrepreneurs and increase female participation in the labor force (UN SDGs) (UNDP).

Addressing Gender-Based Violence: Strengthening legal frameworks and support systems to protect women and girls from violence and discrimination. This encompasses both preventative measures and support services for survivors of gender-based violence (United Nations Pakistan).

Public Awareness and Advocacy: Increasing public awareness and advocacy efforts to change societal attitudes towards gender equality. This includes campaigns and educational programs aimed at promoting gender-sensitive norms and behaviors (UNDP).

Collaboration and Partnerships: Fostering partnerships with international organizations, civil society, and the private sector to leverage resources and expertise for advancing gender equality and sustainable development goals (United Nations Pakistan) (UNDP).

By focusing on these priority actions, Pakistan aims to make significant progress towards achieving gender equality and advancing its national development agenda in line with

the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations Pakistan) (UN SDGs) (UNDP).