



RTC Report

BREAKING BARRIERS, BRIDGING DIVIDES: GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT SYMPOSIUM



By

**The Center for Sustainable
Development Goals and the E Women
Global Network of COPAIR**

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Breaking Barriers, Bridging Divides : Gender Equality and Empowerment Symposium

The Center for Sustainable Development Goals and the E Women Global Network of COPAIR and International Relations, in collaboration with the National Commission of the Status of Women, recently organized a Round Table Conference titled "Breaking Barriers, Bridging Divides: Gender Equality and Empowerment Symposium" at the COPAIR Head Office. The primary aim of this significant dialogue was to concentrate on women's empowerment and the essential task of closing existing gaps. Gender equality and empowerment are not mere ideals; they are the foundation of a fair and progressive society. In Pakistan, where women make up 48.4 percent of the population, the pursuit of gender equality is not just a moral obligation but a crucial element of sustainable development.

Gender equality extends beyond the absence of discrimination; it involves dismantling societal structures that perpetuate inequality, challenging norms that restrict opportunities, and ensuring that every individual, regardless of gender, enjoys the same rights, privileges, and opportunities. Empowerment acts as the catalyst that transforms gender equality into tangible action. It entails providing tools, resources, and platforms necessary for individuals, particularly women, to shape their destinies, contribute meaningfully to society, and engage in decision-making processes. Achieving genuine gender equality and empowerment necessitates not only a policy framework but also a societal transformation. This is why participants from diverse fields were invited to the Round Table Conference to share their perspectives, evaluate past and present gender policies, and establish a data source for gender statistics.



The agenda of the discussion revolved around:

- **Empowerment Strategies:** Exploring initiatives and strategies for empowering women in various aspects of life.
- **Bridging Gender Divides:** Discussing challenges and propose measures to bridge existing divides in gender equality.
- **Policy Evaluation:** Analyzing the effectiveness of past and current gender-related policies in Pakistan.
- **Strategic Partnerships for Progress:** Forging collaborative efforts to develop a comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics, enabling evidence-based policymaking and fostering collective action towards advancing gender equality.

The commencement of the conference included the recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by Ms. Tanzeela Mazhar, the Co-Founder of Women in Media Alliance and Program Head of GTV, who also served as the conference moderator. Ms. Mazhar initiated the proceedings by providing participants with the opportunity to introduce themselves, and thereafter, the President of E-Women Global Network delivered the welcoming remarks.

Welcoming Remarks by the President E-WOMEN Global Network of COPAIR

Amna Munawwar Awan, the President and Founder of The Center for Sustainable Development Goals and the E Women Global Network of COPAIR, extended her welcome and articulated the vision behind E Women Global Network, aiming to establish a global advocacy platform for Women Equality and Empowerment. During her address, she presented the journey of E Women Gender Network, highlighting its achievements in digital networking, training, and mentoring.



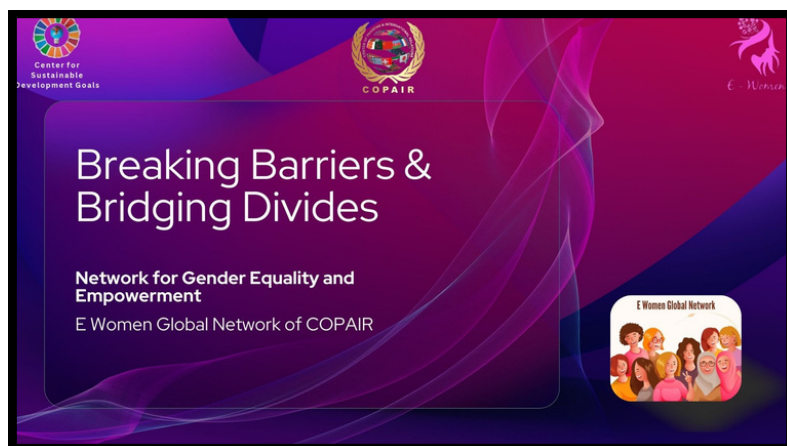
**Aman Munnawar Awan
President E Women Global
Network of COPAIR**

Furthermore, Amna Munawwar Awan indicated that the insights gathered from the Round Table Conference, which identifies challenges and proposes solutions, will be integrated into the final policy brief of the National Gender Policy.

She specifically acknowledged the commendable initiatives undertaken by the National Commission of the Status of Women, under the capable leadership of Honorable Miss Nilofer Bakhtiyar.

Emphasizing the importance of collaboration, Amna Munawwar Awan stressed that through partnerships with civil society and public-private collaborations, gender equality can be achieved.

She expressed her belief that a



collaborative approach enhances the collective impact, fostering the growth, resilience, and adaptability of gender equality in our society

Additionally, she noted that the organization participated in COP28 and has intentions to contribute to COP29, with a specific focus on highlighting the pivotal role of women in climate change and risk mitigation efforts.

The President E Women Global Network invited respective participants to collaborate on National Gender Policy initiative of the Center of Pakistan and International Relations and mentioned that today agenda important points will be incorporated as a part of the Policy Brief.

Following the welcoming remarks, the audience applauded as a video showcasing the E-women journey and the thematic areas it operates in was presented.

Key Note Address by the Chief Guest Nilofar Bakhtiar, Chairperson NCSW

The esteemed Chief Guest, Honorable Nilofar Bakhtiar, proudly shared the accomplishments of NCSW in advocating for Gender Equality and Empowerment through policy advocacy. Stressing the importance of policy implementation and legislative reforms, she underscored the necessity for decisive actions to achieve desired goals. Honorable Nilofar Bakhtiar commended the dedication and commitment of both the Government and civil society in laying the groundwork for a more inclusive and equitable society.



Specifically addressing issues like Early Child Marriage and the need for a Gender-related Code of Ethics in the Political process, she emphasized the requirement for approval by policymakers in Parliament. At the federal level, the National Commission of Women played a pivotal role in women's economic empowerment and digital transformation. Notably, she highlighted the significance of the National Gender Data Portal (NGDP) as a primary source for gender-related statistics and information.

Honorable Nilofar Bakhtiar encouraged COPAIR to engage in collaboration with the National Commission of the Status of Women, emphasizing the potential for collective efforts to contribute to shaping a more equitable and just future for women in Pakistan.

Nabila Malick, Communication Expert , UN Women

Nabila Malick provided a comprehensive overview of the role of UN Women, emphasizing the imperative nature of policy implementation within the context of an effective policy framework. In her address, she underscored the importance of recognizing and addressing persisting challenges even as we celebrate achievements. Nabila Malick highlighted that ensuring effective implementation is of paramount importance, and such efficacy can be achieved through the consistent and transparent functioning of the system.

Furthermore, she stressed the significance of fostering awareness and capacity building, citing gender equality as a central theme of UN Women. Recognizing the multifaceted nature of this theme, Nabila Malick underscored the ongoing commitment of UN Women to advancing gender equality through initiatives that prioritize awareness, capacity building, and a comprehensive policy framework.



Imran Khan , Country Director, USIP

Imran Khan elaborated on the initiatives undertaken by his organization in the realm of gender safety and security, highlighting the collaborative efforts with law enforcement organizations. During the discussion, he emphasized the pivotal roles played by police officers and the judiciary in advancing gender equality.



Imran Khan articulated that ensuring gender access to a transparent justice system and robust law enforcement agencies is instrumental in enhancing gender security within a society. Expanding on the overarching vision, he shared that the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) places a focal point on Gender Peace and Security. The organization envisions advocating for a sustainable, safe, and secure society through initiatives that prioritize gender equality and emphasize the crucial role of peace and security in fostering a harmonious and equitable community.

Syeda Maimoona Zeb ,Gender Head ,UNDP

Maimoona underscored the various programs initiated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) geared towards promoting gender equality. These programs, which encompassed training and mentoring initiatives, aimed at actively contributing to the realization of sustainable development goals. Additionally, she shed light on the adverse effects of climate change, specifically emphasizing its disproportionate impact on women.



Quratul-Ain , Vice President FPCCI

The Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), an esteemed woman holding such a significant position in the chamber, addressed the audience with insightful remarks. She highlighted the pivotal role of women in the business and commerce sector, emphasizing the importance of diversity and inclusion for the overall growth and prosperity of the industry.



Her remarks touched upon the challenges faced by women in the business world and underscored the need for concerted efforts to create a more equitable and supportive business environment. Additionally, she expressed her commitment to fostering collaboration and initiatives that empower women entrepreneurs and professionals, ultimately contributing to the economic development of the country.

Huma Batool , Chairperson Alvir Airways

The Chairperson of Alvir Airways, a distinguished woman at the helm of such a prominent position, shared insightful remarks during the conference. She underscored the significance of innovation and sustainability in the aviation industry, emphasizing Alvir Airways' commitment to excellence and service quality.



The Chairperson spoke about the unique challenges and opportunities in the aviation sector, particularly acknowledging the role of women in bringing about positive transformations.

Furthermore, she highlighted Alvir Airways' dedication to fostering a workplace that promotes gender equality and diversity, recognizing the valuable contributions of women in aviation. Her remarks resonated with a vision for continuous growth, excellence, and a commitment to providing passengers with a safe and exceptional travel experience.

Zulekha , Advisor Gender and child cell , NDMA

Zulekha eloquently emphasized the crucial intersectionality of gender and child-focused considerations within disaster management, underscoring their paramount role in constructing resilient communities. The focus of our initiatives centers on seamlessly integrating gender-sensitive and child-centric strategies into comprehensive disaster response and recovery plans.



Zulekha, recognizing the distinctive vulnerabilities of women and children during crises, highlighted advisory role, centering on ensuring that disaster preparedness, relief efforts, and recovery initiatives are inclusive and specifically address the unique needs and challenges faced by these groups.

She stressed the non-gender-neutral impact of disasters, affirming our commitment to implementing policies and practices that protect the rights and well-being of women and children. Zulekha underscored the collaborative nature of our work with stakeholders, aiming to shape a disaster management framework that not only effectively mitigates the impact of disasters but is also equitable and considerate of diverse needs.

In conclusion, Zulekha expressed her unwavering dedication to nurturing a disaster-resilient society that prioritizes gender equality and the well-being of children. Through collective efforts, she believes in building a more inclusive and compassionate approach to disaster management, ensuring that no one is left behind in times of crisis. Gratitude was extended for the collaborative endeavors.

Dr Saad Ali Khan , Assistant Professor QAU

Dr Saad Ali Khan from the Gender Studies Department of the Quaid-i-Azam University was of the view that participating in this pivotal conference, which delves into breaking barriers and bridging divides for women's empowerment, aligns seamlessly with his expertise as an Assistant Professor with a focus in gender-centric politics



He said that discussions surrounding gender-sensitive strategies resonate deeply with my academic focus on understanding the complexities of gender dynamics, particularly in the realm of political structures.

The importance of integrating gender-sensitive approaches in society, as emphasized in the conference, aligns with the essence of breaking barriers.

In conclusion, he showed optimism that the insights and discussions from this conference will contribute significantly to fostering a society where gender barriers are dismantled, and divides are bridged for the empowerment of women.

Dr. Sadia Nadeem , Head Fast School of Management

Dr. Sadia Nadeem, Head of Fast School of Management, brought a wealth of expertise to the Women Empowerment Conference as a participant. Her insights added a valuable dimension to the discussions, particularly with her background in management.

Dr. Nadeem shared perspectives on breaking barriers and bridging divides for women's empowerment, drawing upon her experiences and understanding of effective strategies within the academic and professional realms.



As a distinguished figure in the field of management, her contributions to the discourse emphasized the crucial role of leadership and organizational practices in advancing gender equality. Dr. Nadeem highlighted the significance of fostering inclusive environments within educational and professional institutions to empower women and dismantle barriers that impede their progress.

Furthermore, she underscored the need for collaborative efforts between academia, industry, and policy-makers to create a more supportive ecosystem for women's empowerment.

Dr. Nadeem's presence at the conference not only enriched the dialogue but also reflected her commitment to leveraging her position to drive positive change for women in various spheres. The valuable insights shared by Dr. Sadia Nadeem resonated with the overarching theme of the conference, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the journey towards women's empowerment.

Concluding Remarks and Vote of Thanks :

By Shabana Fayyaz

Program Head Gender Policy, COPAIR

In her role as the Program Head for Gender Policy at COPAIR, Shabana Fayyaz concluded the Conference with thoughtful reflections and a call to action. Throughout the conference, she shared COPAIR's initiatives under the E-Women Global Network, emphasizing the organization's commitment to breaking barriers and fostering gender equality.



Under COPAIR's umbrella, the E-Women Global Network has undertaken significant efforts in promoting women's empowerment through digital networking, training, and mentoring. These initiatives aim to create a global advocacy platform, aligning with the conference's theme of breaking barriers and bridging divides for women's empowerment.

Shabana Fayyaz acknowledged the diverse perspectives shared during the conference and highlighted the need for comprehensive gender policies to address the challenges faced by women. She underlined COPAIR's dedication to advancing gender equality and fostering tangible policy frameworks that contribute to sustained progress.

In her concluding remarks, Shabana expressed gratitude for the active participation and collaborative spirit of all attendees. She encouraged continued efforts to champion inclusive policies, challenge societal norms, and work collectively towards dismantling barriers hindering women's progress.

As the conference concluded, Shabana Fayyaz extended a sincere vote of thanks to all participants, recognizing their valuable contributions to the dialogue on women's empowerment. She emphasized the importance of turning discussions into actions, underscoring the pivotal role each participant plays in advancing the cause of gender equality. The conference, enriched by diverse insights and collaborative efforts, marked a significant step towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society.

Tanzeela Mazhar (Moderator)

Co-Founder Women in Media Alliance and Program head GTV

In her role as the moderator, Tanzeela Mazhar, Co-Founder of Women in Media Alliance, Program Anchor and Program Head at GTV, offered insightful concluding remarks at the Women Empowerment Conference. Drawing upon her expertise in gender sensitization and diversity training, Tanzeela reflected on the dynamic discussions and collaborations that unfolded during the conference.



Tanzeela highlighted the significance of the conference theme, emphasizing the importance of breaking barriers and bridging divides for women's empowerment. She underscored the critical role of training in gender sensitization and diversity, recognizing it as a powerful tool for creating awareness and fostering inclusivity.

Acknowledging the contributions of the participants, Tanzeela Mazhar commended the diverse perspectives shared during the conference. She emphasized the need for continued efforts to implement the insights gained, translating discussions into tangible actions that drive positive change.

In her concluding remarks, Tanzeela expressed optimism about the transformative potential of collective endeavors in advancing women's empowerment. She encouraged participants to carry forward the spirit of collaboration and to actively contribute to creating a more equitable and empowered society.

As the conference came to an end, Tanzeela Mazhar extended heartfelt gratitude to all attendees for their active engagement, underscoring the crucial role each participant plays in fostering a culture of gender equality and empowerment. The conference, enriched by Tanzeela's expertise and guidance, served as a meaningful platform for advancing the cause of women's empowerment.

Recommendations

Following the Women Empowerment Conference, several key recommendations have emerged to propel the agenda of breaking barriers and bridging divides for women's empowerment. These recommendations are informed by the diverse insights and discussions that took place during the conference:

Comprehensive Gender Policies

- Advocate for the development and implementation of comprehensive gender policies at institutional, organizational, and governmental levels.

- Ensure that these policies address the specific needs of women, considering factors such as healthcare, education, employment, and social protection.

Capacity Building and Training

- Prioritize gender sensitization and diversity training programs across various sectors, including academia, media, and corporate entities.
- Integrate training initiatives to raise awareness about gender issues, foster inclusivity, and challenge stereotypes and biases.

Collaborative Initiatives

- Encourage and facilitate collaborative initiatives between government bodies, civil society, and private organizations to collectively work towards women's empowerment.
- Establish platforms for cross-sectoral collaboration to maximize impact and address challenges comprehensively.

Digital Inclusion

- Promote digital inclusion initiatives that ensure women have access to and are proficient in utilizing digital technologies.
- Leverage digital platforms to enhance opportunities for women in education, entrepreneurship, and professional networking.

Support for Women in Leadership

- Implement policies that actively support and encourage women's participation and leadership in various sectors.
- Create mentorship programs and networking opportunities to facilitate the career growth of women in leadership positions.

Data Collection and Research

- Prioritize the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data to inform evidence-based policymaking.
- Support research initiatives that delve into the specific challenges faced by women in different contexts and sectors.

Advocacy and Awareness

- Sustain advocacy efforts to raise awareness about gender equality issues within communities, institutions, and policy circle.
- Utilize various communication channels, including media and social platforms, to amplify the importance of breaking gender barriers.

Inclusive Disaster Management Policies

- Incorporate gender-sensitive approaches into disaster management policies to address the unique needs of women and children during crises.
- Ensure that relief and recovery efforts prioritize inclusivity and safeguard the rights and well-being of women in disaster-affected areas.

These recommendations collectively underscore the need for holistic, collaborative, and sustained efforts to advance women's empowerment. Implementing these suggestions can contribute to the creation of a more inclusive and equitable society where women can thrive, breaking through barriers and overcoming divides.

Event Gallery



Media Coverage

VOM



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