



EMPOWERHER

POLICY ADVOCACY FOR GENDER
EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT

ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE REPORT

A PROJECT BY COPAIR

CENTER OF PAKISTAN AND
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS





EmpowerHER – A National Roadmap for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment!

The Roundtable Conference, organized by the Centre of Pakistan and International Relations (COPAIR), was a landmark initiative aimed at advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment. Held in Islamabad on 10th December, on International Human Rights Day, this groundbreaking event united policymakers, diplomats, thought leaders, and gender influencers to chart pathways for a more equitable and inclusive society.



COPAIR President also launched an A Chatbot to support women in distress by giving basic guidelines how to address those critical challenges. President COPAIR also shared 1 Million Women Digital skill programs covering the virtual internship and digital Certification for women.



A transformative dialogue addressing critical issues surrounding women's rights and gender equality, the event brought together a diverse group of 30 prominent gender influencers, including activists, artists, entrepreneurs, journalists, policymakers, and thought leaders from various industries and countries. These extraordinary women, renowned for their significant contributions to advancing gender equality, shared their perspectives and actionable strategies for fostering empowerment and inclusion.

The assembly of 30 gender influencers was a convergence of dynamic women, each a torchbearer of progress in her field. Among them were activists championing grassroots causes, policymakers shaping transformative legislation, entrepreneurs creating job opportunities, and educators breaking barriers in marginalized communities. Despite their diverse expertise, they shared a unified vision: a world free from discrimination where women thrive as equals.

Discussions centered on how collective efforts amplify individual voices and drive sustainable change. The participants acknowledged that collaboration is not just desirable but essential to overcome systemic challenges like cultural resistance, legislative gaps, and economic disparity.

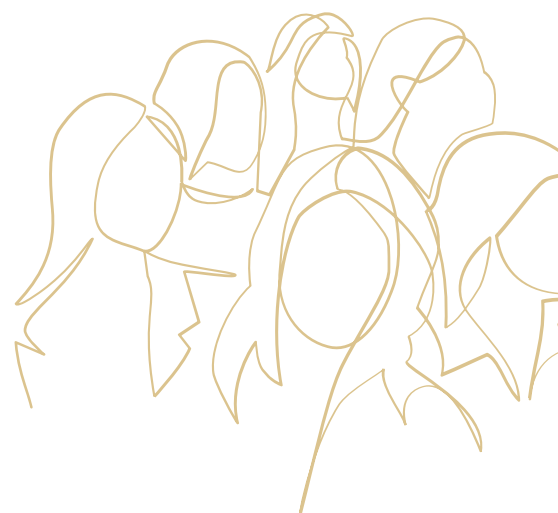




By aligning their efforts, they aimed to forge a global alliance that prioritizes gender equality in every sphere, from local governance to international development.

The roundtable underscored the importance of addressing barriers to gender equality through education, digital skills, public diplomacy, and peacebuilding. By convening diverse voices and stakeholders, EmpowerHER sought to build a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equity and to inspire collaborative action to tackle them.

As part of COPAIR's broader mission, the event reaffirmed its commitment to empowering women as leaders and changemakers in all spheres of life. It also served as a crucial step in promoting gender-inclusive policies and initiatives that align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).





Objectives:

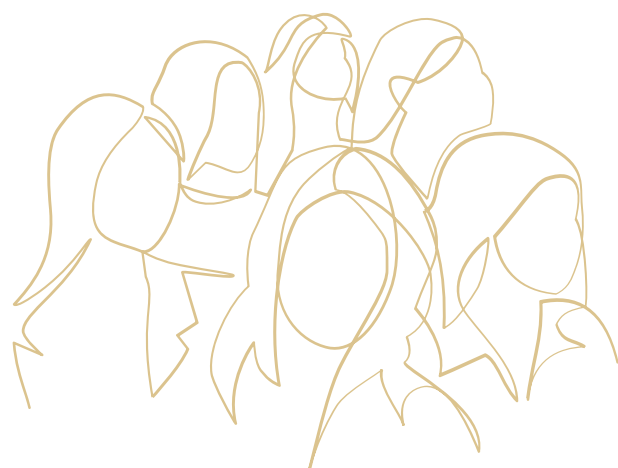
Facilitate Collaborative Dialogue: To create a platform for policymakers, gender influencers, and civil society to exchange insights and best practices for advancing gender equality.

Highlight Critical Pathways: To explore the roles of education, digital empowerment, public diplomacy, and peacebuilding in promoting women's leadership and inclusion.

Promote Policy Innovation: To identify and advocate for actionable strategies and policies that address barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Foster Diverse Partnerships: To strengthen networks and partnerships across sectors to drive collective action toward shared goals of equity and inclusion.

Inspire Transformative Action: To motivate participants to translate the discussions into measurable outcomes, ensuring sustained progress on gender equity initiatives.





A G E N D A

GENDER SENSITIVE GOVERNANCE AND
GENDER POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT
GENDER EQUALITY AND ACCESS TO
BASIC RIGHTS
GENDER ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
THROUGH DIGITAL AND FINANCIAL
INCLUSION

ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

Dec 10, 2024

Timings: 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm

VENUE: COPAIR HEAD OFFICE





The participants of the RoundTable

The EmpowerHER Roundtable Conference brought together a distinguished panel of speakers who delivered powerful insights on various aspects of gender equality and women's empowerment. Each speaker contributed their expertise to this transformative dialogue, highlighting critical pathways toward a more inclusive and equitable society.

Guest Speaker

Dilsad Senol

Dilsad Senol – Ambassador of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Her Excellency has a valuable experience and dedication to advancing gender equality in the diplomatic arena.



Speakers:

Taqdees Gillani

Taqdees Gillani is the Minister for Azad Kashmir Small Industries Corporation. As a dynamic leader and advocate for women's empowerment, Ms. Gillani has been instrumental in promoting inclusive governance and ensuring women's active participation in decision-making processes.





Senator Krishna Kumari

Senator Krishna Kumari is the first Hindu Thari woman to serve in the Senate of Pakistan. Senator Krishna Kumari's is in the BBC's 100 most Inspirational and Influential Women list of 2018. Senator Krishna tirelessly champions the rights of the oppressed.



Amna Munawwar Awan

Amna Munawwar Awan, President of the Centre of Pakistan and International Relations (COPAIR). She's a Forbes Award winner of "Women Leader in Innovation" and the Paris Award in the category of "Amazing Women." She is recognized for her contributions in youth and women's economic empowerment



Cristina Von Sperling Afridi

Cristina Von Sperling Afridi is the Founder and Chairperson of the Karim Khan Afridi Welfare Association (KKAUF) Pakistan.





Daniela Draugelis

Daniela Draugelis is the – Founder of Cultural Pathways LLC. As a intercultural trainer Daniela has made remarkable contributions in fostering global women's collaboration through cultural diplomacy, which has set a benchmark for inclusive leadership and intercultural understanding.



Saadia Sabir

Saadia Sabir is a Program Manager at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). Sadia's work at USIP reflects a deep commitment to promoting collaborative efforts that advance equality and sustainable peace.



Panelists

Samina Fazil

Samina Fazil is the Advisor to President FPCCI at Women's Affairs. Founder President at Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry.





Nighat Ahsan

Nighat Ahsan – Director of Communication and PR, Government of Pakistan. Her work highlights her commitment in developing communication strategies in raising awareness and advocating for gender equality across Pakistan.



Uzma Yaqoob

Uzma Yaqoob is the Founder & Executive Director of the Forum for Dignity Initiatives. She works on strategies for advancing the dignity and rights of marginalized women, particularly in challenging environments.



Barira Hanif

Barira Hanif is the Gender Specialist at the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Pakistan. She works on embedding gender equality into national development policies and planning for sustainable growth.





Sameena Nazir

Sameena Nazir is the Executive Director Promoting Human Rights in Rural Pakistan (PODA). She has 20 years of senior management experience and remained as Country Director for women rights empowerment programs in Afghanistan and Pakistan for 10 years.



Shaukat Mukadam

Shaukat Mukadam is the . Ex- Ambassador Embassy of Pakistan. He has served as Pakistan's ambassador to South Korea and Kazakhstan.



Shabana Arif

Shabana Arif is a National Gender Expert at the National Commission on the Status of Women. She been involved in social work for an approximate period of 27 years. She started her career in the development sector with renowned NGO Bedari in 1995.





Mahnoor Quraishi

Mahnoor Quraishi is a Broadcast Journalist. Her experience in Journalism emphasizes the critical importance of financial as well as emotional independence for women.



Moderator

Naureen Saleem Janjua

Naureen Saleem Janjua is a Renowned Broadcast Journalist at Geo News Network. She has previously worked at Beeper9999.



The commencement of the RoundTable

Naureen Saleem Janjua (Broadcast Journalist)

As the esteemed moderator of the EmpowerHER roundtable event, Naureen Saleem Janjua played a pivotal role in creating an atmosphere conducive to meaningful and impactful dialogue. With her expertise in broadcast journalism, she set the tone for the discussions, skillfully weaving together various perspectives on gender equality and women's empowerment.



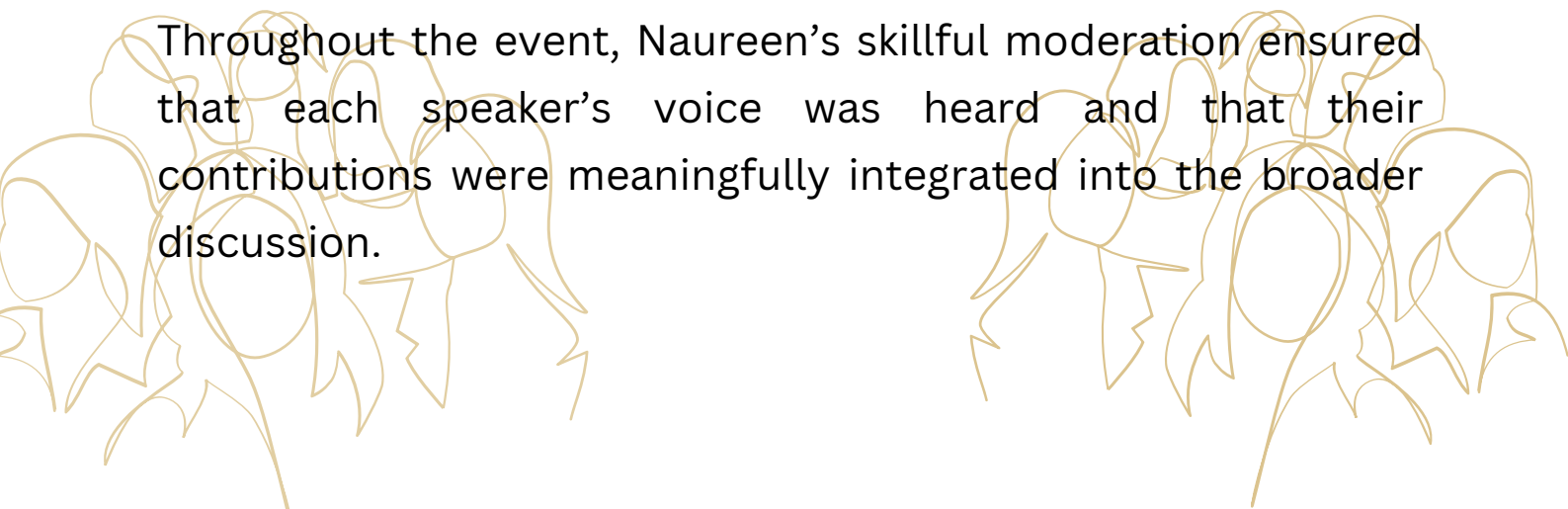


Her introduction to the EmpowerHER Initiative was both comprehensive and inspiring, as she articulated the critical need for addressing gender equality in contemporary society. Through her words, she highlighted the pressing challenges women continue to face across the world, from limited access to education and economic opportunities to systemic discrimination and gender-based violence.

Naureen emphasized the collective responsibility of all sectors—government, civil society, the private sector, and international organizations—to collaborate and create tangible solutions for gender equality.

In outlining the goals of the event, Naureen underscored the significance of coming together to not only discuss but also to implement strategies for real-world change. She passionately conveyed the belief that dialogue is essential, but action is imperative. This roundtable, she noted, was an opportunity to shift from rhetoric to measurable impact, urging all stakeholders to take concrete steps to advance gender equality in their respective domains.

Throughout the event, Naureen's skillful moderation ensured that each speaker's voice was heard and that their contributions were meaningfully integrated into the broader discussion.





She created a balanced environment, allowing each expert to present their perspectives on the various facets of gender equality—whether through policy, education, digital empowerment, or political participation.

Her strategic approach encouraged speakers to not only reflect on their personal experiences and expertise but also to share actionable solutions that could make a difference on a local, national, and global scale. Naureen's facilitation provided clarity and structure, ensuring that the audience walked away with a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality.

By the end of the event, Naureen had successfully brought out the best in every speaker, allowing each of them to share their valuable insights in an engaging and impactful manner. Her leadership as a moderator ensured that the discussions were not only insightful but also actionable, reinforcing the key message of the event: gender equality requires collective commitment and concrete action.



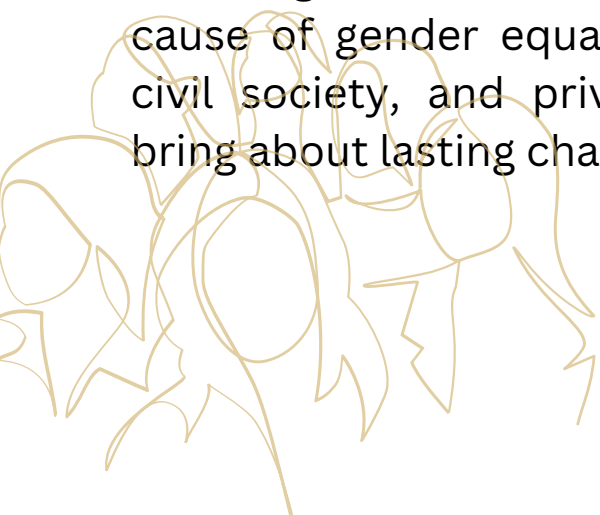


Amna Munawwar Awan- President of the Centre of Pakistan and International Relations (COPAIR)

Ms. Amna Munawwar Awan, President of the Centre of Pakistan and International Relations (COPAIR), opened the EmpowerHER event with a powerful welcome speech that set an ambitious and visionary tone for the day. As the event's host and a passionate advocate for gender equality, Ms. Awan addressed the critical need for gender parity, framing it not as a goal but as a fundamental human right central to sustainable development. Her speech emphasized that achieving gender equality is no longer just a matter of advocacy—it is a matter of urgency for building a just, inclusive, and prosperous society.

In her remarks, Ms. Awan reflected on the significant global momentum for women's empowerment, underscoring the positive strides made in recent years to address gender disparities. However, she also acknowledged that much more needs to be done to ensure that women, especially in marginalized and underserved communities, have equal access to opportunities, resources, and decision-making spaces.

She reiterated that COPAIR, through its work, is committed to fostering collaborations and partnerships that champion the cause of gender equality and that every sector—government, civil society, and private enterprise—must work together to bring about lasting change.





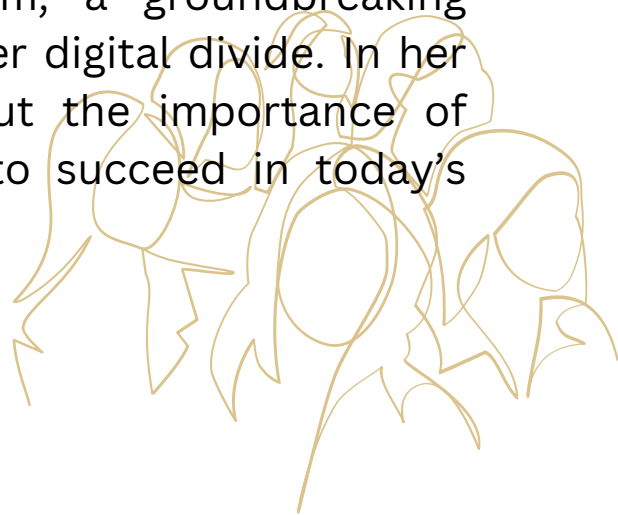
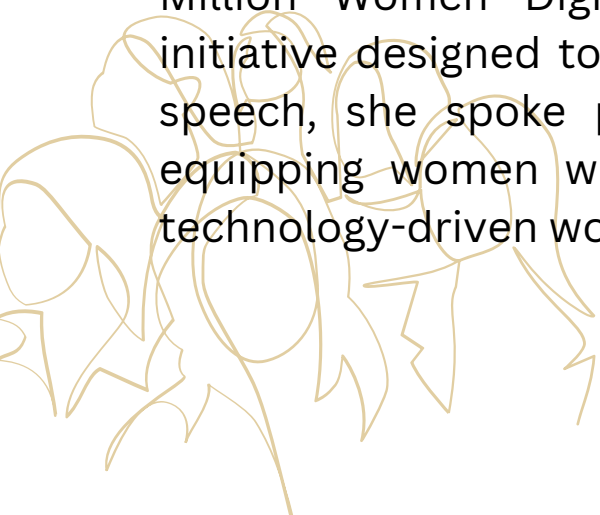


Her speech was not only about raising awareness but also about taking action. She emphasized the importance of collaboration across all sectors, asserting that true change requires the collective effort of governments, civil society, and the private sector. She called for actionable policies, programs, and initiatives that put women at the center of social, economic, and political development.

A particularly impactful moment in her address was the launch of A Chatbot, a digital initiative aimed at supporting women in distress. Recognizing the critical need for accessible support for women facing gender-based violence, legal challenges, and other forms of oppression, Ms. Awan introduced the chatbot as a timely and innovative tool. Designed to provide women with basic guidelines and resources on how to address critical challenges, the chatbot helps them navigate complex issues, such as understanding legal rights, seeking help in cases of domestic abuse, and accessing support services.

This digital initiative empowers women by offering them a resource that is accessible anytime, anywhere, and serves as a critical first step towards finding the help they need.

Furthermore, Ms. Awan shared the exciting launch of the Million Women Digital Skills Program, a groundbreaking initiative designed to bridge the gender digital divide. In her speech, she spoke passionately about the importance of equipping women with digital skills to succeed in today's technology-driven world.





Through this program, COPAIR aims to provide virtual internships and digital certifications to women, giving them the tools they need to thrive in the digital economy.

The program focuses on helping women develop critical digital skills, from coding and web development to social media management and digital marketing, enabling them to access better career opportunities and financial independence.

The Million Women Digital Skills Program is part of COPAIR's broader mission to empower women through education and technology. As Ms. Awan outlined, in today's increasingly digital world, digital literacy is not just a skill—it's a necessity for economic mobility and social empowerment. Through this initiative, COPAIR seeks to uplift women across Pakistan and beyond, enabling them to participate fully in the global digital economy and take on leadership roles in technology and innovation.

Through both the chatbot and the digital skills program, Ms. Awan demonstrated COPAIR's commitment to driving tangible change for women, emphasizing that these digital tools are part of a larger strategy to provide women with the resources, knowledge, and support they need to overcome barriers and succeed in all aspects of life.

Ms. Awan's welcome address was both a call to action and a commitment to continuous progress. She set a powerful tone for the rest of the event, reinforcing the message that gender equality is not just a dream but a necessary component of a better future for all.



Dilsad Senol -Ambassador of the Office of Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

As a distinguished guest speaker, Dilsad Senol, Ambassador of the Office of the Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), delivered a compelling address that captivated the audience with her insights on Public Diplomacy and Gender Equality. With a wealth of experience in diplomatic relations and a deep commitment to advancing gender equity, Ambassador Senol brought a unique perspective to the EmpowerHER roundtable, highlighting the critical intersections of diplomacy, gender rights, and empowerment.



Ambassador Senol began her speech by emphasizing the importance of international cooperation in addressing gender-based disparities. She noted that while progress has been made in many regions, the global gender equality movement must continue to be reinforced through consistent action and collective will. Her remarks centered on the role of diplomacy and foreign policy in shaping global narratives about women's rights and the fundamental necessity of empowering women in all sectors of society.

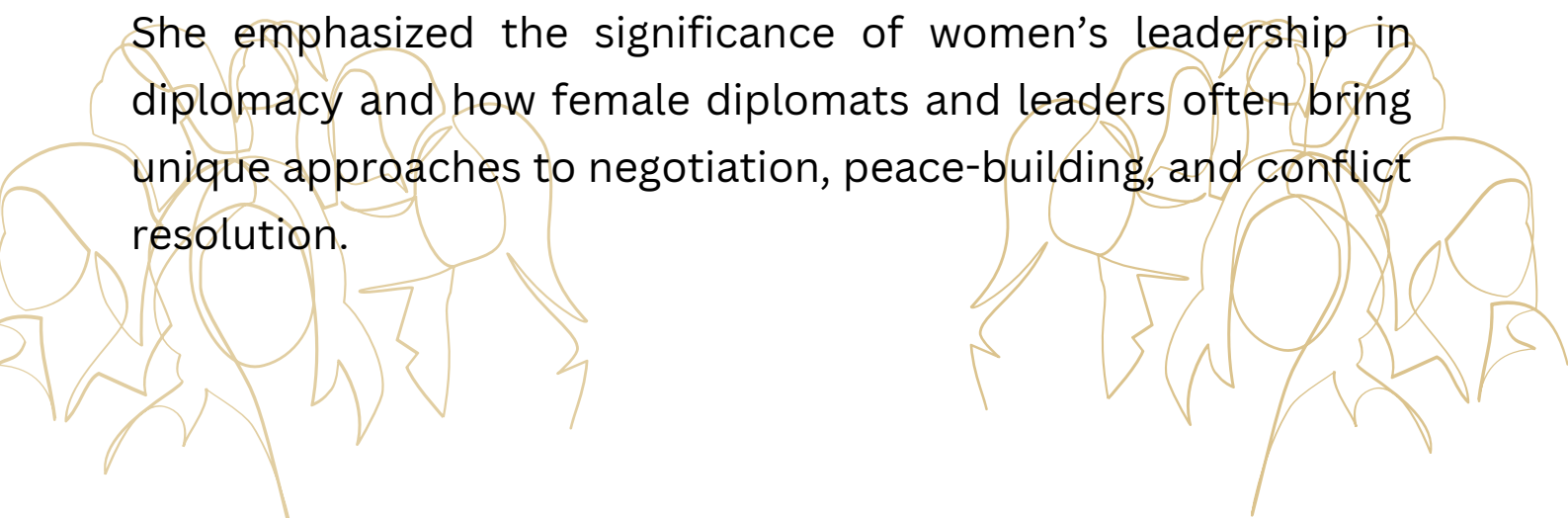


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Ambassador Senol also highlighted how gender equality is not just an issue for women but for all of humanity. She stressed that when women are empowered, society as a whole benefits—economically, socially, and politically. Her speech echoed the importance of creating a world where women can be leaders, innovators, and change-makers, without facing the systemic barriers that have historically held them back. Drawing from her own experiences in diplomacy, she shared the ways in which gender equality has played a role in international relations, and how the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus has worked to ensure that women's voices are heard and represented in governance and policymaking.

She emphasized the significance of women's leadership in diplomacy and how female diplomats and leaders often bring unique approaches to negotiation, peace-building, and conflict resolution.





Ambassador Senol's speech underscored that the world is witnessing a shift where women are stepping into roles that have traditionally been dominated by men, and this transition is not just beneficial for gender equality but for the global political landscape as a whole.

One of the key themes that Ambassador Senol touched upon was the idea of using public diplomacy as a tool for advancing women's rights globally. She emphasized the importance of building bridges between nations to ensure that gender equality is not only a national priority but a global one. Public diplomacy, she argued, plays a vital role in raising awareness, changing perceptions, and advocating for policies that support women's empowerment across borders.

Ambassador Senol concluded her address by calling on all participants to take action and become advocates for gender equality in their own spheres of influence. She encouraged the attendees to use their platforms—whether in government, business, education, or civil society—to promote women's rights and create opportunities for women to thrive.

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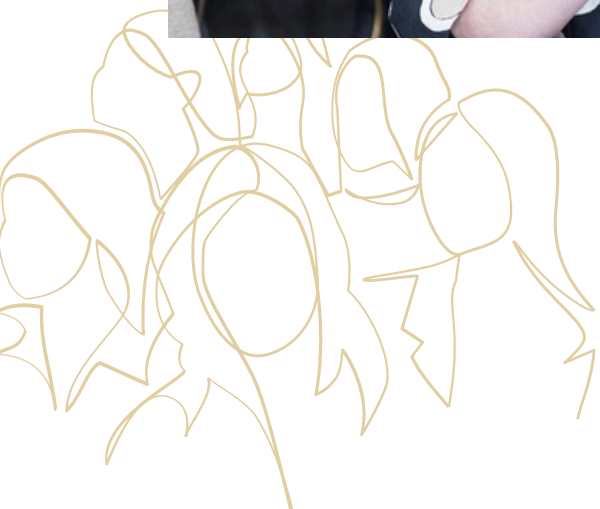
Her speech resonated deeply with the audience, reinforcing the idea that achieving gender equality requires a multifaceted approach, where diplomacy, advocacy, and grassroots efforts come together to drive change.



Through her powerful words and commitment to gender equality, Ambassador Dilsad Senol inspired all present to think critically about their role in advancing women's empowerment and to actively contribute to the creation of a more just and equitable world for women everywhere.

Daniela Draugelis - Founder of Cultural Pathways LLC

Daniela Draugelis, Founder of Cultural Pathways LLC, delivered an impassioned and thought-provoking speech on the theme "Women's Rights are Human Rights." In her address, she emphasized that the rights of women are not separate or secondary to human rights, but are an inherent and integral part of the universal human rights framework.





Drawing from her vast experience in the field of human rights and global advocacy, Daniela framed the conversation around the fundamental principle that gender equality is not a privilege but a basic human right that must be recognized and upheld by all societies, governments, and institutions.

Daniela began her speech by acknowledging the historical and contemporary struggles that women face around the world, particularly those living in marginalized communities where their rights are systematically denied. She reminded the audience that women's rights violations—ranging from gender-based violence to unequal access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities—are pervasive and must be addressed at every level. She underscored that this is not just a “women's issue” but a global human rights issue that requires collective action from all sectors of society.

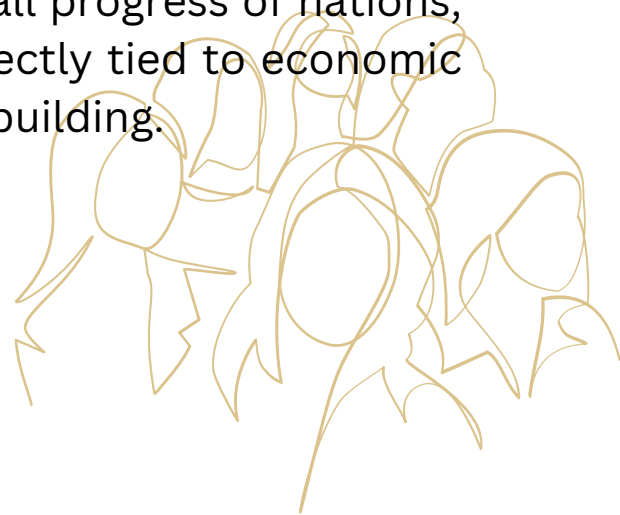
One of the key points Draugelis raised was the need for a shift in societal mindsets, urging that the world must move beyond the traditional view that women's rights are negotiable or conditional. She emphasized that true gender equality can only be achieved when societies recognize and respect the rights of women in the same way that they recognize and respect the rights of men. This fundamental shift, she argued, requires a cultural transformation where women are seen as equal participants in every aspect of life, from the political arena to the business world, and from the home to the community.



Draugelis highlighted several successful global initiatives that have made significant strides in advancing women's rights. She spoke about the role of international organizations, advocacy groups, and grassroots movements in creating change and raising awareness about the importance of women's rights. Drawing attention to the global #MeToo movement, she celebrated how it has sparked conversations about sexual harassment and gender violence, creating a ripple effect of empowerment for women everywhere.

She also mentioned the critical importance of legal frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which provide a blueprint for governments to protect and promote the rights of women and girls.

She urged the international community to unite in ensuring that women are provided with the same opportunities, protections, and rights as men. She emphasized the importance of international cooperation and solidarity in achieving gender equality. Drawing from her experiences working with diverse communities, Daniela shared stories of hope and resilience, illustrating how when women are empowered and provided with equal rights, entire societies thrive. She stressed the undeniable link between the empowerment of women and the overall progress of nations, highlighting how gender equality is directly tied to economic development, social justice, and peacebuilding.

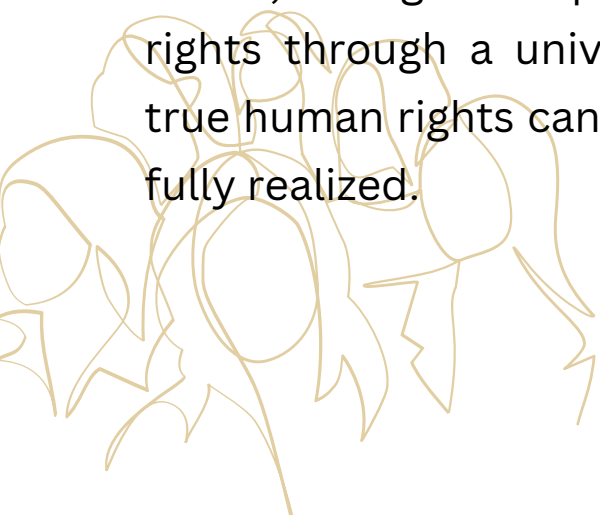




Draugelis also spoke about the importance of education and awareness in advancing women's rights. She called on governments, institutions, and individuals to take proactive steps in educating both men and women about the importance of gender equality and the benefits it brings to society as a whole. She also emphasized the need for continued advocacy and policy reforms that would ensure women's rights are legally protected and implemented.

In her concluding remarks, Daniela Draugelis reminded the audience that women's rights are human rights, and that the fight for gender equality must be at the forefront of global human rights advocacy. She urged all attendees to take personal responsibility in supporting initiatives that promote women's empowerment and to continue challenging the systems that perpetuate gender inequality.

Her speech left a lasting impact on the audience, reinforcing the idea that achieving gender equality is not a distant goal, but a shared responsibility that requires urgent action from individuals, communities, and governments alike. Through her words, Draugelis inspired everyone present to view women's rights through a universal lens—one that acknowledges that true human rights cannot be achieved until women's rights are fully realized.



Cristina Von Sperling Afridi- Founder and Chairperson of the Karim Khan Afridi Welfare Association (KKAUF) Pakistan

Cristina Von Sperling Afridi, the Founder and Chairperson of the Karim Khan Afridi Welfare Association (KKAUF) Pakistan, delivered a compelling and thought-provoking address on the subject of "Empowerment of Young Girls through Training and Mentoring." Her speech was a cornerstone of the session, providing actionable insights and inspiring the audience to envision a future where every young girl has the opportunity to reach her full potential.



Ms. Afridi began by painting a vivid picture of the challenges that young girls in Pakistan face, including limited access to education, social and cultural constraints, and the pervasive issue of gender-based violence. She emphasized the need for a holistic approach to empowerment—one that combines education, skill-building, and emotional support. "Empowerment," she stated, "is not just about education or economic opportunities; it's about enabling girls to make choices that are free from fear and societal pressure."



She delved into the transformative power of training programs tailored specifically for young girls, highlighting their role in building self-confidence, critical thinking skills, and technical expertise. Ms. Afridi shared success stories from KKAUF's initiatives, where girls from underserved communities were provided with life skills training, vocational education, and mentorship.

These programs, she noted, not only improved the girls' career prospects but also had a ripple effect on their families and communities.

Ms. Afridi also explored the critical role of mentorship, describing it as the "bridge" between potential and achievement. She spoke passionately about how mentorship gives young girls the guidance and support they need to overcome obstacles, make informed decisions, and navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing world. She proposed creating a national mentorship framework that connects professional women from various fields with young girls who aspire to break free from traditional roles and stereotypes.

A key aspect of her speech was the intersection of empowerment and mental health. Ms. Afridi highlighted how unresolved mental health issues, often exacerbated by societal pressures, can hinder a young girl's ability to achieve her goals. She stressed the importance of integrating mental health education and support services into training programs, ensuring that girls are equipped to deal with the emotional challenges they face. KKAUF's initiatives, she noted, include counseling and awareness sessions that address issues such as anxiety, stress, and self-esteem.

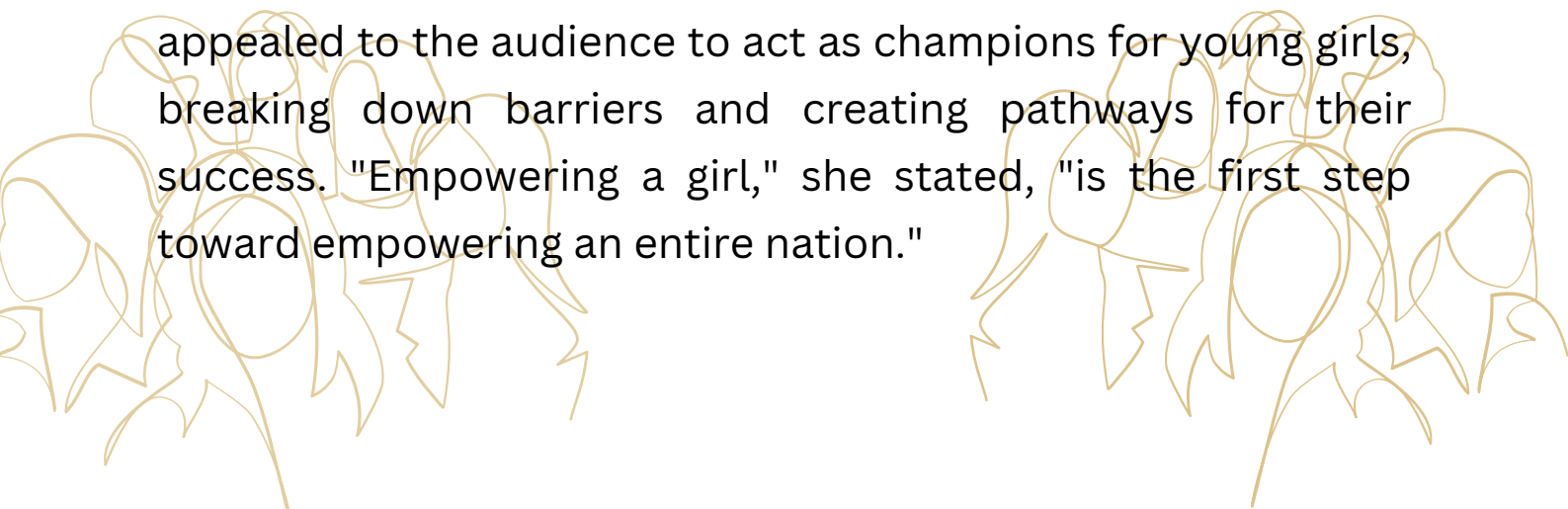


Ms. Afridi also touched on the importance of creating safe spaces for young girls—environments where they can express themselves freely, learn without fear, and interact with positive role models. She emphasized that these spaces are critical for fostering creativity, collaboration, and leadership skills among girls.

In addition to local challenges, Ms. Afridi linked her message to the global movement for women's empowerment. She pointed out that empowering young girls is not just a moral imperative but also an economic and social necessity.

Studies have shown that countries with higher levels of gender equality tend to experience stronger economic growth and more cohesive societies. "When we empower young girls," she said, "we are laying the foundation for a future that benefits everyone."

Ms. Afridi concluded her speech with a powerful call to action. She urged policymakers, educators, civil society organizations, and private sector leaders to invest in scalable and sustainable training and mentoring programs. She appealed to the audience to act as champions for young girls, breaking down barriers and creating pathways for their success. "Empowering a girl," she stated, "is the first step toward empowering an entire nation."





Her address resonated deeply with the audience, leaving a lasting impact. It underscored the importance of collective action and the need for innovative approaches to empower young girls, ensuring they become confident leaders, changemakers, and equal participants in shaping Pakistan's future.

Taqdees Gillani - Minister for Azad Kashmir Small Industries Corporation

Taqdees Gillani, the Minister for Azad Kashmir Small Industries Corporation, delivered a thought-provoking speech on the critical topic of Women's Political Empowerment in Decision-Making. She emphasized the challenges and opportunities related to empowering women politically, asserting that their active participation in governance is crucial for the development of a just and equitable society. Ms. Gillani underscored the necessity of creating an enabling environment where women can take on leadership roles and influence policy decisions at every level of government.





In her address, Ms. Gillani discussed the significant barriers that women face in entering politics, from societal biases to institutional hurdles. She pointed out that women, particularly in rural and conservative areas, often encounter cultural and political barriers that limit their opportunities for political engagement. These obstacles, she argued, prevent women from contributing their perspectives and ideas to decision-making processes that directly impact their lives and communities.

Ms. Gillani stressed the importance of reforms that would empower women to run for office, participate in legislative processes, and hold key positions in government. She called for greater representation of women in political parties and emphasized the need for political platforms that actively support women's candidacies. For women to effectively contribute to policymaking, she highlighted the importance of providing them with the necessary tools—including education, training, and mentorship—to navigate the political landscape.

She also highlighted the significance of legislative reforms to ensure that women's voices are heard in decision-making processes. Ms. Gillani argued that these reforms should include measures such as quotas for women in elected offices, stronger legal frameworks for the protection of women's political rights, and increased support for women in political campaigns. These changes, she explained, would help dismantle the long-standing political barriers that have traditionally hindered women's active participation in governance.



In addition to policy reforms, Ms. Gillani pointed out that women's political empowerment also depends on changing societal attitudes toward women in leadership roles. She spoke about the need for cultural shifts that promote women as political leaders, role models, and decision-makers. This involves challenging stereotypes and promoting the idea that women are just as capable of holding office and making critical decisions as men.

Ms. Gillani's speech was a powerful call for collective action to ensure women's political empowerment. She concluded by urging all stakeholders—governments, political parties, civil society organizations, and communities—to work together to create an inclusive political environment where women are not only participants but leaders in shaping the policies that affect their lives. Her remarks were a timely reminder that political empowerment is essential for women to realize their full potential and contribute to a society that values equity, justice, and inclusion.





Ms. Saadia Sabir - Program Manager at the United States Institute of Peace

Ms. Saadia Sabir, Program Manager at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), played a crucial role in facilitating a dynamic and thought-provoking conversation among the distinguished participants. As the moderator of this session, her expertise was key in guiding the dialogue toward actionable solutions and fostering a collaborative atmosphere where voices from diverse sectors—government, civil society, and international organizations—were heard and valued.

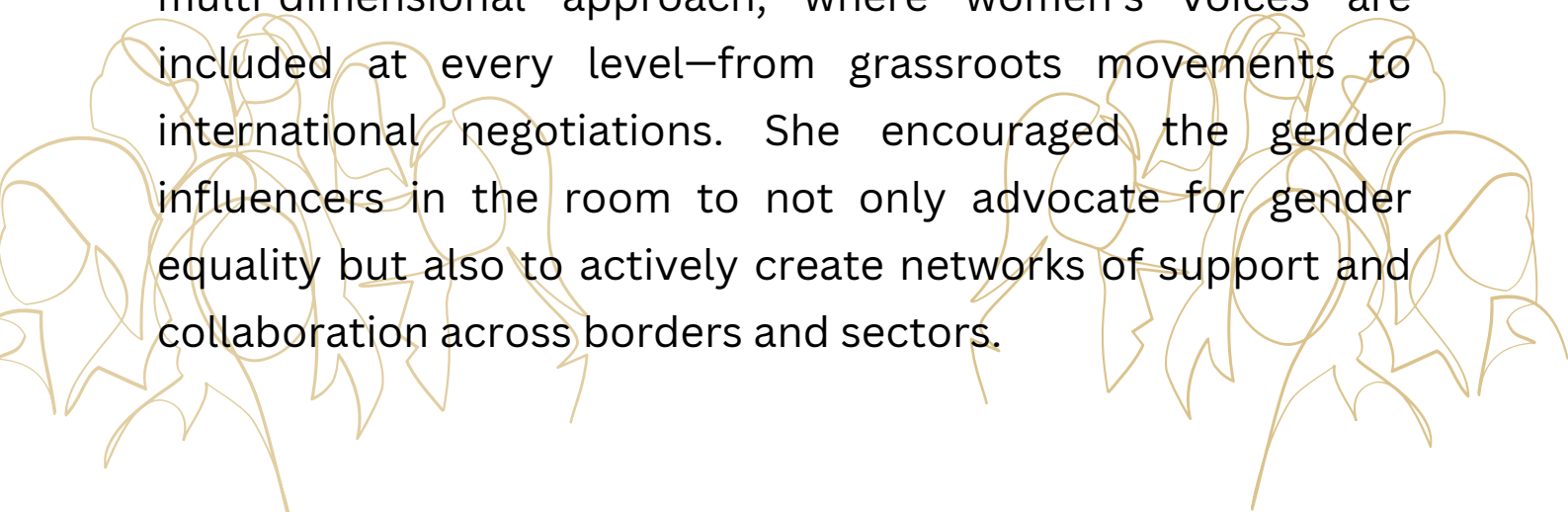




She emphasized that women's empowerment is not only a matter of social justice but also a fundamental prerequisite for establishing lasting peace and stability. Her insights encouraged participants to view gender equality as an essential element of any peacebuilding process, stressing that societies can only be truly peaceful when women are fully involved in decision-making and conflict resolution.

Throughout the session, Ms. Sabir guided the conversation towards cross-sector collaboration, urging the need for greater coordination between governmental bodies, civil society organizations, and international agencies to create more inclusive, gender-responsive policies. She facilitated a lively exchange of ideas on how to implement effective strategies for empowering women within peacebuilding frameworks, with a focus on education, economic empowerment, and political participation as key drivers for creating sustainable peace.

One of the key takeaways from Ms. Sabir's session was the understanding that achieving gender equality requires a multi-dimensional approach, where women's voices are included at every level—from grassroots movements to international negotiations. She encouraged the gender influencers in the room to not only advocate for gender equality but also to actively create networks of support and collaboration across borders and sectors.



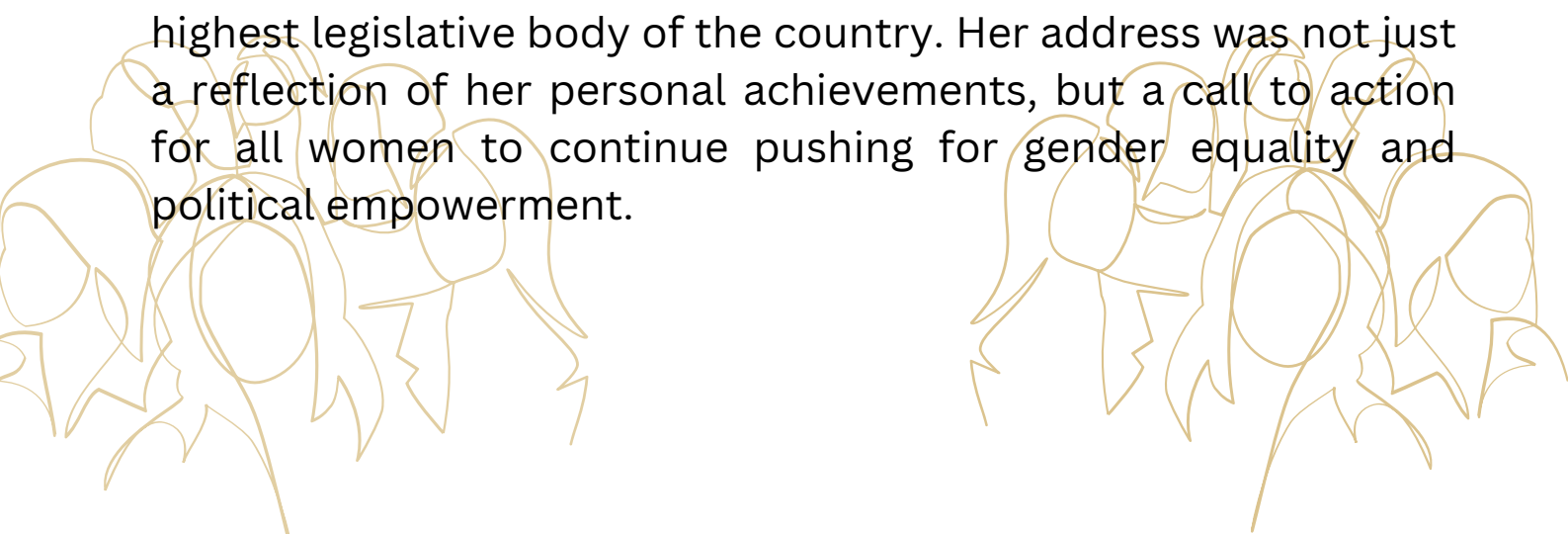


Ms. Sabir also highlighted the importance of measuring the impact of gender equality initiatives, emphasizing that it is crucial to track and evaluate the outcomes of programs designed to empower women and promote peace. Her approach to the session was solution-oriented, focusing on real-world applications of the discussions and encouraging participants to take concrete steps in their own spheres of influence to drive change.

By the end of the session, there was a shared sense of commitment among the attendees to strengthen the connections between gender equality and peacebuilding efforts, ensuring that women continue to play an integral role in creating societies that are not only more equitable but also more peaceful.

Krishna Kumari – Senator at Senate of Pakistan

Senator Krishna Kumari, the first Hindu Thari woman to serve in Pakistan's Senate, delivered the concluding remarks at the event, leaving a lasting impact with her powerful words and inspiring journey. As a trailblazer who overcame numerous obstacles as a woman from a marginalized community, Senator Kumari shared her deeply personal story of perseverance, resilience, and the significant challenges she faced to rise to the highest legislative body of the country. Her address was not just a reflection of her personal achievements, but a call to action for all women to continue pushing for gender equality and political empowerment.





In her speech, Senator Kumari emphasized the vital importance of representation in political spheres, especially for women from underrepresented and marginalized communities. She expressed that the absence of women's voices in policy-making and legislative processes perpetuates inequality and fails to address the diverse needs of society. She stressed that increasing women's participation in political leadership is not merely a matter of fairness, but a necessity for shaping policies that truly reflect the values of justice, equity, and inclusivity.

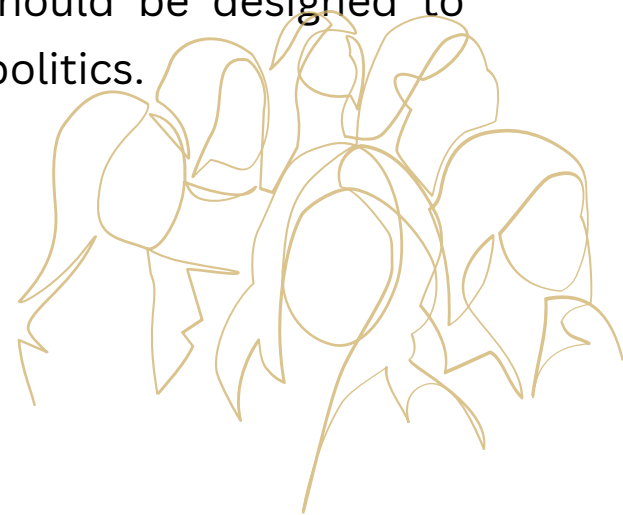
Senator Kumari's own journey from a rural community to the Senate is a testament to the transformative power of political engagement for women, particularly in regions where gender roles and cultural norms often limit women's access to power and decision-making roles.



She shared how her position as a senator has allowed her to advocate for the needs of vulnerable communities, particularly women and minorities, who often remain invisible in the halls of power. She also spoke about the challenges she has faced within the political system, including the systemic barriers that women encounter in politics—such as gender bias, discrimination, and the lack of support networks for women in governance.

As a politician who represents the interests of the marginalized, Senator Kumari highlighted that having women in positions of power is essential for achieving societal transformation. She explained that women bring unique perspectives to the policy-making process that are often rooted in empathy, care, and social justice. By ensuring women's inclusion in political decision-making, not only are gender disparities addressed, but societal issues such as poverty, violence, education, and healthcare are given greater attention and importance.

Senator Kumari also spoke about the need for legal reforms that create a more inclusive political environment for women, emphasizing that policies and laws should be designed to facilitate women's full participation in politics.

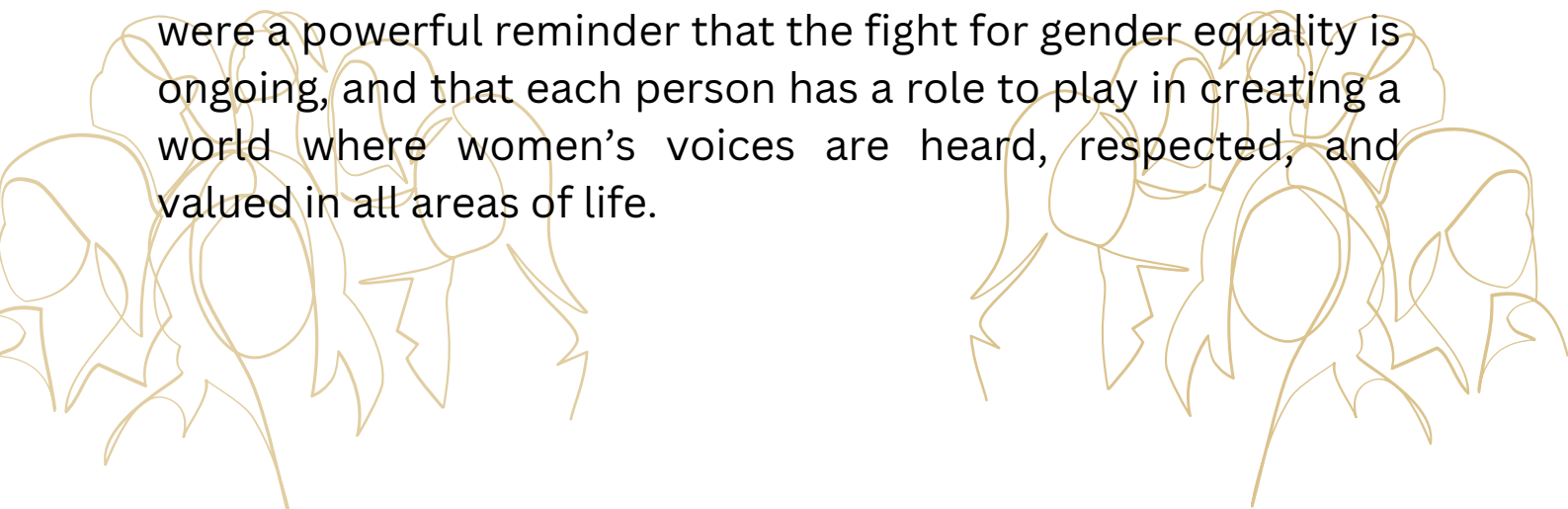




This includes measures such as gender quotas, mentorship programs, and capacity-building initiatives that prepare women to run for office, take leadership roles, and become effective policymakers. Her call for political reforms was a call to dismantle the barriers that have traditionally hindered women's involvement in governance and to build a future where women's leadership is the norm rather than the exception.

She also made a passionate plea for the continued support and solidarity of both men and women in advocating for gender equality in politics. She underscored that gender equality is not a women's issue alone but a human rights issue that requires the collective effort of all sectors of society, from political leaders to civil society organizations, to ensure the full participation of women in all aspects of public life.

In her final remarks, Senator Kumari reaffirmed her commitment to the cause of women's empowerment and gender equality and called on all the participants to carry forward the momentum generated by the discussions at the roundtable. She urged them to continue their advocacy for women's rights, whether in the political sphere, the workplace, or in society at large. Senator Kumari's words were a powerful reminder that the fight for gender equality is ongoing, and that each person has a role to play in creating a world where women's voices are heard, respected, and valued in all areas of life.





Her concluding message was both inspiring and hopeful: “Together, we can dismantle the political and social structures that hold women back and build a future where women can equally share in the opportunities and responsibilities of political leadership and governance. Let’s make the change we wish to see in the world.”

Interactive Session: Engaging Policymakers, Diplomats, Government Officials, and Civil Society

The Interactive Session was a dynamic and engaging platform where a diverse group of experts and advocates, including members of parliament, diplomats, government officials, and civil society representatives, came together to share their insights and collaborate on the advancement of gender equality. This session served as the perfect conclusion to the day’s discussions, allowing for deeper engagement and a collaborative approach to finding actionable solutions. Facilitated by Ms. Saadia Sabir, Program Manager at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), the session created an open space for all participants to reflect on the key issues raised throughout the event and engage in meaningful dialogue.



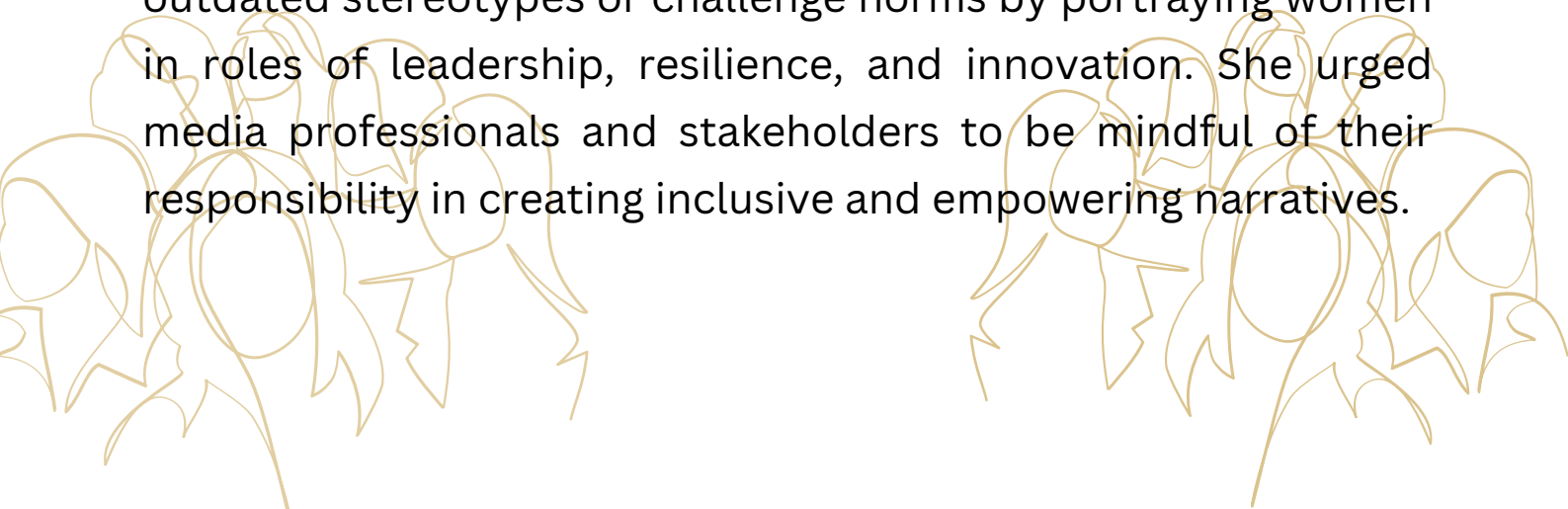


Nighat Ahsan – Director of Communication and PR, Government of Pakistan

Nighat Ahsan, the Director of Communication and Public Relations for the Government of Pakistan, delivered a compelling speech emphasizing the pivotal role of communication in addressing gender equality and elevating the visibility of women's issues in Pakistan. She began by highlighting the transformative power of media and communication in shaping societal perceptions, particularly in the way women's roles are viewed within society and policy-making frameworks.

Ms. Ahsan underscored the need for a comprehensive communication strategy that not only informs but also inspires societal change. She explained how both traditional media—including television, radio, and print—and digital platforms like social media and online forums have a significant influence on public opinion.

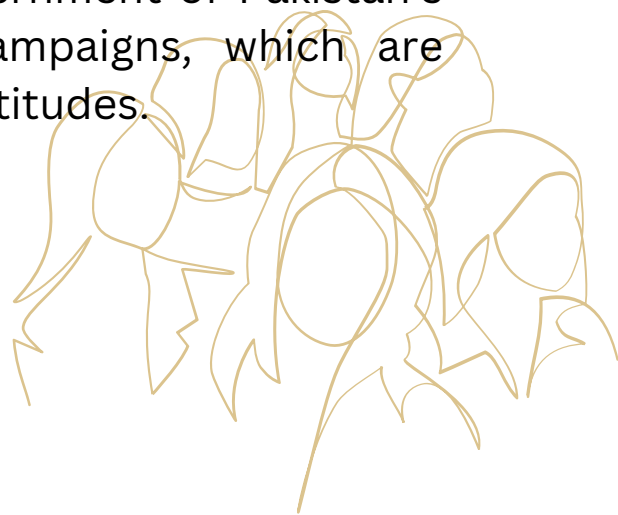
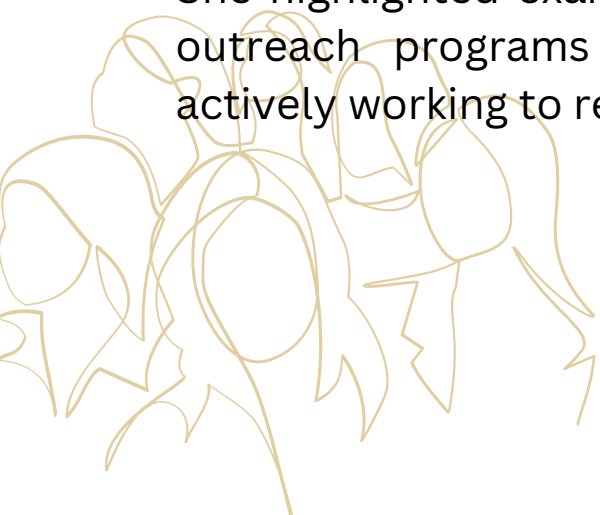
According to her, these mediums can either perpetuate outdated stereotypes or challenge norms by portraying women in roles of leadership, resilience, and innovation. She urged media professionals and stakeholders to be mindful of their responsibility in creating inclusive and empowering narratives.





Central to her speech was the assertion that government initiatives aimed at addressing gender disparities will only be successful if they are accompanied by well-designed communication strategies. Ms. Ahsan emphasized that effective communication ensures that both women and men are aware of their rights, the challenges they face, and the opportunities available for empowerment. She shared insights into how communication campaigns have proven successful in mobilizing communities to participate in national efforts for gender equality.

She highlighted examples of the Government of Pakistan's outreach programs and national campaigns, which are actively working to reshape societal attitudes.





These campaigns aim to promote women's education, economic participation, and political inclusion, showcasing women's achievements and breaking down barriers. She noted that programs such as Awareness Drives for Women's Legal Rights and Digital Literacy Initiatives for Women are supported by targeted media efforts to amplify their impact.

Ms. Ahsan also delved into the importance of inclusive storytelling. She advocated for more diverse representations of women in media, highlighting the need to go beyond urban-centric narratives to include the stories of rural women, women with disabilities, and women from marginalized communities. These stories, she argued, are essential for fostering a sense of shared purpose and inspiring collective action.

Concluding her address, Ms. Ahsan called for greater collaboration between the government, civil society, and media organizations to ensure that communication strategies are gender-sensitive and rooted in cultural contexts. She urged the media to act as a catalyst for change by aligning its narratives with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to gender equality and women's empowerment.



Her speech resonated with the audience, serving as a reminder that communication is not just a tool but a powerful force for social transformation. It can bridge gaps, challenge biases, and ultimately contribute to a more equitable society where women's rights are seen as human rights.

Uzma Yaqoob – Founder & Executive Director, Forum for Dignity Initiatives

Uzma Yaqoob delivered an insightful and passionate speech focusing on the critical intersection of gender-based violence (GBV) and economic empowerment, shedding light on the dual challenges women face in achieving independence and security. Her address was both a call to action and a roadmap for creating sustainable solutions to address these intertwined issues.





Ms. Yaqoob began by emphasizing the pervasive nature of gender-based violence and its far-reaching consequences, particularly on women's mental, emotional, and economic well-being. She described how GBV often creates a cycle of disempowerment, trapping women in poverty and dependency, and highlighted the need for holistic approaches to break this cycle. "Economic empowerment," she said, "is not just about financial independence—it's about giving women the confidence, tools, and autonomy to reclaim their lives and make decisions free from fear and coercion."

Drawing from her experience, Uzma detailed the challenges faced by women in rural and underserved areas, where cultural norms and systemic barriers often exacerbate their vulnerability.

She called for grassroots-level interventions that cater to the unique needs of these women, ensuring that solutions are localized, culturally relevant, and impactful. She shared examples of programs that have successfully provided women with skills training, microfinance opportunities, and entrepreneurial support, enabling them to create sustainable livelihoods.

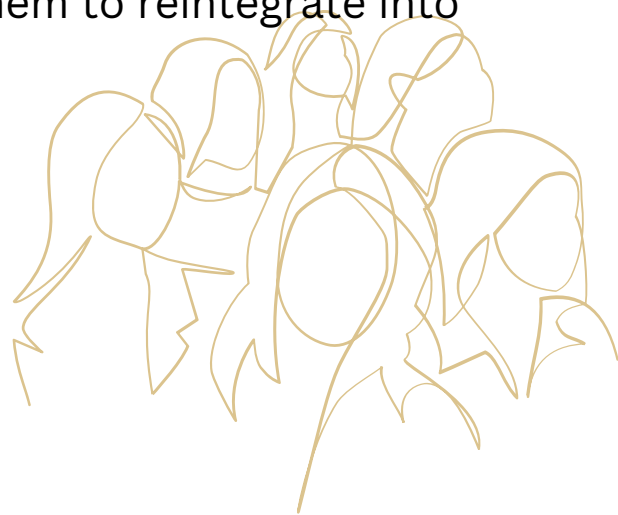
Ms. Yaqoob stressed the importance of integrating economic empowerment initiatives with GBV support services. She proposed the establishment of comprehensive centers that offer women a safe space to receive vocational training, counseling, and legal aid under one roof. These centers, she argued, would serve as a lifeline for women seeking to escape abusive environments and build a secure future for themselves and their children.



Uzma also highlighted the role of community engagement in addressing GBV and promoting economic empowerment. She emphasized the need to involve men, religious leaders, and local influencers in changing mindsets and fostering an environment of support for women's rights. "Empowering women is not a women's issue alone," she stated. "It is a societal issue that requires the collective effort of everyone."

She further discussed the importance of government and policy-level interventions to support economic empowerment as a strategy to combat GBV. Uzma called for increased investment in women-focused programs, including subsidies for women-led businesses, access to markets, and streamlined processes for women to enter formal employment sectors. She urged policymakers to ensure that these programs reach the most marginalized women, bridging the gap between urban and rural areas.

A particularly powerful segment of her speech revolved around the role of education in economic empowerment. Uzma underscored that vocational training and digital literacy programs must be tailored to meet the specific needs of women survivors of GBV. She pointed out that such programs not only equip women with marketable skills but also serve as confidence-building tools that enable them to reintegrate into society with dignity.





In her closing remarks, Uzma Yaqoob highlighted the importance of monitoring and evaluating empowerment initiatives to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability. She urged organizations and stakeholders to collaborate, share best practices, and scale successful models to reach more women. "Economic empowerment is a pathway to freedom and resilience," she said. "When we empower women, we are not just changing individual lives; we are transforming communities and shaping a future that is equitable and just."

Uzma's speech was met with widespread acclaim from the audience, resonating with participants from diverse sectors. Her message reinforced the urgent need for integrated approaches that address both the economic and social dimensions of gender-based violence, paving the way for women to lead lives free from oppression and full of opportunities.

Barira Hanif – Gender Specialist, Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Pakistan

Barira Hanif delivered an insightful and thought-provoking presentation on the Government of Pakistan's gender strategies, showcasing the efforts being made to address women's issues at the national level. As a representative of the Ministry of Planning and Development, Ms. Hanif provided a comprehensive overview of the initiatives aimed at fostering gender equality through inclusive policies and gender-responsive budgeting.





Ms. Hanif began by outlining the government's commitment to integrating gender considerations into all aspects of national development plans. She explained how the Ministry is working to ensure that women are not only beneficiaries but also active contributors to Pakistan's socio-economic progress. "A gender-equal Pakistan is critical for the realization of our Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," she asserted, emphasizing that economic and political participation of women plays a pivotal role in achieving targets related to poverty reduction, education, and economic growth.

Highlighting the importance of gender-responsive budgeting, Ms. Hanif elaborated on how the government is allocating resources to initiatives that directly address women's needs. She cited specific programs focusing on women's health, education, entrepreneurship, and violence prevention, ensuring that financial investments are targeted and impactful. These measures, she noted, are designed to close the gender gap and create a more equitable society.

A key point in Ms. Hanif's presentation was the emphasis on data-driven policies. She explained that the Ministry is increasingly relying on comprehensive data collection and analysis to measure the effectiveness of interventions aimed at advancing women's rights and access to opportunities.



"Without reliable data," she noted, "we cannot fully understand the challenges faced by women, nor can we evaluate the progress of our policies." She shared examples of successful data-driven initiatives, such as surveys and studies that inform targeted strategies to address issues like employment disparities, maternal health, and gender-based violence.

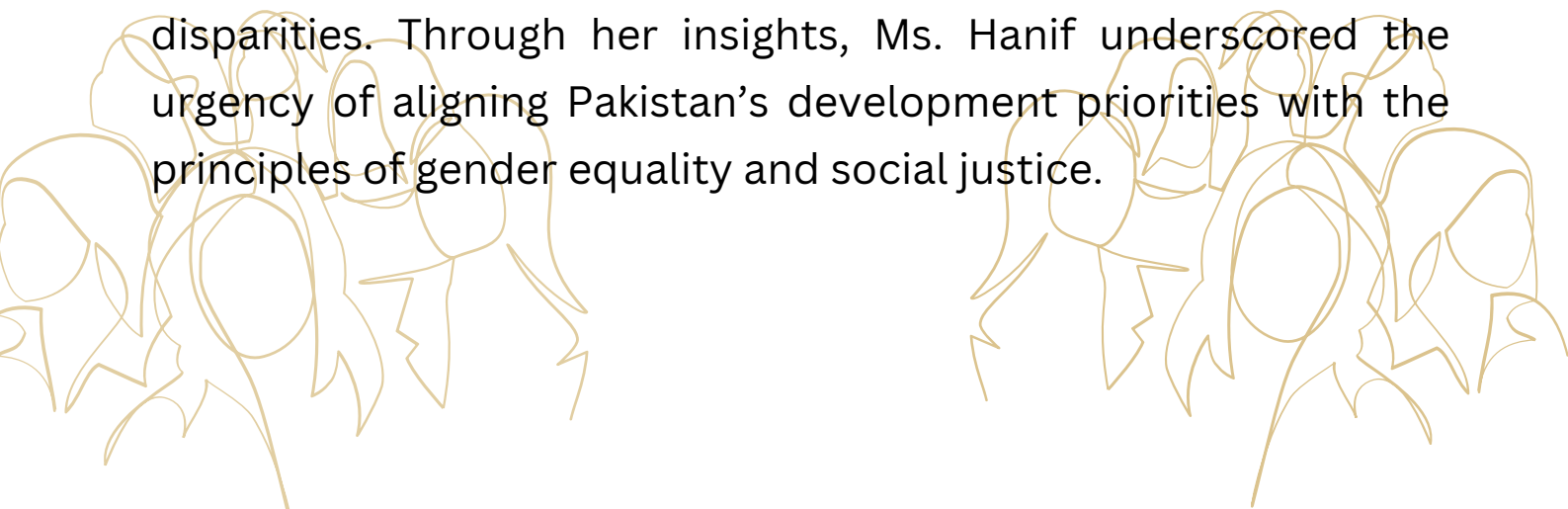
Ms. Hanif also addressed the need to foster women's economic empowerment, highlighting ongoing efforts to increase women's participation in the workforce through skill development programs, microfinance opportunities, and support for women-led businesses. She pointed out that empowering women economically has a ripple effect, benefiting families and communities while contributing to national growth.



On the topic of political participation, she emphasized the necessity of creating pathways for women to engage in decision-making processes. Ms. Hanif discussed the importance of legislative reforms and capacity-building initiatives that enable women to take leadership roles in both local and national governance. She commended the steps taken to increase women's representation in Parliament and local bodies, while also calling for further efforts to ensure their voices are heard.

Ms. Hanif concluded her address with a call for collaboration across sectors to advance gender equality. She stressed that achieving meaningful change requires the combined efforts of government agencies, civil society, private sector stakeholders, and international organizations. She urged all participants to actively contribute to creating a society where women can realize their full potential, free from discrimination and inequality.

Her presentation resonated deeply with the audience, illustrating the critical role of well-planned and inclusive government strategies in addressing systemic gender disparities. Through her insights, Ms. Hanif underscored the urgency of aligning Pakistan's development priorities with the principles of gender equality and social justice.



Sameena Nazir, Executive Director of PODA

Sameena Nazir, Executive Director of the Pakistan Organization for Democracy and Awareness (PODA), endorsed COPAIR's efforts for organizing the roundtable on December 10th, coinciding with Human Rights Day. Her presence at the event underscored the intersection of women's rights, human rights, and democratic participation.

In her address, Ms. Nazir provided an overview of PODA, a women's rights NGO that works tirelessly to promote and protect human rights, especially in rural areas of Pakistan. She highlighted the organization's core activities, which include conducting evidence-based research, executing rights-based programming, and engaging in advocacy aimed at fostering a cohesive and democratic society.





PODA's programs focus on a variety of issues, such as climate change education, women's rights advocacy, and constitutional rights education. Ms. Nazir stressed that these initiatives are critical for advancing rural communities' knowledge about their rights and equipping them to claim and exercise those rights. She particularly emphasized PODA's mission to empower rural women, youth, and minorities by providing access to education, livelihood skills, legal literacy, and human rights advocacy. These tools, she stated, were vital for helping these communities secure their National Identity Cards (CNICs) and achieve voter registration, laying the foundation for active political participation.

Ms. Nazir concluded by highlighting the importance of empowering women to actively engage in political processes, as this would not only strengthen their community involvement but also ensure their voices were heard in decision-making spheres, contributing to a more inclusive and democratic society.

Shaukat Mukadam- Ex- Ambassador of Pakistan

Ambassador Shaukat Mukadam, while reminiscing about her daughter Noor Mukadam, delivered a deeply emotional and impactful speech on the importance of implementing existing legislation to protect women and ensure justice for victims of violence. She shared her personal tragedy to highlight the urgent need for comprehensive legal reforms and stronger enforcement to protect women from violence.



Ambassador Mukadam stressed the importance of holding perpetrators of violence accountable by advocating for harsh punishments, including capital punishment for those who commit heinous acts against women. He emphasized that justice must not only be pursued through legal channels but must also be ensured through stringent implementation of laws that provide meaningful protection for women.



Furthermore, Ambassador Mukadam spoke passionately about the role of economic empowerment in providing women with the ability to break free from cycles of abuse. She argued that financial independence is crucial for women to escape toxic and abusive relationships, make informed decisions about their lives, and contribute positively to their communities and society at large. He called for initiatives that ensure women have access to financial resources and opportunities, which would allow them to regain control over their futures.



His speech was a powerful reminder of the intersection of legal, economic, and social empowerment and underscored the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing gender-based violence. Ambassador Mukadam's call to action highlighted the collective responsibility of society, government, and institutions to ensure that women not only survive but thrive in a world where justice and equality are non-negotiable.

Shabana Arif- National Commission on the Status of Women

Shabana Arif, representing the National Commission on the Status of Women, delivered a thought-provoking speech on the constitutional guarantees for women's rights in Pakistan. She emphasized that the Constitution of Pakistan already provides solutions to many issues surrounding gender inequality by guaranteeing fundamental rights and protections for women. However, she pointed out that the real challenge lies in translating these constitutional provisions into tangible actions that ensure women's rights are not only acknowledged but actively respected and fully implemented across all sectors of society.

Ms. Arif highlighted the significant strides Pakistan has made in creating pro-women legislation, noting the passage of numerous laws aimed at protecting women's rights.





Yet, despite these strong legal frameworks, she noted a persistent gap between what is written in the Constitution and the real-world enforcement of these laws. This gap, she argued, remains a major barrier to achieving full gender equality in Pakistan.

She called for greater efforts in bridging this divide through accountability, effective implementation, and the commitment of all stakeholders—government, civil society, and the public—to ensure that women’s rights are not just theoretical but realized in practice.

In her closing remarks, Shabana stressed the importance of collaboration between legislative bodies, enforcement agencies, and the public to create an environment where women can fully benefit from the legal protections they are promised by the Constitution.



Shabana's speech underscored the need for not only enacting laws but also ensuring that these laws are translated into effective actions that tangibly improve the lives of women across Pakistan.

Samina Fazil- Advisor to the President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) for Women's Affairs and Founder President of the Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Samina Fazil, Advisor to the President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) for Women's Affairs and Founder President of the Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry, delivered an insightful speech on the critical need for expanding skill centers across Pakistan. She stressed the importance of creating and scaling up such centers to drive economic development, highlighting how they play a key role in providing practical expertise and improving the overall competency of the workforce.



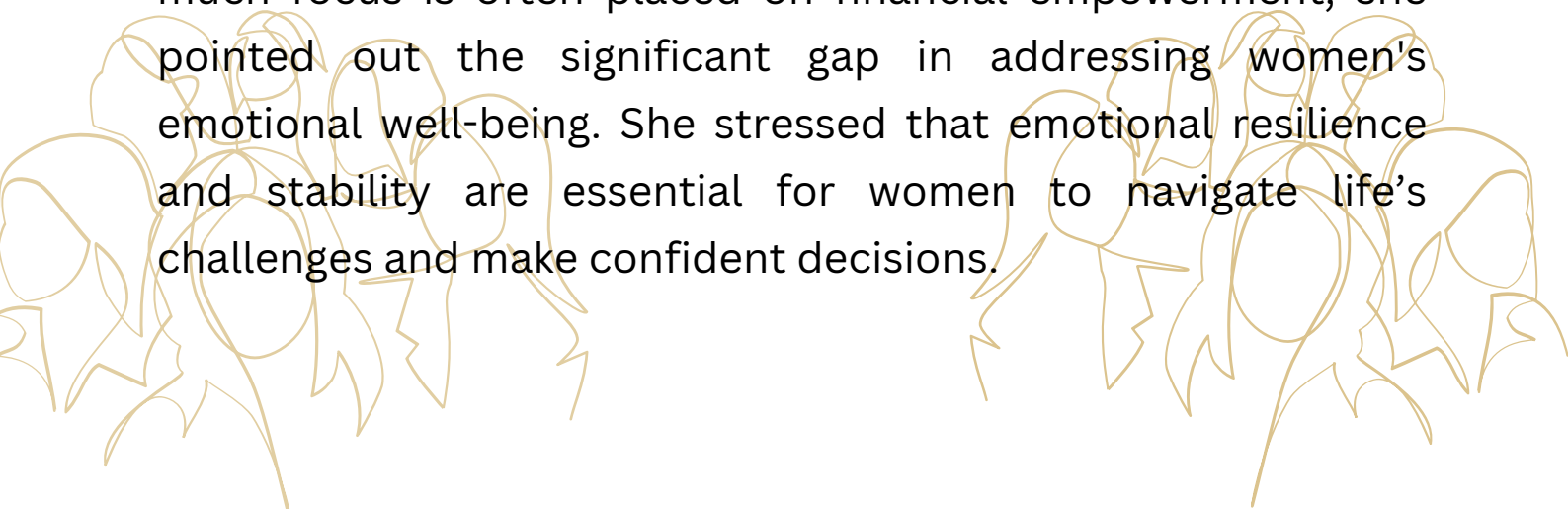


Through her address, Samina underscored that skill training is a vital tool for empowering marginalized groups, especially women, and called for increased collaboration between the government, private sector, and civil society to establish more centers. These initiatives, she argued, would not only enhance the employability of individuals but would also play a pivotal role in bridging gender gaps and reducing economic disparities in the country.

Samina's speech highlighted that the success of Pakistan's economic future hinges on investing in its human capital and that empowering individuals with the right skills can unlock their potential, drive innovation, and create a more prosperous society.

Mahnoor Quraishi – Broadcast Journalist

Mahnoor Quraishi, a Broadcast Journalist, delivered a thought-provoking speech emphasizing the critical importance of emotional independence for women. While much focus is often placed on financial empowerment, she pointed out the significant gap in addressing women's emotional well-being. She stressed that emotional resilience and stability are essential for women to navigate life's challenges and make confident decisions.





Mahnoor highlighted that the societal focus on economic independence should not overshadow the need for emotional support systems for women. She emphasized that fostering emotional independence empowers women to take control of their lives, pursue their goals with confidence, and overcome the obstacles they face. This, she argued, is a necessary component for holistic empowerment that enables women to live fulfilling and autonomous lives.

Her speech called for a shift in the discourse around women's empowerment, advocating for a more inclusive approach that addresses both emotional and financial independence, ensuring that women are equipped with the tools they need to succeed not just economically, but also emotionally.



Interactive Session Proceedings:

Following the speeches, Ms. Saadia Sabir facilitated a lively interactive discussion, which allowed the panelists to respond to the questions posed by participants in the audience. This segment encouraged open dialogue on a variety of issues, including gender equality in politics, economic empowerment, and the role of men in advocating for women's rights.

One of the key discussion points was the importance of political will in ensuring gender equality. Panelists like Senator Krishna Kumari and Ms. Barira Hanif underscored that while policies are important, real change can only occur when governments actively enforce gender-equitable laws and create systems that empower women at every level of governance.

Another significant discussion centered on the role of education and digital skills in empowering women. Ms. Gulmina Bilal Ahmad emphasized the need for women's access to technology and digital education as a key tool for economic independence. She encouraged all stakeholders to collaborate in making digital skills accessible to more women, particularly in rural areas. Ms. Taqdees Gillani echoed the importance of education as the first step towards political empowerment, stating that more educated women would be able to challenge existing political norms and engage in governance more effectively.



The interactive session also discussed the need for better legal frameworks to protect women's rights and the importance of strengthening institutions that support women's safety and empowerment. Panelists discussed the success stories from Pakistan, where women have successfully entered traditionally male-dominated sectors like politics, business, and technology, but also acknowledged the challenges that remain, especially in remote areas.

The session concluded with a call to action, where panelists urged the audience to continue advocating for gender equality, not just through words, but through actions—whether it be through mentorship, collaboration, or supporting policies that address women's needs. The interactive discussion proved to be a powerful reminder of the collective effort needed to push for meaningful change.

Finally, Ms. Saadia Sabir closed the session by summarizing the key takeaways and stressing the importance of continued dialogue and collaboration to create a more inclusive society where women's rights are recognized as human rights.





Vote of Thanks by Ms. Amna Munawwar Awan

In her closing statement, Ms. Amna Munawwar Awan, President of the Centre of Pakistan and International Relations (COPAIR), expressed heartfelt gratitude to all the speakers, panelists, and participants for their dedication and invaluable contributions. She acknowledged the diverse perspectives shared during the event, which not only enriched the discussions but also laid a strong foundation for actionable strategies to advance gender equality and empower women across all sectors.



Ms. Awan emphasized that the conference was more than just an exchange of ideas—it marked the beginning of a collective movement aimed at driving tangible change. She praised the participants for their commitment to tackling the pressing challenges women face, whether in education, entrepreneurship, politics, or disaster management, and highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts to achieve shared goals.



She extended special thanks to the distinguished speakers and panelists who illuminated critical issues with their expertise and experience. Their thought-provoking speeches and innovative solutions, she noted, inspired new approaches and strengthened the resolve to create a more inclusive and equitable society.

Ms. Awan also acknowledged the event organizers, partners, and supporting institutions for their tireless efforts in bringing the event to life. She noted that such platforms play a pivotal role in fostering dialogue, building networks, and catalyzing action on key issues affecting women.

Concluding her remarks, Ms. Awan encouraged everyone to carry forward the momentum generated at the conference. She called on the participants to remain steadfast in their advocacy and to translate the discussions into meaningful initiatives that impact lives at the grassroots level. “Today’s conference is not an end but a powerful starting point for a shared journey towards equality, empowerment, and justice,” she said.

With her vote of thanks, Ms. Awan reaffirmed COPAIR’s commitment to supporting such endeavors and vowed to continue championing the cause of women’s empowerment and gender equality in Pakistan and beyond. She closed the event on a note of optimism and solidarity, urging everyone to remain united in their efforts to create a world where every woman can thrive.



Challenges

The conference highlighted several key challenges that persist in the journey toward achieving gender equality and women's empowerment:

Societal Hurdles: Persistent societal and structural barriers, such as deeply ingrained gender biases, continue to limit opportunities for marginalized communities, especially women, in Pakistan. These barriers prevent women from accessing essential services, education, and economic opportunities.

Gender Disparities: Cultural norms and societal expectations in a male-dominated world restrict women's access to opportunities in various fields, such as sports, entrepreneurship, and small businesses. These disparities are often compounded by traditional gender roles that prioritize male involvement in decision-making and leadership.

Mental Health Neglect: Women's mental health remains underprioritized in Pakistan, with limited resources, support systems, and awareness to address mental health challenges, further hindering their overall well-being and potential for personal and professional growth.

Cultural and Societal Barriers: Deep-rooted cultural norms and gender biases significantly hinder women's participation in key areas such as education, politics, and the workforce, especially in rural and marginalized communities. These barriers reinforce inequality and limit women's social mobility.

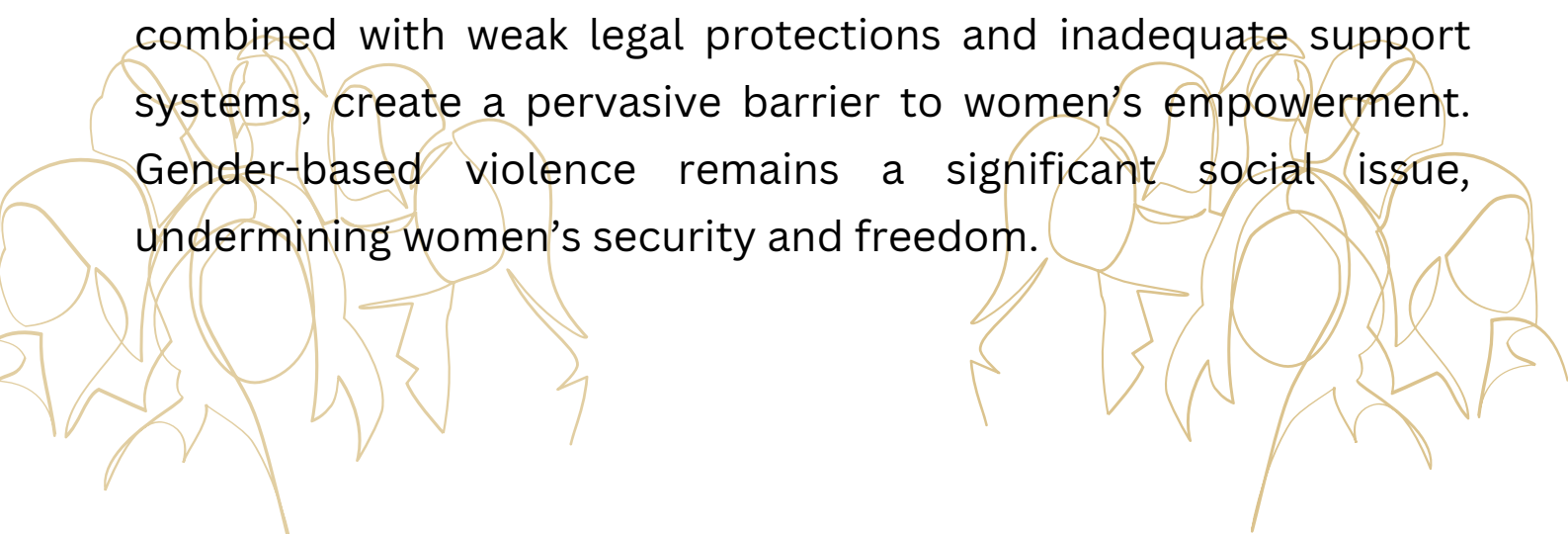
Economic Inequities: Women face restricted access to finance, entrepreneurial opportunities, and formal employment, perpetuating cycles of poverty and dependence. Economic empowerment remains a major challenge due to systemic barriers to resources, capital, and training.

Underrepresentation in Leadership: Women are vastly underrepresented in leadership and decision-making roles across both public and private sectors. This lack of representation prevents women from shaping policies that directly impact their lives and communities, stifling systemic change.

Lack of Gender-Sensitive Policies: Despite some progress, gender-responsive policies are not adequately integrated into national and local development frameworks. The gap between policy formulation and effective implementation continues to hinder progress on gender equality.

Limited Education and Skill Development: Limited access to quality education and skills training—especially in digital and technical fields—creates a significant gender divide. This lack of access prevents women from participating in high-demand sectors, exacerbating existing inequalities.

Gender-Based Violence: High rates of violence against women, combined with weak legal protections and inadequate support systems, create a pervasive barrier to women's empowerment. Gender-based violence remains a significant social issue, undermining women's security and freedom.





Disaster Vulnerability: Women and children are disproportionately affected by natural disasters. Gender-insensitive disaster management practices often overlook the specific needs of women, especially in displaced communities, leaving them more vulnerable during crises.

Lack of Legal Protections: Insufficient legal safeguards and gaps in law enforcement make it difficult for women to challenge discrimination, exploitation, and violence. Even with legislation in place, weak enforcement mechanisms prevent women from accessing justice.

Male Dominance in Decision-Making: Decision-making forums, both in governance and the private sector, remain overwhelmingly male-dominated, excluding women's voices. This lack of representation results in policies that fail to address women's specific needs and perpetuate gender inequality.

Gender-Neutral Development Budgets: Prior to the implementation of the National Gender Framework, development budgets lacked a gender-sensitive approach, further entrenching systemic inequalities. There is a need for gender-responsive budgeting to ensure that resources are allocated equitably to address women's needs.





Early Marriages and Gender-Based Violence: Early marriages contribute significantly to gender-based violence and limit women's access to education and economic opportunities. This practice perpetuates cycles of poverty and dependence, especially in rural areas.

Cross-Cutting Gender Issues: Gender inequality is a pervasive issue that crosses multiple sectors—affecting women's lives in social, economic, and political spheres. A comprehensive and integrated approach is required to tackle gender inequality at all levels of society.

Underrepresentation of Women in Law Enforcement: Women remain severely underrepresented in law enforcement, with only 3% of the police force being female. This disparity limits the ability to effectively address gender-based violence and offer a more responsive and empathetic approach to survivors of violence.

Challenges for Non-Binary Individuals: Non-binary individuals face exclusion, discrimination, and violence in both social and institutional contexts, making it difficult for them to access basic rights, support, and opportunities.





Lack of Rehabilitation for Rural Women: Women in rural areas face numerous barriers to empowerment, including limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Without comprehensive rehabilitation and support programs, many remain trapped in poverty, unable to break free from cycles of dependence.

Gap Between Government and Civil Society: There remains a significant disconnect between government agencies and civil society organizations, resulting in fragmented efforts and limited collaboration. This gap restricts the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at advancing gender equality.

Financial Barriers for Women in Balochistan: In areas like Balochistan, financial barriers—such as the absence of ATMs or personal bank accounts for women—limit their economic independence and autonomy. Women often rely on male family members for financial access, constraining their decision-making power.



Recommendations

Based on the discussions during the conference, the following recommendations were proposed to address these challenges:

Promote Gender-Inclusive Education: Increase girls' enrollment and retention in schools, especially in underserved areas, by introducing targeted scholarships and mentorship programs. Focus on encouraging women's participation in STEM and digital skills training to bridge gender gaps in these fields.

Enhance Economic Opportunities: Expand access to microfinance, vocational training, and entrepreneurial support for women. Collaborate with both the government and private sector to foster gender-inclusive workplaces and provide women-led businesses with necessary resources and opportunities.

Ensure Representation in Leadership: Implement quotas and other mechanisms to boost women's representation in leadership positions across political, corporate, and community sectors. Develop capacity-building programs to prepare women for leadership roles and decision-making positions.



Strengthen Gender-Responsive Policies: Ensure gender considerations are integrated into policy planning, budgeting, and implementation at all levels. Establish robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the impact of these policies and ensure their effectiveness.

Combat Gender-Based Violence: Enhance legal protections and improve enforcement mechanisms to address gender-based violence effectively. Provide accessible support services such as counseling, legal aid, and safe spaces for survivors, while ensuring swift justice through time-bound court cases.

Develop Gender-Sensitive Disaster Management: Incorporate women's voices and leadership in disaster planning and response. Ensure disaster relief measures are designed to meet the unique needs of women and girls, providing equal access to resources and support.

Foster Public Awareness: Launch national campaigns to challenge harmful gender norms and raise awareness about women's rights. Promote gender equality as a societal value, while leveraging media to share empowering stories and challenge stereotypes.





Leverage Technology for Empowerment: Develop digital platforms and tools tailored to women's needs, like COPAIR's chatbot initiative, to offer support and resources. Encourage technological innovation to address issues of safety, healthcare, and financial empowerment for women.

Increase Access to Education: Ensure that education remains a priority for women and girls by investing in accessible, quality education. Encourage women's participation in STEM fields, entrepreneurship, and leadership training to ensure they are equipped for success in an evolving world.

Promote Inclusivity in Governance: Strengthen policies and frameworks that ensure the active participation of women in political and decision-making processes. Encourage women's representation and involvement in local, provincial, and national governance.

Prioritize Girls in Development Plans: Ensure that development programs and policies specifically address the needs of girls, particularly in education, healthcare, and skill development, laying a foundation for lifelong empowerment.

Enhance Civic Sense and Cultural Exposure: Integrate civic sense through arts, culture, and sports into education and community initiatives to help women gain confidence and break societal barriers.





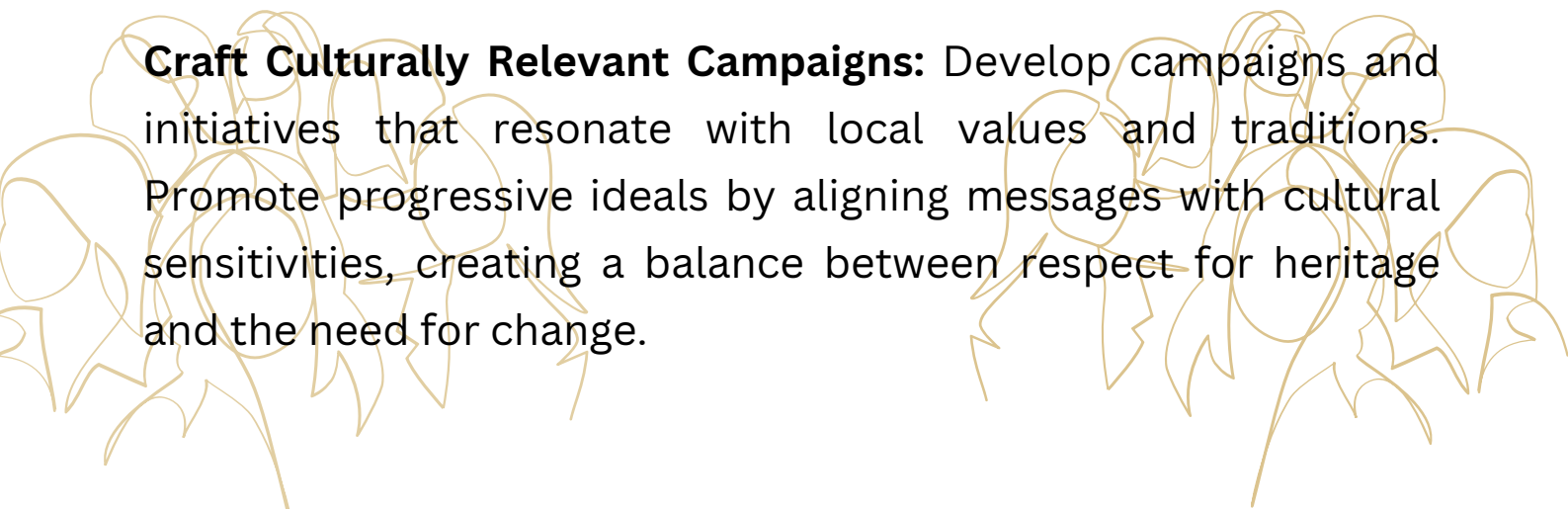
Support Women's Mental Health: Develop accessible mental health programs and support systems for women, addressing the personal and societal pressures they face. Provide counseling, wellness resources, and peer support networks.

Promote Equal Opportunities in All Sectors: Provide equal access for women to opportunities in sports, entrepreneurship, and small business development through targeted funding, training, and mentorship programs.

Strengthen Legal Protections and Enforcement: Implement and enforce laws that safeguard women's rights, particularly in cases of gender-based discrimination and violence. Strengthen the legal system to ensure accountability and justice for women.

Engage Local NGOs and Partners: Collaborate with local organizations to design culturally sensitive and contextually appropriate strategies. These partnerships can help ensure the success of gender-equality initiatives while respecting local traditions.

Craft Culturally Relevant Campaigns: Develop campaigns and initiatives that resonate with local values and traditions. Promote progressive ideals by aligning messages with cultural sensitivities, creating a balance between respect for heritage and the need for change.





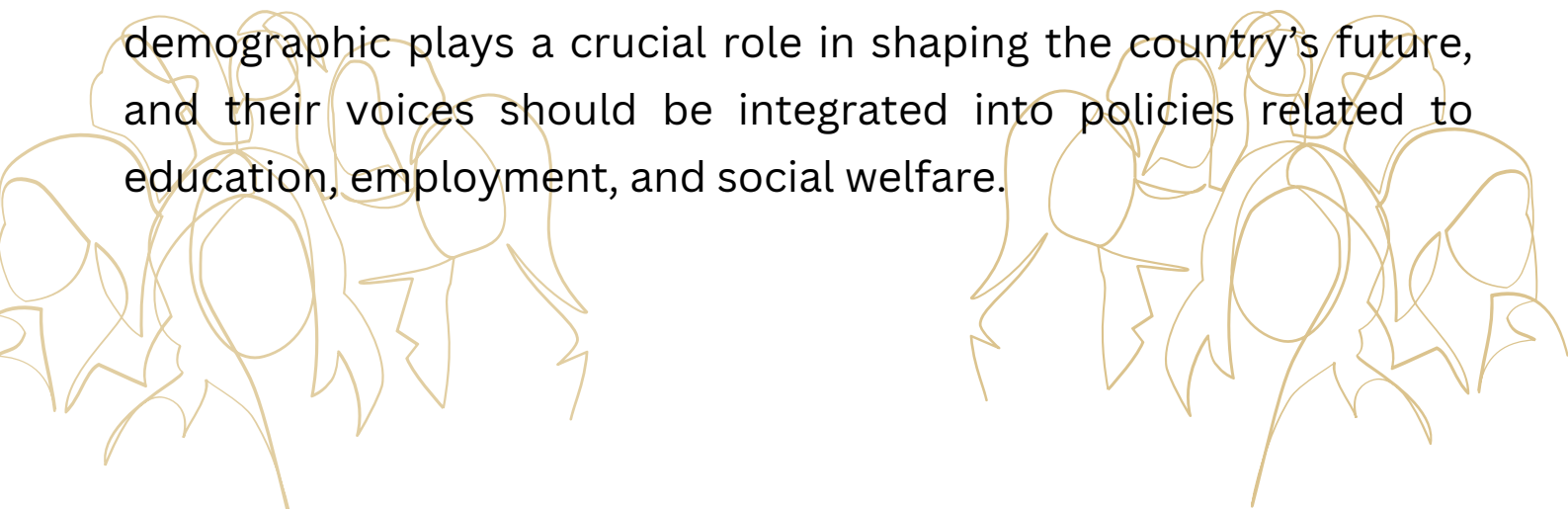
Delay Marriage Age: Advocate for raising the minimum marriage age by at least two years to improve economic and social outcomes for women and positively impact population dynamics.

Target Adolescents for Empowerment: Focus on empowering girls during adolescence by providing them with the education, resources, and support needed to navigate societal barriers and unlock their full potential.

Reduce Gender Disparity in Law Enforcement: Implement a 10% female police officer quota to address the gender gap in law enforcement. This would improve responses to gender-based violence and ensure greater support for female survivors.

Implement Flexible Working Hours: Introduce flexible working hours for female law enforcement officers to help them balance their professional and personal responsibilities. This policy would enhance female participation in the force and improve responses to gender-based violence.

Revise Legislation to Include Young People (18-24): Update laws to include young people in the legislative process. This demographic plays a crucial role in shaping the country's future, and their voices should be integrated into policies related to education, employment, and social welfare.



Capitalize on the Youth Bulge: Provide young people with targeted educational, employment, and leadership opportunities. Harnessing the potential of Pakistan's growing youth population can drive national development and foster economic growth.

Use Media for Women's Empowerment and Awareness: Leverage both traditional and digital media platforms to raise awareness about women's rights, share empowering stories, and challenge societal gender norms. Use media to highlight the benefits of gender equality.

Build on Existing Research and Data: Rather than repeating existing gender data, build on preexisting research to develop actionable solutions. Leverage this data to inform new initiatives and improve the effectiveness of ongoing efforts to close gender gaps.

Focus on Economic Development for Women: Prioritize economic empowerment initiatives that provide women with access to jobs, entrepreneurship, and financial independence. These policies should be inclusive and supportive of women's participation in the workforce.

Establish Skill Centers for Women: Set up vocational training centers that offer marketable skills for women, especially those from marginalized communities. These centers should be accessible and designed to meet the unique needs of women.



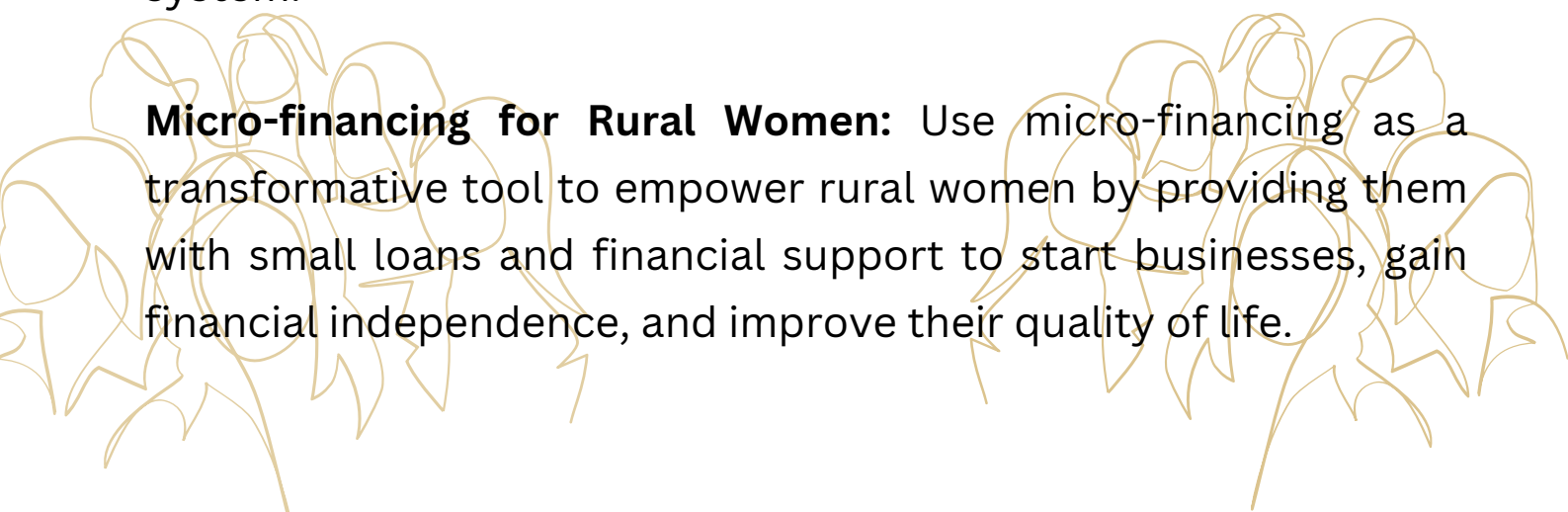
Improve Trainer Quality: Ensure trainers in skill centers are well-trained and equipped to deliver high-quality instruction. Competent trainers are essential to the success of these programs and can significantly impact the skills development of women.

Utilize the Full Potential of Women: Promote women's participation across all sectors of society, particularly in leadership, decision-making, and economic activities. Empower women through education, employment, and community engagement to drive national development.

Strengthen Existing Laws for Women's Rights: Fully implement and strengthen laws that protect women from discrimination and violence. Adapt these laws to address emerging challenges and ensure they remain effective in advancing gender equality.

Time-Frame Court Cases Related to Women's Rights: Establish clear timelines for resolving court cases related to women's rights and gender-based violence. Time-bound procedures would ensure swift justice and enhance the efficiency of the legal system.

Micro-financing for Rural Women: Use micro-financing as a transformative tool to empower rural women by providing them with small loans and financial support to start businesses, gain financial independence, and improve their quality of life.





Media Coverage

The Round Table Conference received extensive coverage across various media platforms, including social, electronic, and print media. PTV Global provided comprehensive coverage through a detailed video explainer, effectively capturing the essence and significance of the event. Additionally, prominent publications such as The Asian Telegraph, Voice of Melange, and Public Purview featured in-depth editorials, shedding light on the conference's objectives, key discussions, and outcomes. The coverage highlighted the event's proceedings and helped disseminate its insights and recommendations to a broader audience, fostering greater public engagement and awareness. The inclusion of diverse media platforms ensured that the conference's message reached varied segments of society, reinforcing its impact and relevance.

Links:

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The Asian Telegraph

www.theasiantelegraph.net Wednesday, December 11, 2024 | Vol: XV, Issue: 255 ABC CERTIFIED



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Gender-inclusive policies are essential for women's political and economic empowerment: President COPAIR

Women in diplomacy bring unique perspectives to tackling global challenges: Amb Dilsad
EmpowerHER: A Landmark National Roundtable for Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: The Centre of Pakistan and International Relations (COPAIR) hosted a groundbreaking event, EmpowerHER - A National Roadmap for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, uniting policymakers, diplomats, thought leaders, and gender theorists to chart pathways for a more equitable and inclusive society. This roundtable served as a transformative dialogue, addressing critical issues surrounding women's rights and gender equality. The event brought together a diverse group of 30 prominent gender influ-

of COPAIR, highlighted women's rights as human rights and there is a need of gender inclusive policies for women political and economic empowerment.

COPAIR President also launched an A Chatbot to support women in distress by giving basic guidelines how to address those critical challenges. President COPAIR also shared 1 Million Women Digital skill program covering the virtual internship and digital Certification for women.

The chief guest of the ceremony H.E. Dilsad Senol, ambassador of Cyprus to Pakistan said that I am delighted to acknowledge COPAIR's groundbreaking initiative, EmpowerHER - A National Roadmap for Gender Equality and



ing gender equality and inspiring meaningful change. Together, we can pave the way for a more equitable future.

THE event featured compelling discussions from leading experts and thought leaders. The dialogue covered vital topics such as gender equality's role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), empowering women through digital skills, the critical contribution of women in peace and security, and the universality of women's rights. Each speaker illuminated pathways for empowering women as catalysts for sustainable development and change.

Interactive sessions with parliamentarians, government officials, diplomats, and civil society leaders created a collabora-

to advance the rights of women and girls across Pakistan and beyond.

In her closing statement, Ms. Am Manuwar Anwar praised the event's participants for their dedication and insight, emphasizing that the conference marks the beginning of a collective movement. She expressed COPAIR's commitment to sustaining these dialogues and transforming them into impactful initiatives. Senator Krishna Kumari echoed these sentiments, encouraging attendees to carry forward the momentum of the day's discussions into tangible actions. Tagle Gillani shared her view on politic Empowerment. Amb of Northern Cyprus Dilsad Senol shared role of women public diplomacy. Sacha Sabir highlight

روزنامہ دیں اینڈین ٹیلی گراف 11 دسمبر 2024ء

جینڈرز پر مشتمل پالیسیاں خواتین کو سیاسی اور معاشی باختیار بنانے کیلئے ضروری ہیں
آمنہ منور اعوان سمارت کاری میں خواتین عالمی چیلنجوں سے نمٹنے کیلئے منفرد نقطہ نظر لاتی ہیں، ایمسڈر دلشاد



اسلام آباد (ٹی وی رپورٹ) ستر آف پاکستان اینڈ انٹرنیشنل ریلیشنز (COPAIR) نے ایک اہم تقریب کی میزبانی کی۔ تقریب سماجیات اور خواتین کو باختیار بنانے کے لیے ایک قومی روڈ میپ، جو کہ پالیسی سازوں، سمارت کاریوں، سوچ رکھنے والے رہنماؤں، اور مقامی اور ذریعہ کے حامل افراد کو زیادہ سماجی اور معاشی سے یکجا کرنے کے لیے تھی۔ ستر آف پاکستان اینڈ انٹرنیشنل ریلیشنز نے ایک اہم تقریب کی میزبانی کی۔ EmpowerHER - A National Roadmap for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment کو باختیار بنانے کے لیے ایک قومی روڈ میپ، جو کہ پالیسی سازوں، سمارت کاریوں، سوچ رکھنے والے رہنماؤں، اور مقامی اور ذریعہ کے حامل افراد کو زیادہ سماجی اور معاشی سے یکجا کرنے کے لیے تھی۔ اس کوئی چیز کا کڑا نہیں ہے۔ ایک نئی آواز بنانے کے طور پر کام کیا، جس میں خواتین کے حقوق کی حمایت کے لیے کام کیا گیا۔



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COPAIR Hosts Advancing Gender Equality And Women Empowerment



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Women in diplomacy bring unique perspectives to tackling global challenges, Amb Dilşad

December 10, 2024 / Reporter



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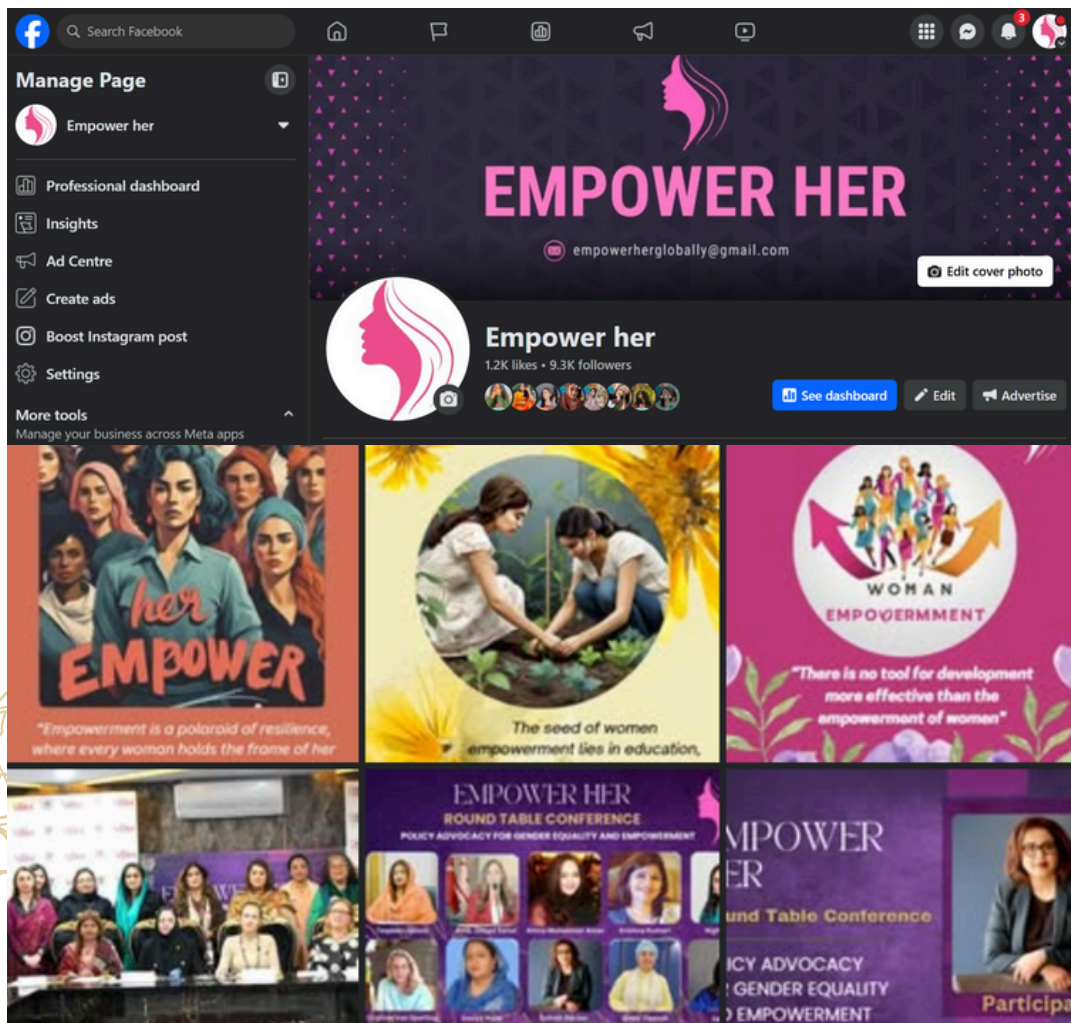
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Gender-inclusive policies are essential for women's political and economic empowerment, President COPAIR

by News Desk — December 11, 2024 in Pakistan





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The Centre of Pakistan and International Relations (COPAIR) hosted a groundbreaking Round Table Conference, "EmpowerHER – A National Roadmap for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment". The event brought together policymakers, diplomats, thought leaders, and gender influencers to cha ...show more

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EmpowerHER : A Landmark National Roundtable for Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. Islamabad:- The Centre of Pakistan and International Relations (COPAIR) hosted a groundbreaking event, "EmpowerHER – A National Roadmap for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment," uniting ...show more

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The COPAIR "EmpowerHER" team is honored to welcome it's wothy Speakers and panelists for its Round Table Conference on, "EmpowerHER: Policy Dialogue on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment."

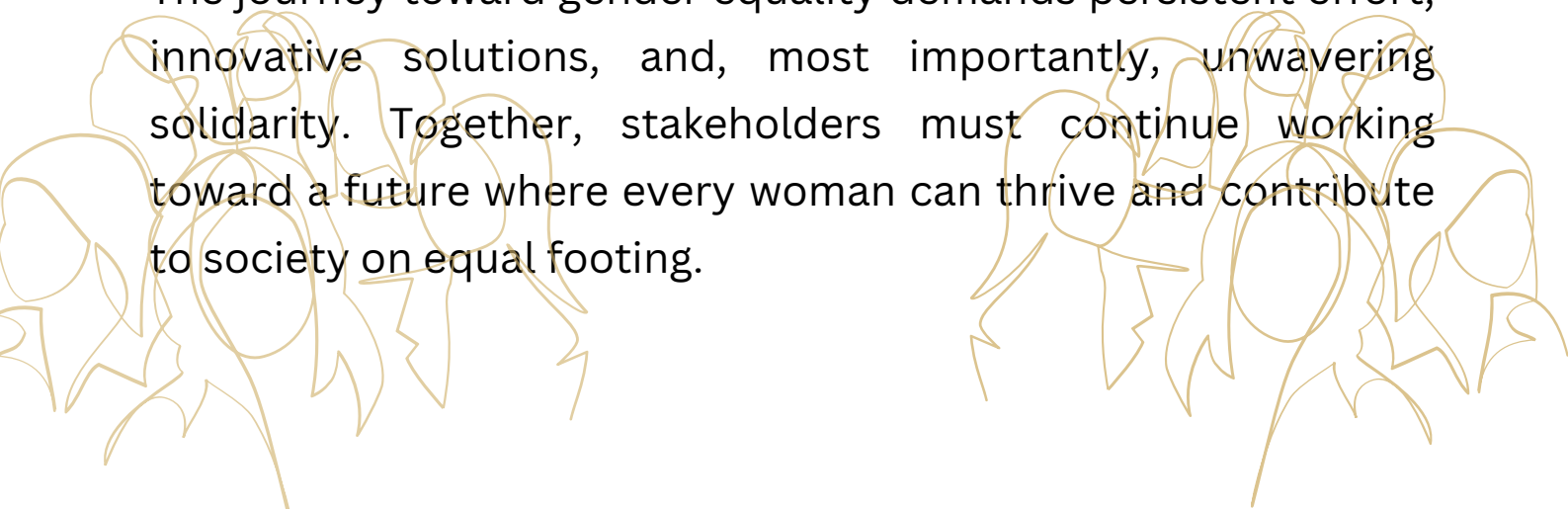


Conclusion

The conference underscored the urgency of addressing gender inequality as a critical barrier to sustainable development. Through dynamic discussions and expert insights, participants reaffirmed the need for collective action to empower women and girls, dismantle systemic barriers, and build a more inclusive society.

As highlighted by the distinguished speakers and panelists, achieving gender equality requires a multipronged approach that involves governments, civil society, private organizations, and individuals. The solutions lie in education, economic empowerment, political participation, and gender-sensitive policies, underpinned by robust data and advocacy.

The event concluded with a strong call to action: to move beyond dialogue and commit to tangible, impactful initiatives that ensure women's rights and opportunities are safeguarded and advanced. As Ms. Amna Munawwar Awan noted, this conference is not the end but the beginning of a movement. The journey toward gender equality demands persistent effort, innovative solutions, and, most importantly, unwavering solidarity. Together, stakeholders must continue working toward a future where every woman can thrive and contribute to society on equal footing.





EMPOWERHER



About COPAIR

The Center of Pakistan and International Relations is a Strategic Think Tank focusing on Policy Analysis and Advocacy through dialogue and collaboration with key stakeholders to recommend effective solutions for Policy Makers. COPAIR is the first global digital think tank working on design thinking and innovation in strategic decision making with the help of Artificial Intelligence.

The E Women Global Network under COPAIR is a vibrant and dynamic platform dedicated to empowering and connecting women in the digital realm. The network brings together women from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and professions, providing them with opportunities for collaboration, education, mentorship, and support in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

Event Credits

COPAIR President Amna Munawwar Awan's leadership pay' special thanks to Dr Tehseen Nisar , Dr Muhammad Zahid , Muhammad Hasam , Saima Zaman, Fatima , Dua , Alex Khan , Mariam Rehman and Eman for making EmpowerHer Project as a successful project for gender equality and women empowerment

