



# LEGISLATIVE WATCH

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## Women flood-affected: issues and challenges

By Tahira Abdullah

Today, barely two months later, how many people in Islamabad or the posh areas of Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar and Quetta, or the highest echelons of power, still remember what happened on 29th July 2010? Or is the pull of carrying on Life-As-Usual, i.e., lavish celebrations of births, birthdays, weddings, fashion shows, musical concerts, exhibitions, restaurant-hopping, shopping, and even business meetings, seminars and conferences in several-starred hotels, inter alia, too strong to spare any more thoughts for our forgotten flood-affected sisters and brothers and children still in acute distress and deprivation?

But the Indus disaster will not disappear in a hurry, even if we, like the proverbial ostrich, now avert our eyes, turn our thoughts away, and bury our heads in the sand.

In this part of the world, we are used to heavy seasonal monsoon rains with periodic flooding, alternating with periodic drought, punctuated by the occasional devastating earthquake such as EQ-2005, and mass migrations, with refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). So in what way was the summer of 2010 different?

For Pakistan, the summer of 2010 changed every-

thing. It will forever stand out in our memory as a nightmare experience of a slowly-unfolding and long-continuing flood of Biblical proportions, with over 21 million people, i.e., one-eighth of the population affected, along with over one-fifth of the land mass across all four provinces: Balochistan (where it started much earlier in mid-July), Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa (KP), Punjab, Sindh, Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and AJK.

The worst to reach and handle, have been the inaccessible north-western mountain areas, especially Malakand (KP) and GB, where neither boats, helicopters nor trucks could reach, due to thousands of broken bridges, washed out roads and tracks, and disappeared mountain sides, due to severe landslides, complicated by sustained bad weather. We are back to the 10th Century, using mules and porters to climb dangerous terrain, laden with relief items and tents. Winter rains and snows started early September, and unless urgent drastic action is taken, around 6 million people face death by pneumonia, extreme cold or starvation - the most vulnerable being women, children and the elderly, as always.

Volunteer women relief workers find that no matter whom they have to deal with (Government, UN, NGOs, philanthropists, showbiz personalities, media), women's specific issues, needs, concerns are neither heard nor given priority, even after being raised and

pointed out. This is particularly true of NDMA, the weekly UN general coordination meetings, sectoral and geographic clusters. They are marginalized in the Gender Task Force or the Protection Cluster.

Thus, women's issues are still falling through the cracks. It is STILL Business-As-Usual-By-Men-For-Men-Of-Men-Decisionmakers. Women are STILL the OBJECTS - the weaker, invisible, ignored and segregated sex, to be "included" in the numbers being crunched in terms of mouths to be fed, tents to be pitched, and non-food items to be provided. They are STILL considered "beneficiaries" vs. actors in continuing patriarchal and paternalistic modes of humanitarian assistance, deprived of the lens of human rights and human dignity.

Human dignity has not been in much evidence in relief work regarding men either. The sheer scale of the disaster and the huge affected population has overwhelmed the Government, to the extent that distribution of early relief, especially cooked food, nearly always ran short, thus provoking anger, food riots, chaos, and law and order situations.

**The most pressing issues were and still remain:**

1. **Data:** for proper planning for Flood Response, **Continued on next Page**



### Michelle Bachelet to head UN Women

On 14 September 2010, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the appointment of Ms Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile, as Under-Secretary-General for UN Women, the new gender composite UN entity. Born in Santiago, Chile, on 29 September 1951, she is trained as a doctor, with graduate studies in Military Sciences. As Under-Secretary General UN Women, Ms Bachelet brings to this critical position a history of dynamic global leadership, political skills and ability to create consensus among UN agencies and many partners in both the public and private sectors.

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## Floods and issues of governance

By Naeem Mirza

Despite the enormity of the floods, I tend to agree with those who call the State's response to it 'a public policy failure', at least in its initial phase. There had been no local official response to it as no official response mechanism was available at the local level. The 'local governments' which used to provide local leadership and administration at the grassroots were absent as these had been dissolved for more than a year ago; and almost all provincial governments are not keen on holding local elections, due to their myopic vision. The office of DCOs had little infrastructure, and what was available was extremely inadequate.

My first recommendation, therefore, would be for immediate holding of local elections and restoration of local governments. All future plans of rehabilitation and reconstruction in flood affected areas should be implemented through local participation and ownership. Any delay or compromise on this fundamental institution of governance

would cause more damage than already inflicted.

The huge void in the absence of local power structures was filled by people themselves, philanthropists, citizens' groups and organisations, the military and UN agencies. Local political leadership from these constituencies was also present and doing whatever was possible. Though the response was spontaneous and sporadic, it saw best of the humans in helping each other.

There were community groups of National Rural Support Programme, volunteers of Aurat Foundation, Sungi Development Foundation, SPO and many other outreach civil society organisations, community-based organisations and committed activists, who remained busy in providing relief goods and shelter to an affected population that was looking far beyond their reach from the day one.

This explains the existence of enormous social capital in Pakistan. I would like to urge the government to

benefit from this wealth of expertise, art of association and volunteerism. Coordination among government and civil society efforts is crucial to the success of any future disaster management plan.

The most obvious gap felt during this relief and rescue effort was the lack of training on disaster management or in simpler words the lack of preparedness to meet this situation. Except for military and a small number of trained volunteers of UN agencies and some NGOs, none had the expertise to cope with these situations.

The failure of successive governments to devise plans and strategies on disaster management and their lack of preparedness, particularly after two huge disaster and conflict situations in the last five years - the 2005 earthquake and 2009 IDPs crisis - is neither understandable nor excusable.

The absence of civil defence institutions like Girl Guides and Boy Scouts **Continued on Page 4**

# Women flood-affectedees: issues and challenges

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Recovery, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (FRRRR), we need accurate numbers of flood-affected men, women and children, disaggregated by sex, age, geographic location (by district), and occupation/livelihood.

**2. Women-Headed Households (WHHs):** the Government does not recognize WHHs, preferring to register such households under the name of the family patriarch or the nearest male sibling. This naturally deprives women of land and property rights, financial compensation, livelihoods, and other urgent support.

**3. Equity and Equality in Compensation:** the GoP has announced a first tranche of cash compensation of Rs.20,000, to be followed by Rs.80,000, for a total of Rs.100,000. Compared to Rs.225,000 given to each earthquake affected household, this is an inadequate sum, given the populist slogan of "Build Back Better" (BBB), and also in view of huge escalations in inflation and poverty, especially the feminization of poverty (a ratio of 3:1 in Pakistan) since 2005. But whatever the amount, WHHs need to be registered before they are eligible for it.

**4. Identification:** Women, especially those in the rural areas, traditionally do not have national identity cards (which also disenfranchises them in elections), meaning they do not have access to bank accounts, credit/debit/SMART/WATAN cards, or other forms of identification. For fair and equitable FRRRR, this is essential. It is recommended that mobile teams (including women staff) of NADRA urgently need to reach out to flood-affectedees in the rural areas, relief camps and host families, in order to provide ALL women and men with CNICs and registration.

**5. Shelter and Infrastructure:** in line with the Build Back Better (BBB) populist slogan, this time around the reconstruction needs to keep in mind the particular needs of privacy and access of 48% women and 10% disabled/special population, as well as environmental and climate change considerations. Women's concerns need to focus especially on latrines/toilets, kitchens, water sources, hygiene, sanitation and sewerage.

**6. Health issues:** (i) the GoP gave a figure of over 300,000 pregnant women who would deliver before the emergency ended, who were either in temporary tent shelters or still camped on roadsides and river banks. While I+N NGOs, the UN, private and volunteer health personnel did make some efforts at providing ante-natal, natal and post-natal care and RH/EmOC/Ob-Gyn services, these fell far short of the huge need and women

did deliver out in the open without medical help; (ii) the floods brought special problems, e.g. injuries, snake bites, infected water-borne gastric diseases, malaria, etc. It was observed that mostly men and boys received treatment, especially as cultural constraints prevent women from seeing male doctors and paramedics; (iii) there was a totally inadequate number of women medical and paramedical health service providers; (iv) there was inadequate focus to ensure girls and women were included in vaccination drives; (v) loss of family and community, shelter, livelihoods, incomes, and the onset of disease, disability and dis-

start with. Now, the loss of schools, teachers and time means that extra efforts are needed to motivate parents to send all their girls and boys to the temporary camp schools; (ii) the public education system needs to rehabilitate the educational infrastructure and teachers on a priority basis; (iii) a new focus is required on teaching life-skills, coping mechanisms, self-awareness, self-confidence and how to face disasters.

**9. Disaster preparedness skills training:** this should include swimming and mountaineering lessons for everyone, including all girls and

(iv) women need agricultural extension, training and inputs for Agriculture and Food Security, e.g. organic seeds and fertilizer; Livestock, Irrigation, Social Forestry and Horticulture; also marketing and quality certification; (v) likewise in urban districts, employment, livelihoods, vocational skills training and credit programmes must include women, especially home-based workers at the outset.

**12. Human rights and human dignity; special measures for women:** (i) reports are surfacing of forced return of IDPs - contrary to human rights Conventions and UNOCHA's Guiding Principles, which mandate informed, voluntary, consensual return; (ii) the GoP needs to ensure male-female joint title deeds in reinstating land records, assets ownership, property, grant of new land and cash compensation; (iii) free legal aid to women to process claims for compensation and inheritance of land and property; (iv) the GoP needs to focus on women and girls' special need for protection, security, safety, honour, dignity, respect and upholding their human rights; (iv) sex-disaggregated data must be collected and used in policymaking, recovery and rehabilitation (e.g. how many girls' schools vis-à-vis boys' schools were destroyed? how many female vs. male teachers and health workers are dead or missing?); (v) civil society, NGOs and the media need to step up their advocacy, monitoring and watchdog roles in all phases of FRRRR.

In conclusion, women need to be seen as equal partners in every aspect of FRRRR and broader, longer term disaster management. They need to be treated not as passive "beneficiaries" and "recipients" of humanitarian assistance, but also as active participants and agents of structural change and societal transformation in post-floods rehabilitation, and to be seen not just as the "affectedees" - i.e. objects of pity, sympathy and "protection" - or relegated, ghettoized and marginalized to the category of the "vulnerable population", which includes orphans, widows, trafficked, abandoned and disabled women and girls, considered deserving of social welfare and philanthropic charity.

We have reiterated our knowledge, information and recommendations on humanitarian and development needs since the EQ2005. All that is required now is the political will and commitment to implement them. Civil society and NNGOs are playing a watchdog role and will not let the Government abdicate its Constitutional responsibility to all its citizens, and especially its 48% women. Our innate humanity forces us to do no less. —*The author is a rights activist, development professional and volunteer humanitarian worker*

## Are in fact 34,000 or any women paramedics "missing"?

In Floods2010, a still-mysterious case is that of the thousands of "missing" paramedical women primary and reproductive health care workers (including LHWs, LHVAs, FWAs, midwives and nurses). A UN consultant reported back in early August that she had been informed by the relevant GoP Ministry that around thirty-four thousand women paramedics had gone "missing" [sic] in the flooded districts. But, despite frantic and sustained efforts of women's rights organizations and health-related I+N NGOs, to date neither has the GoP managed to rebut or rectify that figure if it was factually incorrect (e.g. through a roll-call of those workers who are present), nor has it provided an explanation for where the "missing" women might be, nor has an effort been made (and shared with the public) to trace them. A GoP spokesperson publicly responded to an INGO query thus: "No, not 34,000, ONLY [sic] 10,000 female health staff are still missing, probably Absent Without Leave (AWOL)." Worried relief workers wonder whether they are really AWOL, or have been swept away forever in the furious gushing waters; or injured, or kidnapped, or trafficked for forced prostitution, domestic labour, ransom or sexual abuse. No answers are forthcoming and no real data either. (TA)

placement has caused women and men a widespread loss of coping mechanisms, self-respect, dignity and self-confidence, leading to anger, insecurity and trauma, needing both short- and long-term interventions. While a few NGOs and volunteers have provided psycho-social trauma counselling services, they are required on a much larger scale than the current availability, and for a longer duration.

**7. Violence against Women and Protection Issues:** The GoP did not focus on this extremely important dimension of the disaster, but some NGOs and civil society volunteers are doing so. It was reported (but cannot be verified) that some criminal elements were kidnapping girls and women during the initial emergency rescue and relief phase, under the guise of priority evacuation, food and shelter provision. Trafficking, sexual abuse, forced prostitution, child labour, GBV, divorce, desertion, abandonment of women and senior citizens, sale or coercive "adoption" of women and children have been reported, but they have not received the attention they deserve and poverty-stricken flood-affected families are too scared to come forth with evidence and file reports with the police.

**8. Education issues:** (i) the flood-affected areas had high poverty and low literacy rates (especially girls) to

women, as well as basic survival skills in harsh terrain and harsh weather conditions. All humanitarian workers, groups and civil society volunteers need such training too.

**10. Energy and Fuel:** Women are responsible for gathering fuel wood for domestic energy and fodder for livestock. The pre-flood deforestation led to massive landslides, soil erosion and unprecedented flooding, uprooting huge numbers of trees, hence a massive national campaign of reforestation is required on an urgent basis, along with the provision of alternate and renewable energy sources and village electrification. Changed water courses, rivers, lakes, streams will cause further destruction unless urgently addressed.

**11. Food Security, Employment and Livelihoods:** (i) Pre-floods male migration for employment and high poverty levels meant that large numbers of women and WHHs worked in agriculture, forestry, livestock, dairy and food security - which are now severely damaged or destroyed; (ii) large numbers of livestock and poultry also perished in the floods, with a negative impact on women's income as well as nutrition levels; (iii) in the 81 districts, employment and livelihoods are lost or threatened, but while men used to and could still migrate again, what will rural agricultural women do?



# Latest situation brief on floods 2010

## Sindh

Sindh remains one of the hardest hit areas with over a million displaced. Vast areas in Dadu and Qamber-Shahdadkot districts are still under water. Huge numbers of people continue to require relief assistance from Jacobabad to Thatta. An inter-agency assessment to Qamber-Shahdadkot district, where only recently stranded people were reached for the first time, is planned for this week.

However, access to remote areas is improving and district coordination structures are now in place in four locations. More capacity is needed in the way of dedicated cluster coordinators. A multi-cluster task force has been established in Sukkur to address the mass movement of displaced persons out of schools and public buildings. Safety and security of humanitarian workers in northern Sindh is of increasing concern.

(By 6 October, 2010)

- Areas of Sindh are still under water and many people continue to depend on life-saving assistance.
- Sindh and Balochistan report one million flood-displaced people are living in camps.
- Early recovery is now the focus in areas outside Sindh and the worst-affected districts of Balochistan.
- Planning for the impact of winter on flood-affected persons in KPK is underway.

## Kyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK)

Access to northern districts in KPK continues to improve. Assistance is reaching most areas, with the exception of remote parts of Kohistan, Swat and Upper Dir where large-scale movement of goods due to road conditions, is still a challenge. A winter contingency planning exercise is ongoing, under the leadership of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority and with participation from all the clusters. Tank and D.I. Khan are still without access to adequate WASH and public health support, due to a lack of capacity and security concerns in these districts. A security and rapid needs assessment in South Waziristan is planned to ascertain the feasibility of

the return of conflict-displaced persons from these areas currently hosted in Tank and D.I. Khan.

## Punjab

Punjab experienced the largest number of flood-affecteds - 8,200,000. Two months on, the majority of displaced have returned to their areas of origin. Surveys are ongoing to establish how many others are still either unable or unwilling to return. As in other provinces, readiness to return is in some cases to be linked to a mistaken understanding that government compensation is payable only in displacement sites. Life-saving assistance continues to be provided in Punjab in line with the inter-agency 'Survival Strategy'.

## Balochistan

The security situation in Balochistan remains volatile.

Latest analysis suggests that water in Jaffarabad district, and Jacobabad in neighbouring Sindh, will take a significant period of time to recede, and that relief assistance will need to continue in the coming months. A strategic planning workshop has stressed the need for close coordination between response activities in Balochistan and Sindh. As in Sindh, 'secondary displacement' has been reported, whereby displaced persons return to their areas of origin to find that they are unable to access their homes, and therefore seek support in existing camps.

*Courtesy — OCHA Pakistan*

## Health impact

◆ Out of 5.3 million consultations conducted up to 10 September, 708 891 (13%) were for acute diarrhoea, 802 670 (15%) were for acute respiratory infections (ARI), 986 843 (18%) were for skin disease and 182 762 (3%) were for suspected malaria.

◆ The number of suspected malaria cases is rising in Baluchistan and Sindh provinces compared to Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa (KPK) and Punjab. A total of 40 415 cases of suspected malaria were reported from 4 to 10 September.

◆ The Health Cluster plans to establish 81 diarrhoea treatment centres (DTCs) in the 41 most affected districts. More than 40 centres have already been opened.

◆ There are around 500,000 pregnant women among the affected population. This means that many deliveries each month will be in an unsafe environment, without access to skilled birth attendants.

◆ A total of 165 Static Health Units and almost 1200 Mobile Health Units are operating in the four flood affected provinces.

◆ Acute respiratory tract infections (ARI) are the leading cause of morbidity. The number of cases of suspected malaria is rising faster in Baluchistan and Sindh provinces: over the first week of October, the number of cases reported accounted for 17% of consultations in Balochistan province and 13% in Sindh province.

◆ Paediatric malnutrition is increasingly a concern: 30 to 50% of children arriving at health facilities show symptoms of acute malnutrition. *Courtesy — OCHA Pakistan*



Aurat Foundation Lahore team organized a Flood Relief Coordination Meeting among civil society organizations on August 27, 2010 at Ambassador Hotel. Ms Yasmeen Rehman, Advisor to Ministry of Women Development participated as the Chief Guest. Panelists included Mr Hussain Naqi, Senior Analyst HRCF, Mr Peter Jacob, ED NCJP, Mr Waseem Ashraf, Focal Person UN unit Punjab, Ms Laila Nusrat, Chairperson Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Centre for Women. Ms. Mumtaz Mughal moderated the function.

Province Wise Summary of Damages & Losses								
(As of 02 Oct 2010)								
Province	Area Affected (Sq.km)	Deaths	Injured	Houses Damaged	Total Affected Districts	Population Affected	Cropped areas (Hectares)	Cattle head
Baluchistan	322	48	98	75,261	12	700,000	255,237	55,501
KPK*	awaited	1,156	1,198	200,799	24	3,800,000	205,347	52,750
Punjab	14,047	110	350	509,814	11	8,200,000	774,610	3,572
Sindh	30,132	393	1,202	1,114,629	17	7,184,550	1,056,758	263,703
AJK	1,800	71	87	7,106	7	200,000	30,820	288
G-B	7,500	183	60	2,830	7	100,000	3,635	4,669
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>1961</b>	<b>2,995</b>	<b>1,910,439</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>20,184,550</b>	<b>2,326,407</b>	<b>324,982</b>
Source: NDMA / PDMA's / SDMA					* inclusive FATA			

*Courtesy — NDMA*

## Roundtable meeting with the President on women flood affectees

# Strategies and solutions to address problems

By Dr. Saman Yazdani

A roundtable meeting of prominent women's rights activists and development practitioners, who are working with the flood affectees in Pakistan, was held with the President of Pakistan, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, on 29 September, 2010, at the President House, Islamabad. The objective of the meeting was to evolve a comprehensive strategy for the rehabilitation of flood affectees in general and women and children in particular. The meeting was moderated by Ms. Shahnaz Wazir Ali, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Sector and 60 Civil Society Organization (CSOs) from all over Pakistan, women ministers, women Parliamentarians and senior civil servants participated.

The meeting had comprehensive discussion on women's flood related issues. Issues and possible solutions were discussed. Representatives of about 25-30 organizations were asked to present a short talk. The topics covered a wide range of subjects, a gist of which is presented below:

1. Floods can also be considered and opportunity rather than only a disaster.
2. Discussion on flood tax took place.
3. Seeds for the planting of upcoming Rabi crop were required; President responded that he had been informed that the sufficient seeds are available for winter sowing
4. The real face of Pakistan, which was hidden previously, had now emerged and was obvious and in our face. We need sustainable rehabilitation. Cattle cooperatives farms are required.
5. Population services are missing as women have 10-15 children and female literacy was poor

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and Red Crescent was also conspicuous and tragic. We used to have them. Where are these institutions? Does anybody know? And where was the Flood Relief Commission and what was it doing?

The second major recommendation would be to have civilian-oriented disaster management plans in place and annual nation-wide drills conducted to test the effectiveness of these plans. Civil defence institutions are restored and strengthened to be made integral part of these plans. The disaster management and preparedness tools and techniques are incorporated in the curriculum and; one-year civil defence training is made compulsory for all students after secondary school examination.

The proponents of public policy failure in the recent floods also talk about several illegalities and sheer neglect on the part of successive governments to forestall and pre-empt such calamities.

6. UNIFEM Rapid gender assessment report was ready.

7. It was put forward that the previous system of having elected local councilors were very good because it gave the local people, including grass roots women, an opportunity to participate in local decision making. So a suggestion was put forward to the President that the local council elections should be initiated ASAP so they local councilors are in place to help in the rehabilitation work

8. Land that will be re/assigned to the flood affectees should be registered in women's name; The President responded that his government was very aware of women's rights (Benazir's legacy) and recently in Islamabad, flats were being distributed and the President insisted that they should be registered in the wife's name.

9. Better coordination was demanded with UN and NGO /CSOs and Govts. As the UN cluster were very slow in being set-up and inter-organizational coordination was weak.

10. National Identity Cards (NIC) of women needed to be made so that they can benefit from Govt. schemes like the Watan Card: the Watan Card is a new identification card initiated by the Govt. of Pakistan whereby flood affectees can, with the presentation of this card at the local bank/ATM, draw upto Rs. 25,000/- as the initial flood compensation money. In order to qualify for a Watan Card, the Computerized National Identification Card (CNIC) was required but unfortunately many Pakistani women, especially rural women, do not possess it. Fear was expressed that because of this the flood affected women maybe left out of receiving any cash transfers.

11. Security (trafficking of women and children) sanitation, nutrition were

important issues for women in the relief camps. They needed to be looked into.

12. At the taluka level (Union council in Sindh province is called a taluka. It is at an administrative level below the district), women needed counseling and women headed households needed to be looked into

13. At the start of the floods, people did not vacate dangerous areas and move to safer ones because there was no camp or place set - up to accommodate them. They had nowhere to go.

14. There is a need for an emergency dept. to be set up at the district level and the Govt. needs to allocate budget for disaster management and develop a comprehensive disaster strategy.

15. A young leaders group mentioned that the President should be accessible by email so that they can discuss different options with him

16. RH needs of women were not catered too and babies were delivering in the camps.

17. It was suggested that at least 10% of women should be part of the decision making bodies of the National, Provincial and District Disaster Management Authority, so that women needs are not overlooked during rehabilitation.

18. The skills that the flood affected women and men possess should be harnessed so that they can start earning livelihood e.g. women can do embroideries etc.

19. Public (political) representatives should be asked to make regular visits to the flood affected areas and help the situation on the ground. They should try and make model villages during rehabilitation

20. Malnourished children were evident in the camps and in Karachi camps at least 30-35% were moderately malnourished. Food security need-

ed to be looked into.

21. All UN agencies, like the WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP need to plan together. There needs to be better coordination

22. It is important that there be involvement of the community in planning their own rehabilitation.

23. It was suggested that the Govt. should built and donate houses for the flood affectees rather than giving them cash transfers. Cash will be wasted by the affectees. The houses should be in the name of the women.

24. The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) was mentioned and it was said that because women could not go and collect the BISP forms (due to social restrictions), the forms were being returned and not reaching the beneficiaries;

25. In the upcoming National Health Policy, the voucher scheme needs to be introduced. However it was explained that after the passage of the 18th constitutional amendment in the National Assembly, Health sector had been reverted to the provinces and it was now under provincial jurisdiction (not Federal) so this needed to be pursued in/at the provincial level.

26. There is going to winter and snow coming to the northern districts/areas especially Kohistan, Dir etc. And people are going to get isolated with few rations (poor food security). Accessibility will be difficult as mountain roads will be closed. In response to this, the President consulted the Gen. (Retd.) Nadeem, Chairman, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), who was also present, and informed the group that 26 Chinook helicopters donated by the US Government were available for those areas during the winter season. —*The author is associated with Shirkat Gah*

## Floods and issues of governance

The allowing of erosion and diversion of natural water courses through illegal construction, hotels, houses and farmlands on the river bed and sides is scandalous!

The lack of a coordinated response blended with support systems and components under a unified rapid response network at federal, provincial and local level gave rise to a number of problems. Foremost among these was the inequitable distribution and access to relief items, both in food and non-food categories. And, as in all disaster and conflict situations, foremost among the sufferers were women, children and elderly people.

Since governance predominantly has a masculine body and a patriarchal soul, the saddest part of all crises, including the present one, was the absence of a gender perspective and a general insensitivity of both the government authorities and the general public, to

the special situation, needs and requirements of women, especially the already disadvantaged rural women.

One major recommendation, therefore, is to mainstream gender perspective in all relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction plans with women's special concerns and needs taking priority along with children's concerns and needs. Mainstreamed gender-sensitive initiatives are the best way to meet women's special needs and to protect them from disproportionate suffering in disaster and conflict situations.

This could be achieved, first of all, through inclusion and participation of women as equal participants in all decision-making, policy-making, planning and funding allocations and disbursements and programme implementation for relief and rehabilitation. Women public representatives, local women leaders and women representatives of civil society groups, in addi-

tion to the representatives of the affectees should be taken on board, be it NDMA or any other such forum.

The institutional mechanisms and guidelines provided for in the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 could be a valuable reference point. Similar measures could be undertaken for ensuring women's role in flood relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction plans.

Another key recommendation to the government and policy-makers is for measures that ensure ownership of small but critical assets for women. This includes free land distribution of State lands to women, particularly to the female-headed households. Women must be paid for their agricultural labour and livestock production. In order to rehabilitate women's agri-based livelihoods, they require free or very cheap credit, agri-business and small entrepreneurship skills -- *excerpts from a paper read at Jinnah Institute's policy dialogue in Islamabad*



## EDITORIAL

Civil society the world over and in Pakistan since the October 2005 earthquake has coined and consumed a jargon 'turn disasters into opportunities' in almost all disaster situations. The recent floods, unprecedented in the memories of living generations, proffer a discourse to ponder upon if we still take 'disasters into opportunities' as a gobbledygook for just attracting media and piling up official shelves with reports or we take it as source of elevating civil society's identity from apprehensive to comprehensive position characterized by public demand and opinion.

The recent floods were though unprecedented both in terms of degree and destruction offer a prospect for adopting, testing and adjusting disaster coping mechanism i.e. learning and preparing for the any future eventuality. Currently when the government and civil society in Pakistan is entering from relief to rehabilitation, strategizing on how to 'prevent devastation if not the disasters' is vital.

World over, there is a paradigm shift in disaster management from post-disaster relief to pre-disaster preparedness, mitigation and improved emergency response capacities. Disaster preparedness refers to measures taken to prepare for and reduce the effects of disasters.

That is, to predict, and where possible, prevent and mitigate their impact on vulnerable populations. The whole scheme of disaster preparedness would, however, become a futile exercise if it is taken as a specialized programme and not as a goal in letter and spirit.

Disaster preparedness needs to be a continuous, participatory and open to fit diverse circumstances of diverse population. In order to make it mandatory upon government and institutions like National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), there is mechanism such as the 'UN Resolution 46/182, 1991'. The resolution offers clear guidelines for disaster prevention and preparedness.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) have more competitive advantages and flexibility of operations in fields like awareness generation, community level preparedness and capacity building of communities, while the government agencies have their core competencies in formulating policies and procedures for structural safety, for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development projects. A combination of both would bring significant and practicable disaster preparedness and prevention.

## Aurat Foundation, USAID sign Cooperative Agreement for advancing women's human rights

By a Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Aurat Foundation and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) signed a historic Cooperative Agreement on 18 August 2010, for a five-year Gender Equity Program (GEP) that aims at advancing women's human rights and empowerment in Pakistan. The US\$ 40 million grant-making program, an ambitious gender reform initiative, to be implemented across the country will focus on four objectives relating to core women's rights issues.

The four main GEP objectives are: i) enhancing gender equity by expanding women's access to justice and women's human rights; ii) increasing women's empowerment by expanding knowledge of their rights and opportunities to exercise their rights in the workplace, community, and home; iii) combating gender-based violence; and, iv) strengthening the capacity of Pakistani organizations that advocate for gender equity, women's empowerment and the elimination of gender-based violence.

Aurat Foundation, as primary recipient of this grant, and the Asia Foundation, as its sub-contractor, will work together to award over 400 small, medium and large grants to local civil society organizations, concerned government gender entities, policy think tanks, academic research and training institutions, professional, business and media associations. The volume of grants will range from \$20,000 to \$ 00,000 in a grant cycle starting on a quarterly basis every year through competitive applications.

The Gender Equity Program expects to issue more than 50 grants in its first year, beginning October 1, with more than half of these as "fast-track" grants to support flood-related activities in the first quarter. The selection of projects to be funded by sub-grants dispersal will prioritize quick impact, sustainable and high visibility projects which will have measurable impact upon behavioral gender-sensitive change. This approach will encompass three key elements: proactive engagement with potential sub grantees; innovative grant strategies; and ensuring long-term and sustainable results.

The Program will respond to local needs. It will seek to establish national coherence through Program sub-grants and through the eventual establishment of a Gender Coalition Network. This Network will provide a permanent platform for organizations with enhanced capacity which, it is intended, will continue to provide gender empowerment resources beyond the lifecycle of the Program. Successful initiatives will be considered for replication and scaling up through further solicitations and where appropriate non-competitive grants.

The Program will also respond to changing political, social and security circumstances through rapid impact activities developed in response to changing circumstances (such as new political and legal landscapes, security issues, conflict, displacements etc.). The recent experiences of conflict, giving rise to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), have particularly impacted upon women. The Program will, if needed, reassess its immediate priorities to accommodate rapid impact initiatives to help women and girls meet unexpected economic and social challenges.

The involvement of Pakistan's Government at all levels will be a crucial part of Program approach. The GEP will seek to target interactions and partnerships with federal, provincial and district government, down to the union council level where appropriate. It will be vital to appreciate, in setting overall strategy, the need for top-down change, in terms of law and policy, alongside bottom-up change, in terms of implementation and behavioral change.

The GEP will seek to identify innovative grant ideas and strategies, and support potential sub-awardees in their development and implementation. Such ideas could focus on the gender aspects of information and education, building on the recent constitutional protection of these rights, public interest litigation, and intensive engagement with universities, think tanks and policy institutes to build their capacity to study and address gender issues. It may also include support for communications technology which has potential to assist women in very remote or conflict-affected areas, e.g. through help lines.

## Norway redoubles its support for flood victims in Pakistan

Norway has decided to increase its assistance for the flood victims in Pakistan to USD 66 million. The situation is critical, and the number of victims keeps rising. The floods are the worst ever in the history of Pakistan.

The UN has issued an appeal for more assistance in response to the flood disaster in Pakistan. According to the UN, USD 2 billion will be needed during the first year following the disaster. About 20 million people are affected. More than 1.8 million homes have been completely or partially destroyed.

"The floods in Pakistan are among the worst natural disasters the world has seen in recent times. Extreme weather has forced millions to flee their homes. One out of ten Pakistanis is directly or indirectly affected. The destructive forces of nature have laid vast agricultural areas waste and have set the country back many years," said Minister of the Environment and International Development Erik Solheim.

Norway has already provided NOK 115 million in emergency relief following the flood. Now

Norway's assistance for the flood victims will be increased to NOK 400 million (USD 66 million).

An area larger than England has been devastated by the flood. In the southern province of Sindh, the flood waters remain high. It is difficult to get an overview of the damage, and there is a serious risk of epidemics breaking out.

"The situation is still highly critical for nine million people. We must now show our solidarity with the flood victims. The Norwegian Government is therefore providing additional emergency relief to Pakistan," said Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre.

The funds provided by Norway will be channelled through the UN's humanitarian organisations, the Red Cross movement and other NGOs that have experience of working in Pakistan.

"It is especially difficult to reach the most vulnerable groups. Women and children are particularly at risk in this chaotic situation. It is important that we provide the protection they need," said Mr Solheim.



**LEGISLATIVE  
WATCH**



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### Advisory Board:

I.A. Rehman, Tahira Abdullah, Naeem Mirza

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Wasim Wagha, Sarwat Wazir

Letters, opinions and contributions are welcome. Please write to House 12, Street 12, F-7/2, Islamabad Tel: (051) 2608956-8, Fax: (051) 2608955 Email: lwprs@af.org.pk Website: www.af.org.pk

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# Pakistan working paper to steer UN Women reform agenda

*Following are excerpts from the draft working paper prepared by Civil Society Alliance (CSA) on UN Women in Pakistan*

UN Women needs to be a strong entity, which must be facilitated to achieve its mandate. The impact of UN Women's work will be seen and felt mainly at the country level, so the engagement of national governments in its structuring process over the next three months is critical.

## UN Women:

### □ Functions and structures

- UN Women's mandate requires powerful, capable and effective leadership from HQs to Country level. An in-depth knowledge and experience of women's rights movements and issues must be considered essential criteria for appointments to all policy making, managerial and professional posts at HQs, Regional and Country levels.

- The July 2010 UNGA Resolution paragraph 60 clearly states that there will be a 41 member Board with 10 from the Asia region. As Pakistan, is one of the 8 Pilot countries worldwide, for the 'Delivering As One' within the UN System, it is critical that one seat on the Board be for a strong woman representative from Pakistan.

### Regional level

- The mix of thematic expertise of staff at Regional and Sub-Regional levels, should reflect the particularity of women's concerns in the respective regions and sub-regions.

### Country offices

- at the Country level UN Women must be represented by a senior-level Country Representative, at par with other UN Agency Heads.

- UN Women's Country Offices must be adequately resourced, in order to not only meet country specific programmatic requirements, but also, more importantly, to prevent UNW competing for funds with national NGOs, as has hitherto been the case.

- country Offices must have multi-year Country Programmes and secured funding for them,

- UN Women needs to focus more on institutional strengthening of national mechanisms for women, e.g. National Commissions on the Status of Women (NCSW), Ministries of Women's Development (MoWD) and their provincial departments.

- UN must strongly support the institutional strengthening of women's rights groups and organizations,

## Civil Society Alliance Pakistan formed

By Nayyar Shabana

Women all over the world greeted the historic resolution of UN General Assembly (UNGA) for creating separate entity for women namely 'UN Women' to voice their issues for greater impact. As a result of long struggle of global women's movements and years of negotiations between UN member states, UNGA voted unanimously on 2 July 2010 to create a new entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women - to be known as UN Women.

Women's rights groups and individuals across the world also warmly welcomed the appointment of Ms Michelle Bachelet, former president of Chile, as Under-secretary General, UN Women. As member of Gear Campaign women's rights organizations and activists in Pakistan played imperative role in responding UN system call for more responsive role to the needs and concerns of women world wide.

Thus, responding to the UNGA's terrific resolution, women's rights activists and 12 national NGOs in Pakistan formed a Civil Society Alliance (CSA) on UN Women, to support the advocacy efforts of government and civil society with UN, in order to influence UN decisions and policies vis-à-vis the embryonic structure and mandate of UN Women.

The CSA initiated a series of consultations on UN Women, first meeting was held in Lahore where number of civil society organizations and women's activists participated and shared their concerns, possible challenges and expectations regarding the institutional structure and mandate of UN Women. Consolidated findings of Lahore meeting were later shared and discussed with government, civil society organizations and donor representatives at national consultation held in Islamabad on September 8, 2010.

Through nationwide consultations, the CSA developed its position regarding UN Women's normative and operational aspects and prepared draft position paper 'UN Women-Perspective From Pakistani Rights Activists; perspective' After consultations, CSA members had meetings with representative of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ms Shahnaz Wazir Ali, Special Assistant to PM on Social Sector, to share and discuss the perspective of Pakistani CSOs on UN women. The draft position paper (excerpts of which are presented below), was also shared and delivered to the delegation going to attend UNGA September session in New York.

### □ Civil Society Role in supporting and reinforcing the work of UN Women

- open dialogue with civil society can contribute towards establishing the key priorities of the new entity.. Particular notable in this respect are the July 2010 UNGA Resolution are paragraphs 54, and 55, the former recognizing civil society's role in promoting women's rights gender equality and women's empowerment, and the latter requesting the USG to continue effective consultation with such organizations. It is therefore hoped that the USG will lead the establishment of effective mechanisms and dynamic processes to regularize engagement/consultation with grass root women's organizations at country level, as well as with national and international civil society groups at Regional and Global levels.

### □ Mandate

The consolidation of the four UN gender equality mechanisms into the UN Women entity, needs to evolve into more than just the sum of their previous parts and functions, and needs to include a focus on:

- building in-house and UN system-wide capacity on gender responsiveness;
- strengthening national institutions and national policies;
- reinforcing the effective integration of women's rights into national social, economic and political development policies and processes, as well as disaster management plans;

- ensuring the participation and inclusion of marginalized urban and rural poor women at all fora, - carefully handling the "women-specific" vs. the "cross-cutting gender-mainstreaming" debate; as they are not mutually exclusive - both need to advance side by side;

- achieving poverty eradication by addressing the unacceptably high feminization of poverty;

- focusing on women's food insecurity and hunger, landlessness and increasingly unbalanced dependence on fast-depleting natural resources left on fast-depleting natural resources left un-renewed despite being renewable (e.g. forests) and environmental degradation, exacerbate by the WTO, IFIs and their local partners;

- focusing on peace, and conflict resolution, especially as it impacts on women

- assisting Government and civil society awareness, advocacy, training, inter-generational experience sharing and institution-building initiatives, not limited to the projectized approach.

### □ Financial Architecture - Regular Budgets and Trust Funds Resources

- UN Women's sustainability and success will depend upon a solid financial architecture, comprising a judicious mix of regular budgets/core funds, along with trust funds and "noted" budgets.

- While the Pakistani women's movement welcomes the principle

of establishing UN Women as the new composite entity for women's empowerment, gender justice and equality, we caution the UN System that a great deal more global consultation is required in fine-tuning its vision, mission, mandate and operational focus. For instance, ref doc UNGA/A/64/588 of 6 January 2010, Pakistani activists for gender justice and equality, human rights and social justice do not agree with para III.C.11(g) on page 10, recommending the development of "strategic partnerships [our emphasis] with multilateral...agencies...including international financial and trade organizations (such as the World Bank, IMF, WTO), regional development banks and other...entities...". Similarly, para I.C.8(e) on page 7 of doc UNGA/A/64/589 of 22 December 2009 recommends building "greater synergy ... and promoting enhanced coherence in operational policies ... in the work of the UN system ... the Bretton Woods Institutions ... regional development banks and coordinating bodies".

- we believe that the structural adjustment policies and programmes of the IMF, WB, regional banks and WTO have actually exacerbated global poverty as well as the feminization of poverty. Thus, in line with para 342 of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) will need "to ensure that investments and programmes benefit women and contribute to sustainable development". As such we urge the UN Women to play a strong, proactive role in ensuring this.



# Aurat Foundation's Motherland Flood Relief Campaign

## Country-wide mobilisation to save women, children and elderly people

By Ibetsam Hasan Qaisrani

Aurat Foundation responded to Pakistan's worst ever disaster of its history by immediately launching the 'Motherland Flood Relief Campaign'. The deadly floods devastated vast swathes of the country in almost all the provinces of Pakistan. Over 21 million people were affected and 1,961 lost their lives. Millions of people lost their homes and livelihoods. Over 8 million acres of wheat, cotton, sugarcane and other crops were ruined; hygiene and sanitary conditions have deteriorated alarmingly and there is grave apprehension of epidemics, especially gastroenteritis, cholera, malaria and dengue fever, and large-scale snake bites, scabies, respiratory and digestive system problems.

One of AF's most valuable assets is its citizens' networks. These networks are based at the grassroots level in all 110 districts of Pakistan and became the vehicle through which AF launched its major nation-wide flood relief campaign. In collaboration with hundreds of volunteers from AF's Citizens' Action Committees for Women's Rights, Women's Leaders' Groups and District Coordination Committees, AF was able to make a rapid response to the catastrophe.

The first relief goods were sent to the



worst hit areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Later, AF was able to extend its Motherland Flood Relief Campaign to districts in Sindh, Punjab and Balochistan which were swiftly accessible to our volunteers and were located near AF's regional offices.

With the support and cooperation of its global partners, friends and sympathizers within the country and abroad,

AF was able to raise funds for the Campaign. Women's Learning Partnership (WLP) from USA, who is our global partners, gave complete support to our flood relief effort. The WLP and its 17 other partners across the world also linked their websites with AF's website on the situation of the flood and disseminated Motherland Flood Relief Appeal in their respective geographical areas by

translating the appeal into Arabic, French, Spanish and Portuguese. Similarly, The Mauritius-based HomeNet South Asia, the Malaysian-based International Women's Rights Watch Group - Asia Pacific, and the Australian-based Chamak Pakistan also gave us valuable support to AF's flood relief activities.

Some urgent needs for some of the worse-affected were met. However, AF continues to plan more short and long-term relief and rehabilitation interventions. Lost livelihoods and infrastructure will have to be re-established and re-built. Again, female-headed households are particularly vulnerable as they will have to struggle to establish their livelihoods and reclaim their land title rights. Psychological trauma is a huge concern as rehabilitation efforts are made more challenging to the state of mind of the flood-affected. —*The author is AF's Director Programmes*

Translation by FODEN, WLP partner in Nicaragua  
**Llamado urgente para Fondos de Ayuda para damnificados en Pakistán**  
 Tornado de Urgent Appeal for Pakistan Flood Relief Funds  
 WLP Partner Aurat Foundation's Motherland Flood Relief Campaign for women, children, and the elderly  
 Traducción por: Fondo de Desarrollo para la Mujer/ FODEN  
<http://www.learningpartnership.org/en/partners/pakistan/flood-relief>  
 La fundación Aurat, ha lanzado una campaña nacional para obtener fondos para mujeres, niñas, niños,

Translation by Copia, WLP partner in Brazil  
**Apelo Urgente para Fundo de Assistência às Vítimas das Enchentes do Paquistão**  
 WLP em parceria com a Fundação Aurat em sua Campanha de Assistência às mulheres, crianças e idosos vítimas das enchentes do Paquistão.  
 WLP em parceria com a Fundação Aurat lançou uma Campanha nacional para obter fundos para

International appeals by WLP and AF partners in Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic

Translation by CRTD.A, WLP partner in Lebanon  
**نداء عاجل لصندوق إغاثة باكستان من الفيضانات**  
**منظمة التضامن النسائي للتعليم**  
<http://www.learningpartnership.org/en/partners/pakistan/flood-relief>  
 منظمة التضامن النسائي للتعليم بالاشتراك مع حملة مؤسسة أورات لإغاثة نساء وأطفال ومسنى الوطن الأم من الفيضانات  
 أطلقت مؤسسة أورات، شريكة منظمة التضامن النسائي للتعليم في باكستان، حملة إغاثة وطنية من جراء الفيضانات بهدف



Aurat Foundation staff and volunteers of Citizen Action Committees distributing emergency relief goods to women and children affected by floods (clockwise) in Quetta, Peshawar, Karachi, Nowshera, Sukkur and D G Khan.







Nabeela Shaheen and Tayyaba Aziz at a D G Khan FDG

## FGD on women flood affectees

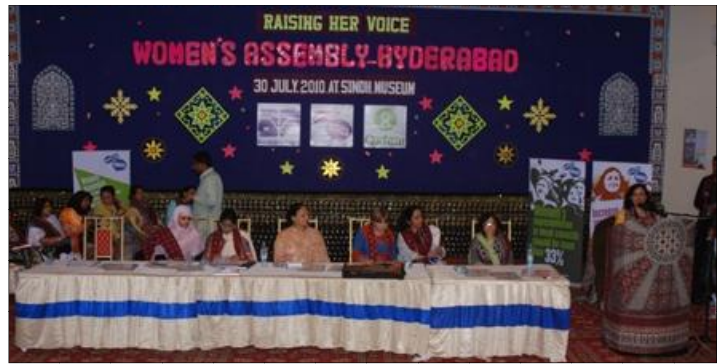
In order to identify the flood affected women in South Punjab, PDM-VAW team of Lahore office organized a focused group discussion (FGD) at D G Khan on September 27, 2010.

The discussion was participated by Ms Tayyaba Aziz, Chair Person Women Leader Group, D G Khan, members of Citizen Action Committee, local NGOs and women affectees.

Raising Her Voice (RHV), a project of Aurat Foundation and Oxfam GB, organized a One-Day Women Assembly on July 30, 2010, at Sindh Museum Hyderabad.

The women assembly was planned on Oxfam GB Chief Executive Ms Barbara Stocking's visit to Hyderabad. Apart from the representatives of women's rights organizations, the assembly was also attended by the members of '50 Women Leaders Group' from nine districts of Sindh and three districts of Baluchistan.

Dr Masuma Hasan, Founder-Member of Aurat Foundation's Board of Governors, said that a great transformation had taken place since women are now actively participating in politics and in almost every walk of life.



Amar Sindhu is addressing the Women Assembly; Barbara Stocking, Dr Masuma Hasan and other women leaders on the stage.

Ms Barbara Stocking, addressing the assembly, said that campaign women groups had been formed in 17 countries so that to develop leadership qualities among women and create awareness about their rights. Ms

Feroza Zahra from Oxfam GB informed the participants that under the campaign such women leader groups had been formed in 30 districts of Pakistan with a membership of 1,500 women leaders.

## Sialkot killings blot on national conscience

15 August, 2010 was the darkest day in the history of Pakistan when two young brothers, 15-year-old Hafiz Mughees and 19-year-old Hafiz Muneeb were brutally murdered in Sialkot by a wild mob in front of local police, in the holy month of Ramadan.

Their dead bodies were dragged on the road; several people including police watched this incident and no one intervened to stop this barbarism. Human rights organizations and activists and people from different sections of society strongly condemned this heinous incident and demanded the concerned authorities to bring criminals to justice.

Insani Huqooq Itihad (IHI), an alliance of rights-based organizations in Rawalpindi-Islamabad, held meetings not only to condemn the incidence, but also to devise future strategies to combat the increasing incidence of violence across the country.

Participants emphasized that all human rights organizations and individuals should work jointly to bring positive change in the social behavior of the people to ensure just, democratic and harmonious society.

The meeting was followed by a series of discussions in the same context. As a result of comprehensive dialogue IHI members decided to launch a campaign named 'Citizens' Campaign to End Violence' (CCEV).

It was decided that the campaign would provide forum for citizens, which would involve teachers, students, youth, media, writers, civil society activists, professionals and public to create nationwide awareness about peace and harmony through media and other means of communication. — *By Staff Reporter*



PDM-VAW team at Karachi office also held an FGD, titled 'Problems & Issues of Flood Affected Women', on September 30, 2010, at Karachi. Mr Kaiser Bangali, Advisor to the CM, Sindh, Mr Shahab Usto, Analyst, Ms Shehar Bano, Journalist, Ms Kishwer Zehra, MNA (MQM) and Ms Humaira Alwani, MPA (PPPP) were the guest speakers. Mehnaz Rehman of AF Karachi office moderated the discussion.

## Workshop organised for capacity building of Musalahati Jirga

Aurat Foundation's Peshawar team organized one 3-Day workshop for the capacity building of members of Musalahati Jirga, on August 19-21, 2010 at Haripur district. The workshops were held under its 'Local Action to Combat Gender Injustices' project. Major focus of the workshops included the issues of gender based violence, forced marriage and women's right to inheritance. Participants were invited from 20 union councils of the district. Legal status of forced marriages and women's right to inheritance was discussed in details.



Participants at the capacity building workshop organized for the members of Musalahati Jirga.



Anbreen Yasin, Rubab Afzal and Sarwat Wazir at the group discussion, Islamabad.

PDM-VAW team at Islamabad office organized similar group discussion with the university students and women activists from civil society, on October 1, 2010 at AF office. Student from Fatima Jinah Women University and Preston University actively participated in the discussion titled 'Affects of Flood on expecting women with special reference to Post Partum Depression'. The panelist, including Ms Anbreen Yasin from Bedari, Ms Rubab Afzal, a Psychologist and Ms Sarwat Wazir described in detail the affects of flood on expecting women in reference with Post Partum depression. Mina Khan from PDM-VAW moderated the discussion.