Timeline: Gender Equality in Review
Pakistan Country Office
Year 2012
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1. Foreword

In May 2012 UN Women Pakistan launched its Country Profile 2012-2013 placing women’s rights at the centre of its efforts in line with national and international commitments on Gender Equality and Women’s Rights, including the Constitution of Pakistan, National Action of Plan for Women as well as the Beijing Platform for Action, Convention on Elimination and Discrimination Against Women and the Millennium Development Goals (and more specifically ‘Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women’).

The Pakistan Country Programme is built around three key areas: the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievements of equality between women and men as partners and rights holders of development, human rights, humanitarian response and peace.

In 2012, through partnerships with the host government (at the inter-ministerial and the inter-sectorial level), with non-government and civil society, women’s alliances and networks, and in working with the United Nations system and other development partners, special focus was placed on gender responsive policy making, women’s political participation, economic empowerment opportunities, freedom from violence, and women’s leadership role in disaster risk reduction and management.

This year, efforts in bringing gender to the forefront of discussions at the highest levels has resulted in: adoption and launch of frameworks on gender equality and women's rights; approval of policies in recognition of informal women workers and women’s empowerment; tabling and adoption of legal reforms to prevent and protect women and girls against crimes of violence; institutionalization of provincial mechanisms to support implementation of pro-women laws; and specific actions related to disaster risk management were gendered and made beneficial to women and children.

We now look forward to building on the results and foundations we have put in place with our partners in leading towards realization of gender equality and empowerment of the women of Pakistan.

Lena Lindberg  
Country Director, OIC  
UN Women Pakistan
2. One UN Coordination on gender equality commitments

Photo credit: Iqbal Katri
Promoting gender equality commitments

In working with the UN System’s agencies, programmes and funds in combining efforts in setting common standards to promote and integrate gender commitments within its works, UN Women in leading and coordinating the energies of the Inter-Agency Group on Gender Equality contributed towards the UN Country Team’s endorsement of a Management Response to the Gender Audit of 2011 as an initial step towards assisting the UN System to identify trends, challenges and opportunities in its delivery around the process and substance of gender equality and more so, the UN’s own capacity to do so. The Gender Audit, a social assessment, was on the level of internalization of gender equality concerns, the existence and actual use of institutional mechanisms towards gender equality, as well as the organizational culture within the UN System in Pakistan.

In strengthening internal mechanisms, the Management Response has provided a basis for tracking actions taken in the context of the CCA/UNDAF, known as the One UN Programme (OPI) 2009-2012, and more specifically towards implementation of the next CCA/UNDAF, the One UN Programme (OPII) 2013-2017, and includes:

i. Gender Markers to track and monitor gender responsiveness of programming and contributions of investments and expenditures to both gender mainstreaming and targeted interventions for gender equality and women’s empowerment

ii. Guidance notes to support integration of gender equality and a human rights based approach into programming leading towards meaningful inclusion of gender equality and human rights in situational and response analyses, programmatic activities, budgets, and monitoring frameworks

iii. A common understanding of terminology, core principles and effective approaches of gender equality and women’s empowerment

UN Women also led the development and advocacy for adoption of a UN Gender Mainstreaming Strategy through the Inter-Agency Group on Gender Equality, providing the UN Country Team with a key initiative for institutionalizing the Management Response to the Gender Audit. The Gender Audit and its Management Response form part of the country level implementation of the scorecard on UNCT Performance Indicators in South Asia.

Accountability on gender equality

The UN Country Team’s adoption this year of a One UN Pakistan Statement on Gender Equality upholds their commitment and accountability on gender equality and states;

‘we, as Heads of the UN Agencies in Pakistan, under ONE UN are committed to collaborating closely with the Government of Pakistan - at all levels - and other stake-holders including the civil society, within the framework of UN’s four roles of Advocate, Convener, Advisor and Service Provider, anchored in human rights, inclusive, equitable and sustainable development and humanitarian assistance to enhance institutional processes and procedures, governance systems and mechanisms for delivering on Gender Equality’.

In furthering accountability and commitments towards mainstreaming gender, the UN Country Team endorsed ‘Gender Equality and Social Justice’ as a Strategic Priority Area within the second One UN Programme, 2013-2017. UN Women were instrumental in advocating and guiding the discussion leading to this strategic recommendation which drew rationale from a number of key UN and Government of Pakistan sources, all of which were consistent in their demand for promoting a targeted approach to effectively enhance women and girl’s ability (individually and collectively) to transform inequitable relationships and structures of power. A framework supports this strategic priority which sets specific measurable actions for the UN in strengthening enabling conditions for women’s and girl’s in a range of decision-making processes and reduce gender and social justice related exclusions and inequalities. (UN Women is co-convener of this priority area with ILO)

In addition, the UN Country Team agreed to continue gender mainstreaming throughout all strategic priority areas of the One UN Programme, 2013-2017.

Furthermore, in assisting the UN in its coordinated efforts to integrate the principles of gender equality in development assistance, UN Women supported efforts of the UN and other partners to integrate and promote accountability on gender equality within the humanitarian architecture and response. Resultantly, UN Women was recognized as the key UN agency for coordination and promotion of gender equality by the National Disaster Management Authority, the Government of Pakistan’s lead agency on disasters and emergency situations.
3. Women’s leadership and participation
With Pakistan’s 18th Amendment to the Constitution, women’s development was administratively devolved from the federal to the provincial governments, initiated in June 2011. For 2012 this signaled a paradigm shift in the way services would be delivered to disadvantaged segments of society. In bringing democratic governance closer to the people (including women and girls), governance structures were strengthened with empowerment of provincial actors as an important step to ensure inclusive development at the grass-root level.

With the National Plan of Action for Women (1998) in need of being updated, and expiry of the National Policy on Development and Empowerment of Women (2002), UN Women and the National Commission on the Status of Women supported the provincial Women Development Departments to develop gender strategic plans and frameworks within their local context to: identify key priority areas and strategies; set targets for a 5-year period; better position local women machineries and government departments; and identify responsible actors.

In doing so, three framework on gender equality and empowerment of women were approved:

i. The Provincial Government of Punjab launched their ‘Women’s Empowerment Package’

ii. A ‘State Policy Framework on Gender Equality’ for Azad Jammu and Kashmir (Pakistan Administered Kashmir) was launched

iii. The Provincial Government of Balochistan endorsed their ‘Policy Framework for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment’

Efforts in advocacy and lobbying with key partners to empower provincial women machineries to lead and implement the gender perspective in policies and plans, included:

i. Bifurcation of the Women Development Department from the Department of Social Welfare in Punjab

ii. Establishment of a State Commission on the Status of Women and a Women Parliamentarian Caucus in Pakistan Administered Kashmir

iii. Bifurcation of a Women Development Department from the Department of Social Welfare by and establishment of a Women Development Directorate by Pakistan Administered Kashmir

Following observation of the 2008 General Election results and CEDAW’s Concluding Observations in 2007 efforts were focused to increase women’s turnout as registered voters.

Through a model pilot intervention, UN Women supported the National Database and Registration Authority on their Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) registration drive on women from the rural areas of five ‘low women CNIC registration’ districts of Balochistan (as identified in the 2008 General Elections). With a projected number of 127,139 unregistered women in the pilot area against an initial target to register 10,000 women, so far 1,674 women have successfully been facilitated and issued with CNICs and registered as voters - a further 3,130 women are in process of being issued a CNIC - a crucial piece of identification necessary for their eligibility for inclusion in the voter’s list.

Complementing the registration drive on women voters was UN Women’s support towards collection and analysis of sex disaggregated voter turnout data. In collaboration with UNDP and the Electoral Commission of Pakistan, for the first time in Pakistan’s history the Commission collected sex disaggregated voter turnout data from individual polling stations during local by-elections in July and December 2012. Inclusion of women within the ballots as registered electoral voters, facilitated the Commission in collection of votes cast as a part of pilot testing towards a gender responsive election results management system. Initial analyses provided a vital tool to detect irregularities in polling stations and identify areas of low voter turnout, particularly of women, which in some areas included a simple revision to forms used in collection of voter turnout data. Following the by-elections of June 2012, three electoral forms identified as critical to support collection and consolidation of sex disaggregated data on voter turnout were revised to include a gender perspective and were subsequently piloted in the by-elections of December 2012. UN Women is also supporting the Commission to integrate the gender perspective within strategic electoral management frameworks and documents, including:

i. A Code of Conduct for political parties and their candidates, polling staff and Election observers

ii. A staff training manual for the Election Commission to ensure gender mainstreaming within the training architecture

iii. A Gender Policy for electoral management, oversight and dispute resolution services
4. Women’s economic empowerment

Photo credit: Salman Asif
2012 saw realization of efforts to reduce the gender gap in women’s economic empowerment opportunities and in particular the recognition and inclusion of informal women workers within the formal workforce. Approval of a Home Based Worker Policy within the framework of a Women’s Empowerment Package by the Government of Punjab was a first step to local policy adoption and is a milestone for the women of Punjab, particularly informal women home based workers.

This provincial Women’s Empowerment Package in addressing enhanced economic empowerment opportunities for women, commits to:

i. Encourage women into public services through quota’s and reserved seats
ii. Increase women’s representation in recruitment committees and administrative leadership positions
iii. Offer loans to women for commercial ventures
Other measures include amendment in inheritance laws to safeguard property rights of female heirs, and a property rights scheme for joint property title awarded to both husband and wife (50% share each).

According to various estimates, over 20 million Pakistani women are engaged in home based work and the rate is rising each year. The key legislative measures approved by the Government of Punjab is just one step towards providing these workers with equality of legal status and just reward of their works, in addition to:

i. Equality of treatment and wages
ii. Skill enhancement training
iii. Access to credit, land ownership and assets
iv. Access to market challenges and linkages
v. Expansion of social protection (including maternity protection)

Provincial Home Based Workers Policies have this year been initiated in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as has a Women’s Empowerment Package for the women of Sindh.

In acknowledging the role and economic empowerment opportunities of Pakistanis working overseas (both men and women workers), and in ensuring it is women friendly, UN Women at the request of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis provided technical advisory support in review of a comprehensive draft ‘Overseas Pakistani Policy’, the first of its kind, to ensure it supports and advances women’s empowerment commitments to overseas Pakistani women.

Policy formulation and its adoption is a key achievement and the first step towards enhancing women’s economic empowerment and addressing the concerns and issues of home based workers, and in particular informal women workers.

In enhancing effectiveness and change from the policy level to the grass root community level, it was through public-private social sector partnerships, that UN Women have been able to bring forth a holistic support package for these informal women home based workers and their inclusion in formal entrepreneurship programmes and market partnerships.

Lessons learned and recommendations from a pilot study carried out in collaboration with ILO to increase economic empowerment opportunities and particularly of informal home based women workers and their access to formal factory work, has strongly acknowledged a link between the policy, institutional and community levels.

Through this pilot study many women were positioned to better lobby for their registration, recognition and protection within the formal workforce.

In piloting implementation of key Policy features through integrated support to women home based workers at the community level, findings included:

i. Recognition of home based workers, as workers
ii. Access to enter and participate in formal factory work
iii. Improved income
iv. Access to social security benefits including acquisition of a computerized national ID card
v. Raised awareness of their legal rights
vi. Healthy, safe and improved working conditions
vii. Equal wages (including minimum wages)
viii. Right to join unions
ix. Diversification of skills and focused training through institutions
x. Direct market linkages
xi. Ability to develop marketable products and bargain collectively
xii. Link with microfinance providers
xiii. Build-up of momentum for policy advocacy and labour rights
5. Ending violence against women and girls
The passing of three localized legislations this reporting period, marks a small yet powerful milestone in the long struggle to end crimes of violence against women and girls in Pakistan:

1. The Domestic Violence Bill applicable in the Islamabad Capital Territory, passed by the Senate on 20 February 2012, besides children and women, the Bill provides protection to the adopted, employed and domestic associates in a household
2. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance 2012, issued on 27 November 2012 is an amendment to the Azad Penal Code, 1860 and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 for Pakistan Administered Kashmir, and inserts two new sections on acid violence on women and its punishment
3. The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2011, passed in October 2012 in Pakistan Administered Kashmir, expedites the provision to protect women at the workplace against sexual harassment and, it states the implementation modalities and the requirement to constitute an Enquiry Committee within every organization

The passage of the Domestic Violence Bill (applicable to the Islamabad Capital Territory) in particular, follows a long and on-going journey undertaken by the women’s movement in Pakistan, civil society advocates, parliamentarians and policy-makers. Passing of this Bill highlights that legislative reform is not the sole preserve of the State, but is a participatory and consultative approach. In systematically addressing coordinated and integrated policy responses, from advocacy, coalition-building and engagement with stakeholders in drafting, to endorsement and legislative implementation of laws, reinforces the norm that violence against women and girls is unacceptable and more importantly, meaningful laws for women are backed by State sanctions.

2012 saw concrete steps in implementation of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act (2010) through enhancement of provincial capacities such as:

1. Establishment of Provincial Implementation Watch Committees in all four provinces
2. Appointment of an Ombudsperson in Sindh province
3. Media based advocacy on anti-sexual harassment
4. Awareness raising to implement the Committees

Social mobilization remained central to UN Women’s endeavours for inclusive and participatory community engagement. Social media campaigns generated national awareness of people from all walks of life on the need to advance legislation and its implementation to ending violence against women and girls such as Acid Crime and Prevention, Domestic Violence and Anti-Sexual Harassment.

Social mobilization platforms included:

1. ‘Million Names... Million Voices’ was UN Women’s innovative nationwide campaign giving voice to One Million people to SAY NO to violence against women and girls. Public Resolutions and Charter of Demands were gathered from 57 districts, where 1,500 women leaders and over 450,000 men and women change makers particularly engaged marginalized women on their human rights and commit to ‘take action’ to end crimes of violence against them. A Declaration to improve the criminal justice system combatting violence against women and girls was also collected

2. A documentary titled ‘Saving Face’ (awarded an Oscar under the category ‘best short documentary’, in February 2012) featured the struggle of Pakistani agents of change in combating acid violence in the country and depicted the holistic work of Acid Survival Foundation, other partners and Alliances working on the eradication of acid crime and support to acid and burn victims

3. Evidence-based media campaign ‘Stop Acid Violence’ focussed on raising awareness and mobilization of parliamentarians and policy-makers to pass a Comprehensive Acid and Burn Crime Bill. The campaign in re-enforcing its own message to eradicate acid crimes highlighted the staggering increase in notified cases of acid violence in Pakistan over the years

4. A six-month social and mainstream media campaign titled ‘You can’t be a good manager.... Unless you manage to stop Sexual Harassment’ targeted public-private organizations to register as a ‘Gender Friendly Organization’ and comply with the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act (2010). Resultantly, 299 organizations were registered as being a ‘Gender Friendly Organization’.
6. Women in disaster risk reduction and management
Mainstreaming gender and child protection

Following the successful joint collaboration between the National Disaster Management Authority and UN Women in the creation and institutional positioning of the Gender and Child Cell within a national authoritative establishment since 2010 as the mechanism to integrate and mainstream gender and child protection issues in relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction process, UN Women’s continued advocacy and lobbying for the adoption and strengthening of gender responsive policies and plans at the provincial level, resulted this year in the notification of Gender and Child Cells within the Provincial Disaster Management Authorities of Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab, and within the State Disaster Management Authority of Pakistan Administered Kashmir.

Working closely with provincial machineries of women (and in particular Women Development Departments), the provincial governments and respective departments and other partners, the provincial Gender and Child Cells are being strengthened with technical expertise enabling them to:

i. Provide advisory support to mainstream gender and child concerns at the policy and technical levels
ii. Provide guidance and support on local rapid assessments of needs and impact towards prioritizing interventions and response
iii. Support and guide on collection and dissemination of gender disaggregated data towards informed policy and programming
iv. Facilitate and support gender standards in humanitarian actions

A ‘Women Desk’ established within the Disaster Management Authority of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas addresses the minimal representation of women within its Secretariat, particularly at the decision-making level. The Desk is a functioning unit dealing specifically with women’s issues, operates within the Disaster Management Authorities mandate and Gender Equality framework to further strengthen capacities for gender mainstreaming in planning and programming. The Women Desk is involved in the development of gender-responsive Standard Operating Procedures and a monitoring framework to address gender in relief, recovery and disaster risk reduction, ensuring equal relief to men and women.

Friendly spaces for women and girls

UN Women were instrumental in bringing about a holistic support package of information and spaces for vulnerable women and girls affected by disasters and complex emergencies. Through model interventions:

i. Standard Operating Procedures were adopted by the Provincial Government of Balochistan’s Social Welfare Department for Dar-ul-Aman (Shelter Homes) - the only government owned facility in the entire province. UN Women have supported the Dar-ul-Aman to become an improved shelter service for the vulnerable women in the province since 2010. Such shelter homes and services provide vulnerable women and girls with a protective and empowering environment as they rebuild their lives

ii. Women Friendly Spaces is one of UN Women’s successfully piloted emergency intervention at the grass roots since 2010. With 20 Women Friendly Spaces functional (1 in Peshawar, 2 in DI Khan, 1 in Tank and 16 in Jalozai camp), this year a total of 2,214 women and 1,459 children benefitted from its facilities. Additionally, 3 Women Facilitation Centres are functional (1 in Peshawar, 1 in Mardan and 1 in Swabi) and have facilitated 47 women in 2012. Ownership of these model Women Friendly Spaces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas has been requested by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Provincial Disaster Management Authority is currently under a transitory stage whereby their maintenance and strengthening as a protection structure/mechanism will lie with them

iii. The first ‘Women Shura’ (a women’s forum) was established within the Jalozai ‘transit’ camp by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as a mechanism to empower displaced women to raise their voice and be part of the planning and decision making process that would inadvertently affect them and their lives - this forum also paves the way towards identification and training of future women leaders from this region. The Provincial Disaster Management Authority in supporting the need to empower displaced women to raise their issues and concerns, and be part of the planning and decision making process, have recognized the establishment of this Shura
7. Working together

Photo credit: UNO/Pierre Virot
Partnerships, stronger synergies for action

UN Women places specific emphasis on fostering, maintaining and widening partnerships across the board with stakeholders as a core strategy for action. Some of these strategic partnerships include:

National and Provincial Women Machineries
- Provincial Women Development Departments
- National, Provincial and State Commissions on the Status of Women
- Women Parliamentarian Caucus, at the national and provincial level

Relevant Government organs
- Ministry of Human Rights and its provincial Departments and Directorates
- Ministry and Departments of Finance
- Ministry of Law and Justice
- Planning Commission and Planning & Development Departments
- Departments of Labour
- Department of Social Welfare
- Elections Commission Pakistan
- National Database and Registration Authority
- Disaster Management Authorities (at the national, provincial, district and state levels)
- Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

Senior level political leaders including Heads of the Women Wings, Secretary-Generals and representatives of the Manifesto Committee from eight of the main political parties

Alliances and Networks
- The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Provincial Committees
- Inter-Provincial Ministerial Group for Women’s Development
- The Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Alliance (national and provincial)
- Home Based Workers Groups and Work Councils

UN Agencies, Programmes and Funds
- All UN Entities to different degrees of co-operation

Funding Partners
- Contributors to UN Women globally, including the Host Government
- Contributors to UN Women Pakistan Office

Other Major Partners
- Human Rights Defenders/Women’s Rights Alliances
- International and National Non-Government Organizations
- International Financial Institutions
- Civil Society, Community Based Groups and Women’s Networks and Organizations
- Academia
- Media
- Private Sector
8. Financial portfolio

Photo credit: Samar Minallah Khan
In sustaining UN Women’s programmes and its support to gender equality goals, contributions in 2012 include:

(approximations in USD)

Core Funding: 1,369,425
Non-Core Funding: 5,029,845 (includes One UN Funds and Donor Funding)
Total Funding: 6,399,270

From Donors 3,695,835

- Asian Development Bank
- Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- German Agency for International Cooperation
- Japanese National Committee
- Royal Norwegian Embassy
- UK’s Department for International Development

From One UN Fund 785,665

From UN Agencies 548,345

- UNOCHA
- UNOPS
- UNHCR
- OHCHR
- ILO
- UNAIDS