South Asia Regional Exchange Meeting

Joint Resolution

The South Asia Regional Exchange meeting is being held in Kathmandu Nepal from 15th-17th July, 2014, to effectively promote women’s leadership and political participation at all levels. The meeting is hosted by the Women’s Parliamentary Caucus, National Commission on the Status of Women Pakistan and National Women Commission Nepal with the support of UN Women and UNDP Pakistan.

We the Parliamentarians, Representatives of Women Commissions, National Women Machineries and Electoral Commissions;

Recall the struggle of women of the South Asian Region in helping to build a democratic, just and rights-based society;

Reaffirm the need to bring together South Asian countries to exchange information, best practices and jointly advocate the Women’s Empowerment agenda;

Welcome various mechanisms for Women’s Empowerment that exist within the SAARC system;

Commend the efforts of South Asian countries in promoting and implementing electoral education and reforms; the role of respective Women Parliamentarians and Women Commissions in raising voice for gender justice and equality;

Recognize the need to ensure implementation of commitments made during the 4th World Conference of Women in Beijing, 1995 and the recommendations from Beijing+20 processes feed into the Sustainable Development Goals (SMGs), especially the targets for ending violence against women.

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HEREBY ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TO:

1. Build a common vision for the empowerment of women of South Asia for promotion of gender equality in social, political and economic fields;

2. Build through this forum a joint regional network “South Asian Alliance for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment” which will include Parliamentarians/WPC, National/Provincial Commissions for Women and Women Ministries/Departments, as a platform to share and exchange our experiences and best practices so as to strengthen and make our role more effective in advancing Women’s Empowerment agenda; In this regard, Pakistan Women Parliamentary Caucus has taken the initiative to establish a web portal to facilitate the sharing of this information.

3. Develop a mechanism for regular engagement with the existing SAARC bodies such as SAARC Advocacy Group on Gender Equality, Technical Group for Women Development, Women Parliamentarians meeting of the SAARC speakers and parliamentary conference, Regional Convention on combating the crime of trafficking of Women and Children, and to ensure that the recommendations of the proposed regional network are taken forward to the next SAARC Summit’s Agenda

4. Raise a collective voice for at least 33% representation of women in all elected bodies (national and sub-national legislature and local governments) and in decision making levels of all institutions within political parties;

5. Advocating for conducive and secure environment for women to contest elections, to exercise their right to vote and to administer elections as representatives of election management bodies.
6. Demand a minimum of 10% quota for women on general seats by each political party in our respective countries; with financial support for contesting elections;

7. Advocate for minimum 33% representation of women in decision making in all spheres including civil services.

8. Urge the respective Parliaments and Governments to establish Women Caucuses, Women Commissions and strengthen Women Machineries in each South Asian country with a common agenda for women rights and advocacy in compliance with national, regional and international commitments;

9. Within the SAARC development fund create a special fund for combating and preventing Violence against Women; and develop standardized indicators for measuring the extent of violence against women at the second phase of SAARC Gender Info. Database (SGIB) for comparable data across the region.

10. Advocate for the establishment of women caucuses and national commissions in all South Asian countries working towards setting up the Regional Network of Women Caucuses and Regional Women Commissions and a regional network of women’s machinery.

11. Ensure that the recommendations of the proposed regional network are taken forward at the next SAARC Summit’s agenda.

We, South Asian Delegates for Women’s Empowerment, participating in the regional exchange meeting being held in Kathmandu Nepal 15-17th July, 2014, thank UN Women and UNDP for their support in facilitating and organizing this event. We look forward to their continued support.