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Pakistan

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Introduction

1. The commencement of the 4th UPR cycle demonstrates success of this universal cooperative mechanism. Pakistan remains committed to this process and would participate in the upcoming review to highlight achievements in the promotion and protection of human rights, share best practices, identify challenges and invite feed-back from multiple stakeholders including member states and civil society.
2. Since the 3rd UPR, Pakistan has remained steadfast in its cooperation with the UN human rights machinery and made efforts to comply with its international human rights obligations, including through submission of treaty bodies reports and providing responses to the communication of the Special Procedures. Pakistan has recently submitted its periodic reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Human Rights Committee, Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee against Torture.
3. Pakistan, like other developing countries, has experienced unprecedented socio-economic challenges during the past two years on account of the Covid-19 outbreak, further exacerbated by recent climate-induced devastating floods. However, despite these intersecting challenges and ensuing resource constraints, Pakistan has made utmost efforts to safeguard and advance basic human rights, needs and freedoms, including through provision of social safety nets targeting the most vulnerable and the marginalized individuals.

Methodology

4. The report has been prepared in accordance with the general guidelines for the preparation of information under the universal periodic review, as contained in Human Rights Council decision 17/119, and therefore, is an outcome of a broad-based, inclusive and participatory consultation process involving all stakeholders, including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) had disseminated the accepted recommendations emanating from the 3rd UPR cycle review amongst all relevant Federal and Provincial stakeholders to consider requisite legislative, policy and administrative measures. Accordingly, a systematic and institutionalized process was followed in soliciting information about implementation status of these recommendations. In this regard, matrices/questionnaires were designed and circulated among key like Federal Ministries and Provincial Departments as well as Treaty Implementation Cells (TICs) for feedback/data collection. Consultative meetings were also arranged at Federal and Provincial levels with the participation of the Government officials and CSOs for seeking their input and finalization of responses.

I. International human rights commitments (Recommendation 152.8)

5. Pakistan ratified/acceded to CEDAW on 3rd December 1996.

II. Cooperation with HR mechanisms (Recommendations 152.32, 152.38, 152.39, 152.40, 152.41, 152.42, 152.43 and 152.44)

6. Pakistan is working in close coordination with United Nations human rights mechanisms by actively engaging with them, especially the Human Rights Council (HRC), and its allied mechanisms and forums, including but not limited to Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures. Since the establishment of the HRC, Pakistan has been elected as its member for the 5th time in 2020 and has actively contributed to its deliberations and outcomes. Pakistan also extended invitations for country visits to four Special Procedures in 2020 including Independent Expert on Foreign Debt and Special Rapporteurs on Extreme Poverty, Education and Disabilities. Similarly, requests from other Special Procedures remain under active

consideration. The former High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michele Bachelet visited Pakistan in July 2022 and held productive discussions with her interlocutors.

7. The MoHR is collaborating with various stakeholders including provincial governments, National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR), National Commission on Status of Women (NCSW), National Commission on Rights of the Child (NCRC) and National Commission for Minorities (NCM) to take policy measures and administrative steps in compliance with Pakistan's international human rights obligations and fulfill voluntary commitments. Pakistan is continuously moving towards domestication of provisions of international human rights instruments by enacting laws on family, women and child, promoting compliance by law enforcement agencies towards country's human rights obligations, capacity building of national human rights institutions and collaboration with members of civil society. All these steps have been taken pursuant to Nation Action Plan. Key laws enacted during the last four years include Islamabad Capital Territory Child Protection Act, 2018; the Juvenile Justice System Act 2018; the Transgender Persons Act 2018; the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2018; Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Act 2020; ICT Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2020; Islamabad Capital Territory Senior Citizens Act 2020; Legal Aid & Justice Authority Act 2020; ICT Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2020; the Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act 2021; the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act 2021; Anti Rape (Trial and Investigation) Act 2021; and the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Amendment) Act 2022.

8. In addition, there is an existing framework of national and provincial laws. Of these, close to 400 have a direct bearing and 800 tangentially deal with the basic human rights enshrined in the Constitution and international instruments. For example, the Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act 2006 and the Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act 2016. These acts amended the Pakistan Penal Code 1860 (PPC) by insertion of sections 375 and 376, thereby further strengthening the domestic framework to counter rape.

9. The judiciary, too, has demonstrated activism on and sensitivity to issues of human rights through judgments referring to international instruments. Recently, the Islamabad High Court, passed a landmark judgment in *Mumtaz Bibi v Qasim* where it held that Pakistan is a party to the UN CRC and accordingly, marriage of children under the age of 18 is unlawful and the marriage contract is void *ab initio*.

10. Pakistan has also strengthened its monitoring and implementation mechanisms. In addition to existing TICs at federal and provincial levels, and various human rights commissions, the Government has initiated several projects to monitor and implement international human rights conventions to which Pakistan is a State Party. The National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up project was launched based on guidelines devised by the United Nations. The MoHR is carrying out awareness campaign on human rights education under its Human Rights Awareness Raising Program with an approved initial cost of PKR Rs.55 million.

11. For effective coordination among stakeholders and implementation partners, and maintenance of a database, a Human Rights Information Management System has been established at MoHR. Complaint cells have also been established at Federal and Provincial Directorates of Human Rights under MoHR for redressal and referral of human rights complaints.

12. Recently a National Gender Policy Framework was launched in 2022. For mobility and empowerment of women, the Government of Pakistan (GoP) approved a project worth PKR. 400 million for provision of motorbikes on subsidized rates to working-women and students initially in ICT and then across Pakistan. A project has also been developed in line with Government's commitment to advance women empowerment and comply with United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to prevent, address and remedy human rights infringements in business operations.

13. Pakistan is continuously strengthening programs and public policies on development, inclusion, poverty alleviation, inequality and non-discrimination. The National Security Policy (NSP) of Pakistan 2022-2026 emphasizes economic and human security, progress and development as its salient features. In order to prioritize human security, the NSP makes

specific references to upholding rule of law, and ensuring a responsive and impartial justice system.

III. Strengthening of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), legislative and policy measures (Recommendations 152.45, 152.46, 152.47, 152.48, 152.49, 152.50, 152.51, 152.52, 152.53, 152.54, 152.55, 152.56, 152.57, 152.58, 152.59, 152.60, 152.61, 152.62, 152.63, 152.64, 152.65, 152.67, 152.68, 152.69, 152.70, 152.71 and 152.72)

14. MoHR is performing a vital role in the promotion and protection of human rights. For institutional strengthening of MoHR, a project with initial approved cost of PKR 59.7 million was launched with an allocation of PKR 20 million during financial year 2019–20. Another project has been launched to strengthen the Regional Directorates of Human Rights (RDHRs) through up-gradation of existing infrastructure and provision of necessary staff. Additionally, organizations with overlapping functions have been abolished like Social Welfare Council and new institutions have been established such as Child Protection Institute, Transgender Protection Centre and Council for Senior Citizens. The institutions of Social Welfare and Special Education have been merged under the administrative umbrella of MoHR.

15. Pakistan recognizes the importance of NHRIs as an integral component of its domestic human rights machinery and framework. In order to strengthen NHRIs, MoHR successfully completed the three-year project “Haqooq-e-Pakistan” with a total amount of Euros 7.9 million, targeting at their capacity-building. For strengthening overall reporting mechanism, the TIC has been upgraded into well-coordinated tracking body that can obtain baseline data on current implementation and identify legislative and administrative gaps.

16. The NCHR was established by way of legislative mandate, as per the National Commission for Human Rights Act 2012. The NCHR is an autonomous body, independent of the government in its functions, and has a broad mandate including investigating complaints related to human rights violations. The NCHR issues fact-finding reports on various human rights situations including issues of minorities and vulnerable communities. The NCHR enjoys financial autonomy, and has a separate fund to carry out its functions. The initial budget for 2019–2020 was increased to PKR 93 million with an additional allocation of PKR 20 million. Moreover, financial and technical support is also provided by Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI)/ UNDP to NCHR. The Commission can also generate its own resources and receive financial grants and endowments. The Commission is working actively to fulfil requirements for GANHRI accreditation.

17. The NCSW, established under the National Commission on the Status of Women Act, 2012 is an autonomous statutory body with powers of a civil court. The basic role of NCSW is to examine and review laws, policies, programmes related to women rights, monitor their implementation and to facilitate/advise the government in the implementation of international instruments and obligations.

18. Similarly, the Government notified the NCM with the mandate to protect and promote minority rights in the country. The Supreme Court of Pakistan has also taken up the issues pertaining to minorities and has established a one-member Commission.

19. The NCRC is also functional. In line with the Paris Principles, the Commission reflects plurality in its composition and independence in its operation. Two child members are also part of the Commission. The Commission has been allocated PKR. 30 million in the financial year 2022–23 to carry out its functions.

A. National Action Plan on human rights

20. With respect to implementation of National Action Plan on Human Rights, Pakistan is committed to achieving the objectives envisioned under the plan. For this purpose, the

Action plan 2016 has been revised and updated focusing on 06 thematic priorities and 60 Actions. Additionally, a public sector development project titled "Implementation of Action Plan for Human Rights" and a National Task Force have been launched to achieve the objectives and targets of Action Plan.

B. Awareness raising and human rights education

21. Pakistan has continued to enhance efforts to ensure that women across Pakistan are aware of their rights as well as the legal remedies available to them. The MoHR and NHRIs, such as NCHR, NCSW and NCRC, are collectively working to ensure implementation of the CEDAW through legislation, policy measures, research, and awareness-raising. For instance, NCSW raised awareness through dissemination of information posters in Urdu and English including on electronic media on laws related to acid crime law, underage marriage, workplace harassment and rape.

22. At the provincial level, Punjab CSW developed advocacy material regarding awareness of laws including inheritance and property rights of women, birth registration, and prevention of early and forced marriage. Awareness sessions were conducted in educational institutes and brochures were distributed in 36 districts of Punjab. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) CSW arranged campaigns for awareness raising on laws and workshops in collaboration with CSOs and religious leaders. KP CSW is also providing technical support to the provincial Ombudsperson on harassment. Moreover, Women Development Department (WDD) in Balochistan, with support of UN WOMEN, has conducted awareness sessions on responding to gender-based violence.

23. Several initiatives are being taken for awareness raising and capacity building of judges, lawyers and other judicial officers on human rights. The MoHR launched a project in 2018 to organize sensitization sessions for prosecutors and court officials on women-specific laws. Until July 2021, 467 prosecutors and court officials had been trained through 12 workshops. MoHR initiated training programs for district judiciary in Sindh and Balochistan where approximately 360 judges and 360 prosecution lawyers in Sindh, and nearly 175 judges and 150 prosecution lawyers in Balochistan were trained. Furthermore, in Sindh, UNODC Pakistan has been training police, judiciary, and public prosecution officers. UNDP Pakistan has trained 63 judicial officers and 12 court staff in KP through 75 workshops. The total number of judicial officers and court staff trained in KP is 2167.

24. The Federal Judicial Academy (FJA) as well as the provincial judicial academies have also initiated programs to build capacity in the domain of international human rights law. In July 2019, 160 judges, 126 judicial officers, and 126 prosecutors were given training in December 2019 at the Punjab Judicial Academy (PJA). From 2016–2019, Punjab conducted 22 training programs to sensitize 1,168 judges and judicial staff on laws related to gender and discrimination.

25. The KP Judicial Academy (KJA) also organized various trainings on women rights, gender mainstreaming, empowerment, and inheritance. The Balochistan Judicial Academy (BJA) organized training on child rights, protection, and justice; human rights; forensic science-based investigation techniques; and principles of judicial conduct. The MoHR and Sindh Judicial Academy (SJA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 26 April 2019 to collaborate on strengthening the capacity of the judges in Sindh. In this regard, 55 Judges and 28 prosecutors were trained.

IV. Discrimination (Recommendations 152.73, 152.75, 152.76, 152.77, 152.78, 152.79, 152.80, 152.81, 152.83, 152.84, 152.91 and 152.92)

26. The Constitution of Pakistan, in its Articles 3 and 25, guarantees the right to equality for everyone without any distinction, and stresses upon affirmative measures to create a non-discriminatory and protective environment for all. The GoP has taken pragmatic initiatives

to protect the rights of vulnerable people including women, children, elderly, minorities and persons with disabilities.

27. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony (MoRA&IH) is preparing a National Interfaith Harmony Policy in consultation with all stakeholders. Other initiatives include establishment of Minorities Welfare Fund under which small development schemes are carried out for the maintenance of the religious places belonging to minorities. Furthermore, financial assistance is extended to the poor segments of minorities and scholarships are granted to students from minority communities on merit basis.

28. The Government has also enacted laws to curb all forms of discrimination, in particular those relating to women, transgender, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018 guarantees basic rights to transgender citizens. It also protects other fundamental rights like inheritance, education, decent work, property ownership, and participation in public affairs. There is also a Protection Centre for transgender persons in Islamabad to provide shelter, rehabilitation, medical and psychological care.

29. Similarly, the Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act 2020 protects the rights of women to property ownership and possession while ensuring that such rights are not violated by means of harassment, coercion, force, or fraud.

30. To provide legal protection to PWDs, the ICT Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2020 was promulgated in line with CRPD which aims to safeguard the rights and improve the conditions of PWDs in social, economic and political spheres. A Council has been established to implement the Act and improve access for PWDs to basic services like as health care, education, employment, transportation, and communication without discrimination.

31. For the Protection of Children, Child protection Institute (CPI) was established in 2021 which has advanced comprehensive case management plan and improved inter agency coordination.

32. Among other affirmative measures, the Federal and Provincial Governments continue to implement 5% job quota for minorities. The Government of Punjab has also introduced a 2% quota for minorities in public sector universities and other education institutions. In KP, 2% admission quota for minority candidates in the 27 public sector universities has been approved, thereby facilitating individuals belonging to minorities to receive higher education. In Punjab, free vocational training was imparted to 1679 women belonging to minority communities by Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) and Human Rights & Minorities Affairs Department.

V. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Recommendations 152.94, 152.95, 152.96 and 152.97)

33. Pakistan has prioritized SDGs by including them in its National Agenda 2030 and allocating resources for its implementation. A dedicated SDGs Section at the Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives (MoP&SI) acts as a national coordinating entity, and SDG Support Units are correspondingly institutionalized at provincial levels.

34. At provincial level, the Government of KP has introduced a number of reforms and the current development strategy places an emphasis on improving governance – especially at the divisional level; education and health; climate change; disaster risk management; youth empowerment and employment; gender equality and inclusion; and culture, sports, arts and communication/media.

35. To meet the challenges of energy, the GoP introduced the Alternative and Renewable Energy Policy in 2019 to boost the share of electricity generated from renewable sources from around 5% at present to 30% by 2030. In early 2022, the Ministry of Climate Change announced an updated version of the National Climate Change Policy to make the country more resilient to adverse effects of climate change and transition to a low-carbon footprint.

36. The Government of Punjab has initiated a program to address the challenges of environment and climate change. Major sustainable development initiatives include economic and electricity management reforms wherein load of electricity has been reduced through promotion of renewable resources through solarisation of schools, hospitals, and public buildings. Moreover, Energy Conservation Buildings Poles (ECBC) have been developed.

37. Other SDG projects in Punjab include the Punjab Power Development Board (PPDB). PPDB has been working towards addition of clean, renewable and sustainable power generation facilities and more than 2.3 billion KWh has been injected into national Grid through several solar projects. In addition, the PPDB is also facilitating development of 17 small hydel power projects in 15 districts. From 2018 to 2021, Punjab installed 1,967 air pollution control devices, and 333 effluent treatment plants at Industrial Units.

38. The Government of Sindh has initiated focused efforts towards mainstreaming, localization, and implementation of the 2030 Agenda. As a first step, SDGs have been prioritized based on multi-stakeholder consultations and evidence-based analysis while taking into consideration severity of development issues and challenges, resource availability, and economic and social endowments, value for money, and magnitude of impacts.

39. Balochistan's Comprehensive Development & Growth Strategy (BCDGS) 2018-24 aims to leverage opportunities emanating from the 2030 Agenda. A Provincial Technical Committee (PTC) has been notified to steer the localization of the goals and advise the SDG Support Unit. In addition, five Thematic Committees have been formed on employment generation and management, water, energy and the environment, health, agriculture and education.

VI. Counter-terrorism (Recommendations 152.98, 152.99 and 152.101)

40. Pakistan is fully committed to protection and promotion of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism. Pakistan's Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) prescribes a wide range of legal and administrative checks and balances, which are aimed at safeguarding basic rights, especially due process and fair trial rights, during processing of terrorism related cases. For instance, the ATA prescribes strict punishment for LEA officials in case of defective investigation, and reinforces constitutional guarantees during arrest and detention of a person.

41. Pakistan's independent judiciary has remained in vanguard to promote and protect human rights during consideration of terrorism related cases. In 2019, the Supreme Court laid down the guidelines on the applicability of or otherwise of the anti-terrorism law. *Ghulam Hussain vs. the State* is a landmark judgment by the Supreme Court of Pakistan, which lays down a conclusive and narrow scope of the definition of terrorism and its application with respect to criminal cases, thereby preventing misuse of anti-terrorism law. To invoke the provisions of ATA 1997, a three-fold test needs to be satisfied in pursuance of this judgment: a) there must be *actus reus*, b) there must be *mens rea*, and c) the first two conditions must be coupled with an intention to advance an ideological, political, or religious cause. The judgment also recommends the legislature to limit the scope of the ATA 1997 by amending the preamble of the Act to only include acts of terrorism, and by removing Schedule III from the Act. In follow-up, the GoP is actively deliberating on follow-up actions to the judgement.

42. Additionally, the Actions (in Aid of Civil Power) Regulations, 2011 have been formulated strictly in conformity with the international human rights standards. The abuse or misuse of force during operations has been made punishable under the Regulations. All detainees apprehended during operations are kept in declared and notified Internment Centers. The internees' cases are being regularly reviewed by the Oversight Boards notified by the Provincial Governments.

VII. Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary killings and detentions/enforced disappearances (Recommendations 152.131 and 152.132)

43. The Government of Pakistan has introduced a bill to criminalize enforced disappearances, after consideration and approval by the National Assembly is being sent to the Senate.

44. The alleged cases of missing persons are being expeditiously and efficiently dealt by Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances.

45. The Commission is a legal forum for families of alleged disappeared persons to lodge complaints. During investigation of cases, they are kept informed about progress of their cases. The hearing of the cases is done in their presence. The system is absolutely free of cost to lodge a complaint and the complainants are not required to engage lawyers to appear before the Commission. The hearings are also held at the provincial capitals with a view to saving expenses of the complainants to travel to the federal capital. As a result of these concerted efforts, the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearance has been able to dispose majority of the cases. The overall decrease in number of alleged cases received from the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances attest to this positive trend.

VIII. Torture (Recommendation 152.134)

46. The Torture, Custodial Death and Custodial Rape (Prevention and Punishment) Bill, 2021, passed by the National Assembly in August 2022, has also been passed by the Senate. The aforesaid Bill lays down a wide definition of 'Torture' which includes, *inter alia*, severe physical pain or physical suffering which is inflicted intentionally on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him/her for an act that he/she or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed. In addition to the above, the Bill further lays down punishments for torture, custodial death and custodial rape as per the Pakistan Penal Code of 1860.

IX. Improvements in criminal justice system (Recommendations 152.136, 152.137, 152.138, 142.141, 152.143 and 152.146)

47. The Government is reviewing the status of prisons in Pakistan especially the issues related to overcrowding. Efforts are underway to harmonize state policies with international treaties, and Conventions, and taking steps to further improve human rights conditions in prisons.

48. To reduce overcrowding, provincial governments have approved construction of new jails. In Punjab, 08 District Jails, 01 High Security Prison and 01 Sub Jail have been constructed between 2012 and 2018. Construction of new jails in two cities are underway to reduce the overcrowding from 42% to 30%. In Sindh, construction of several prisons is underway in Thatta District as well as expansion of barracks in Malir Prison Karachi and District Prison Shikarpur.

49. Provinces are also amending their provincial parole laws. The Punjab Probation and Parole Services Act 2019 creates an effective and efficient probation and parole service. This service is responsible for assessing offenders' risks and needs, developing plans for working with offenders, managing offenders' risks, maintaining and updating data on offenders, ensuring that conditions of release or license are met, and facilitating offenders' rehabilitation. The drafting of Parole Rules under the aforesaid Act is complete and a Parole Board has been constituted. Additionally, under the amendments to the Good Conduct Prisoners Act, an Offenders Management Information System (OMIS) is being developed for effective monitoring/supervision of offenders on probation and parole.

50. The Sindh Prisons and Correction Services Act 2019 has been promulgated to safeguard the fundamental rights of all prisoners, ensuring their safe custody, and assistance

with rehabilitation into society. Under the Act, the process of releasing elderly offenders has already started and a census has already been conducted.

51. Furthermore, Prison Camp Courts are held on each Friday by Judicial Magistrates for disposal of petty nature cases in KP. 2,860 cases have been disposed-off. In addition to the foregoing, the Prisoners Management Information System (PMIS) has been installed in 14 jails in KP.

52. The Government as well as Judiciary have taken several steps, including use of IT, in case management, to overcome the judicial backlog and amending the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), the Qanoon-i-Shahadat (law of evidence), Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and other relevant laws. The right to fair trial as enshrined in the Constitution is given the utmost importance in ensuring that concrete steps are taken for the delivery of speedy justice, and to improve the overall criminal justice system in Pakistan. The Supreme Court takes *sou moto* actions in cases of public interest and fundamental rights. To provide legal Assistance to the people who cannot afford litigation, the Government has established Legal Aid and Justice Authority. Furthermore, the Federal government and all the provinces have improved the public prosecution service in terms of capacity and strength.

X. Minorities/interfaith harmony/blasphemy laws (Recommendations 152.147, 152.163, 152.164, 152.165, 152.166, 152.168, 152.182 and 152.183)

53. In order to protect minorities and promote their public participation, the Government has taken several legislative, policy and administrative measures. At the policy level, the National Action Plan on Human Rights pays special attention to the protection of minorities' rights. A National Interfaith Harmony Policy is also being drafted in consultation with stakeholders. The provincial governments have also established mechanisms to investigate reports of violence against minorities and bring the perpetrators to justice. All police field units have been sensitized on minority rights.

54. The Government of Pakistan is committed to curb the misuse of blasphemy laws. In this regard, the Government has instituted various administrative safeguards. For instance, the preliminary inquiry in blasphemy cases is now carried out by the District Police Officer (senior most officer in the district). Section 211 of PPC states that a person who intentionally initiates a false criminal case or puts false charges on any other person for an offence without any lawful ground shall be punished with imprisonment of 2 years, or fine or both. And he/she may also be imprisoned for 7 years and fine, if punishment for such falsely charged crime is death, imprisonment for life, or 7 years or more.

55. Pakistan has also taken wide-ranging affirmative measures to enhance participation of minorities in all spheres of public life. In Punjab there is a 5% job quota and a 2% admission quota in all public sector educational institutes. Similarly, in all other provinces, a 5% job quota is being implemented.

XI. Freedom of expression, protection of journalists (Recommendations 152.170, 152.173, 152.174, 152.175 and 152.176)

56. The Government has promulgated the landmark Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act, 2021 (Journalist Act) to protect journalists and media professionals from all forms of abuse, violence and exploitation and provide them with an enabling and safe environment to carry out their work.

57. Under the Journalist Act, a Commission is being constituted to provide redressal to journalists after inquiring into complaints, and determine cases eligibility for compensation costs from relevant federal and provincial funds.

58. The Provincial Governments have also taken a proactive approach to safeguarding and investigating cases pertaining to human rights defenders and journalists. In 2019, the

Government of KP adopted the Journalists Welfare Endowment Fund (Amendment) Act 2019 to provide for the welfare of veteran journalists of age 60 or above in case of, inter alia, death or injury. The Government of Punjab also established a PKR 50 million fund to support affected journalists or their families with grants up to PKR 100,000. For the year 2020–21, the total beneficiaries from the fund amounted to 145 with disbursement of PKR 7.8 million. Additionally, Punjab also announced a Relief Package for Journalists amidst Covid-19 of PKR 100,000 as a one-time grant. Widows were given PKR 10,000/month. A total of 89 journalists have benefitted from this package with the disbursed amount estimated at PKR 5.525 million. Balochistan Information Department has established a special “Journalist Welfare Fund” to compensate journalists for any serious injuries, and in case of death to their family members.

XII. Anti-trafficking/human smuggling (Recommendations 152.187, 152.188, 152.189, 152.190)

59. At the Federal level, the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2018 and Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act 2018 were promulgated to prevent and combat trafficking of persons and smuggling of migrants by land, sea and by air. The rules for operationalization of the respective legislations have been drafted and were approved by the Cabinet in 2020. Since enactment of these laws, there have been more than 1,000 human trafficking investigations and 161 convictions.

60. Pakistan has also concluded a number of bilateral, trilateral and quadrilateral agreements on Human Trafficking related Law Enforcement Cooperation with Afghanistan, Australia, Azerbaijan, Greece, Iran, Turkey, Oman, and the UK. Moreover, in December 2020, the Government adopted the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Migrants Smuggling for the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

XIII. Labour, job creation and poverty reduction (Recommendations 152.191, 152.192, 152.193, 152.194, 152.195, 152.196, 152.197, 152.198, 152.199, 152.200, 152.201, 152.202, 152.203, 152.204, 152.205, 152.206, 152.207 and 152.208)

61. Legislation prohibiting employment of children is in force across the country. In July 2020, the GoP proscribed child domestic labor through an amendment to the Child Employment Act 1991 at the federal level. Moreover, in 2018 the Government of KP promulgated a child labour policy. Labour inspectors in all provinces regularly inspect factory premises for any violation of these laws and fines are imposed in case of violations.

62. On the administrative front at ICT level, the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development has notified a Child Labour Cell for the purpose of coordinating efforts on elimination of child labour and for devising a consensus based National Action Plan with technical assistance of the ILO Country Office.

63. To realize the right to work, the Government of Punjab established a Job Portal to map the labour force of the province, facilitate them in enhancing their skills, find suitable jobs and spread awareness about their rights and responsibilities. Labour Department has initiated online free registration of factories, shops and establishments with the assistance of the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB).

64. In Balochistan, the Directorate of Manpower Training provides vocational training to the youth at 21 technical/vocational training centers located in different districts with focus on job-oriented vocational education and technical skills. Efforts are also being made to improve occupational safety & health standards at the workplaces in four districts of Hub, Quetta, Dukki & Sharag through a proposal by the Labour & Mines Department to purchase occupational safety & health mobile unit for labour welfare Quetta, Hub & mining sector in Dukki and Sharag for an estimated cost of PKR 140.00 million.

65. The Poverty Alleviation and Social Security Division (PASS) is managing several social security schemes to alleviate poverty. The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP)/Ehsaas Kafaalat Programme (EKP) provides unconditional cash transfers to eligible families. During the pandemic, the Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme was launched to help poor families affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and an amount of approximately PKR 180 billion to around 14.9 million beneficiaries @ PKR 12,000/- per beneficiary was disbursed. Moreover, BISP has designed and launched a pilot project for opening of savings accounts and provision of financial literacy to Ehsaas Kafaalat beneficiaries.

66. The Government of Punjab has also undertaken a number of poverty alleviation measures such as Humqadam Programme; income generation and graduation scheme for PWDs; Sila-e-Fun Program for elderly artists; Nayee Zindagi Program for Acid-attack victims; Ba-himmat Buzurg Program for poor senior citizens; Punjab Human Capital Investment Project (PHCIP) for pregnant and lactating mothers and young parents; and Masawaat Program for Transgender Persons. Drafting of Punjab Social Protection Policy for socio-economic empowerment of the vulnerable and marginalized through cash assistance, active labour market programs and contributory/non-contributory pensions is also underway. The Government of KP also provides skill development and income generating trainings and activities to the local communities. The new projects include Poverty Alleviation through development of rural poultry in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (PSDP), The Government of Sindh is running a Peoples Poverty Reduction Program. It was formerly known as Union Council Based Poverty Reduction Program.

XIV. Housing (Recommendation 152.209)

67. In October 2018, the Government announced Naya Pakistan Housing Program (NPHP) to increase availability of affordable housing in the country and ensure the realization of right of everyone to an adequate standard of living. The program aims to promote avenues of Low-Cost Housing Finance with easy installments over a period of 20 years.

68. In October 2020, the Mera Pakistan Mera Ghar (MPMG) Scheme was introduced which enables banks to provide financing for the construction and purchase of houses at very low financing rates.

69. The Government of Punjab plans to construct five million houses. For this purpose, a committee was constituted to establish a land bank, conduct review of laws, rules and regulations, undertake survey of land, and discuss various financing models. The National Engineering Services of Pakistan (NESPAK) also provided tentative designs for low-cost housing, and identified land for affordable housing. In 2021, the Government inaugurated the Peri Urban Housing Project at Raiwind, Mandi Bahauddin, Chuniyan, Khanewal, Mianwali, Shujaabad, DG Khan, Chiniot, Khushab and Sargodha.

XV. Right to health (Recommendations 152.210, 152.211, 152.212, 152.213, 152.214, 152.215, 152.216, 152.217, 152.218, 152.219 and 152.220)

70. In 2020, the GoP introduced its flagship program to provide free, quality, basic health services to all through a micro health insurance scheme. This Sehat Sahulat Program (SSP) ensures that the identified under-privileged citizens across the country get free access to their entitled medical health care in a swift and dignified manner.

71. Infant Mortality Rate in Pakistan has declined to 54.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2020 from 55.7 in 2019, while Neonatal Mortality Rate declined to 40.4 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2020 from 41.2 in 2019. Maternal Mortality Ratio fell to 186 maternal deaths per 100,000 births in 2020, from 189 in 2019. Percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel increased to 69.3 percent in 2020 from 68 percent in 2019.

72. Provincial governments are also making endeavours to improve health facilities and increase access to healthcare. The KP Government allocated a lump sum of PKR 2.4 billion

for the Expanded Programme for Immunization in 2021-22 budget and increased its health allocation in the provincial budget 2021-22 to PKR 142 billion from PKR 124 billion. Women Facilitation Centres in KP are promoting awareness regarding child health and nutrition and supporting women's access to social services.

73. Moreover, Lady Health Workers (LHWs) are working in communities especially in rural areas as agent of change by providing basic medical facilities. Some of the key interventions by KP Health Department include service delivery improvement, implementing SSP, and improvements in Medical Teaching Institutions (MTIs). Services delivery improvement intervention include strengthening conversion of 200 BHUs in 24/7 SBA facilities with total cost of PKR 1,652 million. Moreover, rehabilitation of all Rural Health Centres (RHC) across KP and conversion of 50 RHCs into 24/7 facilities at total cost of PKR 934 million. For secondary health care facilities, 6 District Headquarters (DHQs) have been selected to bring operational improvement such as equipment and medicine, and increasing staff presence. In addition, Health Management Cadre have been constituted in KP with financial ceiling of up to PKR 2 million to cater for top medicines, repair and maintenance and filling vacancies for 3 months.

74. Structural and institutional strengthening has also taken place in Punjab. During FY2022, PKR 107.004 and PKR 23.098 billion were allocated for Specialized Healthcare & Medical Education Department and Primary & Secondary Healthcare Department, respectively. 576 Basic Health Units (BHUs), 35 Rural Health Units (RHUs), and 16 Dispensaries into Urban Health centers (UHCs) have been upgraded, 08 warehouses were constructed, and 483 Rural Ambulances for improvement of Medical Care Health Services were procured. 24 pediatricians were recruited for RHCs, 179 Medical Officers, 191 Staff Nurses, 977 Lady Health Workers (LHWs), and 74 Dispensers. 87,802 healthcare providers/outreach workers were trained on maternal and newborn healthcare, nutrition and family planning services and focus was placed on retention of Community Midwives (CMWs). Additionally, new technologies are being used for monitoring and evaluation of healthcare services. Since 2018, additional 1164 Outpatient Therapeutic Program sites (OTPs), and 29 Stabilization Centers (SCs) for treatment of malnourished children have been established. Since 2017, the Punjab Health Facilities Management Company (PHFMC) has worked towards ensuring the presence of staff in the health facilities.

75. With respect to maternal and child mortality, the Integrated Reproductive Maternal Newborn & Child Health (IRMNCH) & Nutrition Program under Primary and Secondary Health Care department has devised a comprehensive approach to address preventive components to improve the maternal, new born and child health of the population directly. Accordingly, Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (BEmNOC) at primary level and comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmNOC) through secondary healthcare has been strengthened in terms of capacity building of staff, provision of additional medicines/ equipment and monitoring & supervision of community and facility.

76. The Government of Balochistan has increased its budget from PKR 31.4 billion in 2020-21 to PKR 44.6 billion in the FY2022 for 191 development schemes out of which, 86 are new and 105 are ongoing schemes. Launch of health card for more than 1.8 million families across the province was approved in 2022 where every family would be given a universal PKR 1 million coverage to get quality and timely health treatment at public and private sector hospitals. Balochistan Health Department declared eleven DHQ hospitals as Teaching DHQs. 470 qualified doctors are expected to start graduating from the public sector medical colleges of Balochistan by 2026 as a result of increase in seats of Bolan Medical College from 192 to 320, and the recognition of Jhalawan, Loralai and Mekran Medical Colleges by Pakistan Medical Council (PMC).

77. Government of Sindh allocated PKR 199.72 billion for investment on construction, strengthening, upgrading and rehabilitation of health facilities including rehabilitation and expansion of various level of health facilities (DHQs, THQ, RHCs, etc.) as well as medical colleges.

78. During FY2022, several nutrition support programs/activities were undertaken at both national and provincial levels. A nutrition specific project of PKR 312 billion was prepared by M/o NHR&C to reduce the prevalence of malnutrition in 67 districts and a National

Nutrition Action Plan (MS-NNAP) is also underway. The revised National Agro-Ecological Based Food Composition Table data has been validated and the report is being finalized. Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy Mapping Report, National Policy Dialogue Report, and Key Family Care Practices Package have been disseminated.

79. Nutrition interventions to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods of poorest households in South Punjab have been launched in three districts of Bhakkar, Khushab and Mianwali. Nutrition interventions to improve nutrition and food security through kitchen gardening, advocacy, awareness & capacity building have been initiated in Balochistan. The conditional cash transfer under Ehsaas Nashonuma Programme is operational in 14 districts and is being expanded to additional 50 districts of the country.

80. Nutrition Awareness and Advocacy Training sessions have been conducted among mid-career officers of various federal and provincial departments and Urdu translations of Pakistan Dietary Guidelines for Better Nutrition (PDGN) have been disseminated.

XVI. Right to education (Recommendations 152.221, 152.222, 152.223, 152.224, 152.225, 152.226, 152.227, 152.228, 152.229, 152.230, 152.231, 152.232, 152.233, 152.234, 152.235, 152.236 and 152.237)

81. The Ministry of Education & Professional Training (MoEP&T) in 2017 developed a policy guideline on Minimum Standards for Quality Education in Pakistan as a basic minimum criterion for all provinces and areas to ensure provision of quality education. The document explicitly describes the minimum targets and standards for learners, curriculum, textbooks and other learning materials, teachers, assessment, early learning and development standards and school environment. Additionally, the National Education Policy Framework was also drafted in 2018 to make improving quality of education as a priority area for the government.

82. In 2019, the Single National Curriculum (SNC) was approved for all education institutions in the country to provide a unified system "in terms of curriculum, medium of instruction, and a single platform of evaluation to ensure a fair and equal opportunity to acquire high-quality education. Punjab and KP adopted the SNC and Balochistan has committed to adopt it. The SNC's first phase was inaugurated in March 2021 and the second and third stages will be implemented by 2023. Furthermore, the MoEP&T is also working on Pakistan National Education Policy.

83. The SNC envisions merger of madrassas, or religious institutions, into a unified educational system. MoEP&T and the Federation of Religious Seminaries have agreed in principle to include madrassas in the scope of formal education under the SNC.

84. All Provincial Education Departments have developed their respective Education Sector Plans for the period of 2019/20–25, drawing special focus on girl child to reduce gender disparity in enrollments. In 2020, the Secondary Education Department of the Government of Balochistan developed a Welcome Back to School Plan-2020 to reduce the number of out of school children. Accordingly, 86,856 out of school children have been enrolled in schools during 2020–21.

85. The Government of Punjab launched enrolment drive in February, 2021 with particular focus on students who dropped out due to prolonged closure of schools amid COVID-19 pandemic. In three months, more than 634,000 children were enrolled. For the first time, B-form has been made mandatory for new enrolment to eliminate possibility of ghost enrolment. Almost 92% of B-forms of newly admitted students have been verified so far. In Sindh, enrolment drive has led to a reduction in drop out cases. Similarly, schools have been upgraded to improve transition rates while teachers are being hired on merit.

86. Access to education is also being ensured through provision of online education resources. To reduce the negative impact of Covid-19 and counter dropout rates from schools, the Punjab Secondary Education Department promoted remote learning through their initiative Taleem-Ghar where a TV cable channel was launched, supplemented by a dedicated

website and mobile application to facilitate students' learning. The Department of Elementary & Secondary Education Sindh also initiated free online curriculum-based learning materials for students to continue their education during school closure. A learning portal was launched containing digital materials for students to enhance their knowledge. These contents are dubbed for easy understanding of students. Official YouTube channel of Elementary & Secondary Education Department has been created for students of grades 1 to 10. Furthermore, a question answer platform has also been formulated for students, parents and the general public to spark the spirit of conceptual knowledge in the subjects of Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics.

87. The School Education Department (SED) in collaboration with Punjab Curriculum & Textbook Board and PITB has launched an official repository of digital textbooks titled E-Learn. Through this website, students can access thirty science and math textbooks for Grade 1–12 which have been augmented with 13,047 Video Lectures, 592 Simulations, 2,100 Audio minutes and 1,830 Animations. In 2020, Punjab's first book for Early Child Education (ECE) "Little Library" was launched for ECE and Grade 1 students. The book contains 12 little booklets with different topics, images and shapes so children can learn them easily.

88. The Federal and Provincial governments have also introduced financial incentives and schemes to ensure access to education. In Punjab, the Government initiated the Zever-e-Taleem Programme in 2017 to improve enrolment, attendance, and retention of secondary school girls. Under this program a monthly stipend of PKR 1,000 is given to female students of grade 6–10 who comply with 80% attendance rate in public sector middle and secondary schools of 16 low-literacy districts of Punjab. 813,123 girls have received cash benefit from this programme since 2017. Additional incentives include provision of free textbooks up to matric level, no fee at matric level just FTF of only 20 rupees per month, and provision of uniform to needy students. In Sindh stipends totaling up to 1,500 million rupees for over 350,000 Girl Students are being provided to support transition in secondary classes through branchless banking. Girls of public and private institutions in KP are also being given scholarships on equality and merit basis.

89. Expenditure on schools and their infrastructures has increased and merit-based recruitment of teaching staff is underway. The Government of Balochistan, with the assistance of EU under the Balochistan Education Support program (BES-I), is upgrading 100 Government Primary Schools to Middle level, along with functionalizing 900 classrooms to accommodate new enrollments and improve access at the middle level. 9,433 teaching positions (under pay scale 9–15 scale) are being filled in through independent testing services on the basis of merit and recruitment for 2,149 teachers (in pay Scale-17) has been planned through Balochistan Public Service Commission.

90. The Government of Sindh has upgraded 54 girls' schools, and completed construction of 29 schools with further 25 girls' schools under construction. Other initiatives include Girls' Right to Education Program by UNESCO being implemented by School Education & Literacy Department Sindh in district Tharparkar; a Girls' Transition Program in Mithi, Diplo, Kaloi, Nagarparkar & Islamkot; a Girls' Can project by AZCorp and Wins by UNICEF.

91. The Government of Punjab also established 202 Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) Centers, developed infrastructures at schools, and launched programs to support lagging districts of province. In 2021, the Insaf Afternoon School Program (IASP) was launched to upgrade schools. In the first phase, 577 schools in 22 districts were upgraded and in the second phase, 10,000 primary schools were upgraded to the Middle level using the existing infrastructure. The Punjab School Construction and Rehabilitation Program (P-SCR) was completed by June 2021 to uplift the infrastructure of public schools in selected districts, including construction of 2,000 classrooms, establishment of 110 model schools, revitalization of 1,000 Science and IT labs, and rehabilitation of 400 libraries. Furthermore, 1,227 elementary schools were upgraded to high level using the existing infrastructure.

92. In Punjab, a School Improvement Framework (SIF) has been introduced which organizes 24 indicators under 4 domains. After a successful pilot in 10 districts SIF has been rolled out in all districts. The Government of KP also launched Second Shift at schools program in 2021 to reduce the dropout rate and balance the number of students in the

overcrowded schools. Under this programme, primary schools were given the status of middle, middle ones that of high, and high schools to higher secondary schools. In the first phase, the second shift programme will start in 120 schools in 16 districts of KPK including 76 boys and 44 girls' schools.

**XVII. Discrimination against/protection of women
(Recommendations 152.239, 152.240, 152.241, 152.242,
152.243, 152.244, 152.245, 152.246, 152.248, 152.249, 152.250,
152.251, 152.252, 152.253, 152.255, 152.256, 152.257, 152.258,
152.259, 152.260, 152.261, 152.262, 152.263, 152.264, 152.265,
152.266, 152.267, 152.268, 152.269, 152.270, 152.271, 152.272,
152.273)**

93. The Federal Government has enacted a number of laws, policies, programs and other measures to remove gender disparity and empower women. At the policy front, Kafaalat Program was introduced in 2020 to reform the existing BISP by adjusting the transferred amount for inflation. This increased women beneficiaries from 4.6 million to 7 million. Furthermore, the Ehsaas Emergency Cash (EEC) program was also established to deliver one-time emergency cash assistance to the poor and vulnerable households that were most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and 3.7 million (48.9%) women benefitted from this initiative.

94. The Government of Punjab published the Punjab Women Development Policy, 2018 which mandates all public sector entities to ensure a minimum of 33% representation of women. Balochistan implemented the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Policy in 2020 to protect, advance and implement women rights through equity-based socio-economic opportunities including decision-making role in public and private sectors. Mainstreaming gender, gender-responsive governance, pro-women legislation, access to justice, and improved social services are priority areas under the Policy.

95. In addition to policy measures, Pakistan has also enacted various legislations to address VAW including harassment, deprivation from inheritance, domestic violence, acid throwing, and rape. In January 2022, the Parliament amended the Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2010 to broaden the definition of employees to include non-conventional workplaces and increase definition of workplace harassment to include gender discrimination at work. Additionally, the State promulgated the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act 2021 and the Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act 2020.

96. The Punjab province promulgated the Domestic Workers' Act 2019 to regulate the working conditions, hours, and holidays and overall employment of domestic workers. The Government of KP also enacted key legislation pertaining to protection against discrimination, protection against harassment, provision of day care, maternity leave, and equal pay for equal work. The KP Home Based Workers (Welfare and protection) Act 2021 was enacted to address the rights, duties and problems of home-based workers. A Women Protection Bill is also under consideration in KP that comprehensively covers all aspects of women related crimes, reporting cognizance, prosecution as well as victim and witness protection.

97. In order to effectively implement criminal laws and provide speedy justice to victims of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in a gender-sensitive manner, the National Judicial Policy Making Committee (NJPMC) in 2019 directed all provincial High Courts to establish special Gender Based Violence Courts. Pursuant to the directions of NJPMC, 36 GBV courts have been designated in Punjab, 27 in Sindh, 29 in KPK, 1 in Balochistan and 2 in ICT. Additionally, 36 judicial officers are assigned to GBV cases in Punjab, 46 in Sindh, 32 in KPK and 1 in Balochistan and ICT respectively. The same requirement is also mentioned in the recently enacted anti-rape legislation.

98. The efforts of the GoP also include administrative and institutional interventions. A Gender Protection Unit (GPU) was established at the Islamabad Police Facilitation Centre in May 2021 to encourage women victims of sexual harassment, rape, and bonded labour to report offences in the presence of a well-trained team of female police officers, legal officers, psychologists, and medical officers.

99. To improve reporting, helplines have been set up across Pakistan. In 2019, Punjab established 186 helpdesks managed solely by female police staff, and by 2020 32% of all police stations in Punjab had helpdesks. The Punjab Police has also set up 03 women police stations in Lahore, Rawalpindi and Faisalabad to exclusively facilitate reporting of crimes against women. The PCSW has also administered the Punjab Women's Helpline (1043) to provide legal guidance, raise awareness, and register formal complaints. In 2019, 1308 complaints were received through the helpline, while 567 complaints were received in 2020. In January 2021, the Balochistan Women Helpline was launched for registration of complaints against women harassment at home and at the workplace.

100. In Balochistan a One-Stop Complex for Victims of Crimes against Women has been set up to provide in-house services including 24/7 helpline, medical examination, legal consultation, psychosocial support, referral service to long-term shelters, and policy protection to survivors of GBV. The Punjab Social Welfare & BM Department has established a model Protection Center in Multan that received 2684 complaints till 2020. Additionally, 12 Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Crisis Centres for Women exist in Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Mianwali, Sahiwal, Faisalabad, Muzaffargarh, Khushab, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Mutlan Sialkot and Vehari and three additional centers are under construction in Rawalpindi, Gujranwala and Faisalabad. In these centers 7400 women were provided redress between 2019 and 2020. In KP, there are 8 Dar-ul-Aman (Shelter Homes) and 5 new Dar-ul-Amans are being established for providing rehabilitation services to the victims of violence.

101. The WDD Balochistan in its Annual Development Plan (ADP) of FY2021-22 has provided for several development schemes like Women Business Incubation Centres, Women Bazaars, and Working Women Hostels at Divisional Headquarters. Three Crises Centres and Shelter Homes are under construction in different districts and SOPs of the Crises Centres and Shelter Homes operating are being revised to harmonize them with the essence of the SDGs and other best practices.

102. Under the Punjab Skill Development Fund (PSDF), skills training was provided to approximately 40,180 rural females. During 2019–20 the Punjab Livestock and Dairy Development Department distributed 78,872 poultry units to rural women across Punjab and provided poultry raising training. Through the Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority, 55,000 female students have been provided skill development courses along with a stipend worth PKR 1,000 per month. Other initiatives by the Government of Punjab include establishment of Mediation and Rehabilitation Wing; conducting awareness campaigns, establishment of an online central storage system for timely service delivery and monitoring mechanism, and provision of legal aid.

103. The MoHR is in the process of drafting a National Policy on Ending Violence against Women and Girls. The Ministry is also engaged with the UN Women as well as with all stakeholders in the country including at provincial levels.

104. Legislation on domestic violence exists in all provinces. The Sindh Domestic Violence (Protection and Prevention) Act was passed in 2013, the Balochistan Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act in 2014, the Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Act in 2016 and the KP Domestic Violence Against women (Prevention and Protection) Act in 2021. Under these laws, institutional mechanisms have been set up to protect women from abuse. District level protection committees are organized to ensure access to legal, psychological and shelter services of women survivors of violence. At the federal level, a similar bill has been drafted and introduced in the National Assembly.

105. Government and non-government entities are providing trainings and awareness-raising sessions on gender issues and laws. The Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan started special training sessions in 2019 for Judicial Officers and Prosecutors on gender issues. The FJA has also initiated a nation-wide sensitization program of judges with a focus on gender sensitization. In 2018 MoHR conducted sensitization sessions for prosecutors and

court officials on women specific laws. Till July 2021, 12 capacity building workshops were arranged, and 467 prosecutors and court officials were sensitized.

106. At the provincial level 22 training programs were held in Punjab to sensitize 1,168 judges and court staffs on gender related laws from 2016–2019. The KP Judicial Academy also conducted various trainings on women’s rights, gender mainstreaming, women empowerment and women’s right to inheritance. The Balochistan Judicial Academy has carried out several trainings with Judges, Prosecutors, Commissioners, Magistrates, Investigation Officers and newly enrolled lawyers on various topics including juvenile justice system, women and children’s rights, inheritance laws, harassment of women, child rights and prevention of early marriages.

107. Since the subject of child marriage has been devolved to provinces every provincial government has taken its own initiatives to revise the age of marriage. The Sindh Government enacted the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2013 to criminalize marriage of anyone below the age of 18 years. Balochistan and KP also drafted Early Child Marriage Restraint Act and Child Marriage Restraint Bill to prohibit marriage of persons below 18 years. The Government of Punjab also proposed a similar bill where stricter penalties have been imposed on those found guilty of marrying children under the age of 18.

XVIII. Rights of child (Recommendations 152.279, 152.280, 152.281, 152.282 and 152.284)

108. The GoP has undertaken a number of legislative, policy and administrative initiatives to protect and promote the rights of child. The NCRC was established in 2020 to monitor child rights situation in Pakistan and take punitive measures for redressal of grievances of victims. In 2021, CPI was established. A Director General for CPI and a Child Protection Advisory Board has also been appointed. Since its operationalization, the CPI has rescued 127 children.

109. In 2018, Pakistan promulgated the Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018 to dispose of cases through diversion and social-reintegration of the child offenders. Furthermore, the Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Act 2020 was enacted to raise alerts, and recover missing and abducted children. Under this Act, the Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Agency (ZARRA) has been established and the Director General ZARRA has been appointed and police stations have been sensitized on this law.

110. To end child labour, a National Child Labour Survey is being carried out to help devise policy and amend laws on child labour. Furthermore, child labour has been banned at the federal and provincial level, as the Federal and each Provincial Government has enacted relevant laws prohibiting employment of children at the workplace.

111. With respect to addressing youth unemployment, a Youth Affairs Wing in the Prime Minister’s Office was established in 2018, which carried out several consultations to understand the problems faced by the youth. Consequently, a National Youth Development Framework (NYDF) was developed focusing on youth education, employment, and engagement. Based on NYDF, the *Kamyab Jawan* Program (2019–2023) was designed with support from several UN agencies. The program focused on federal-provincial collaboration in mainstreaming of marginalized youth, economic empowerment, civic engagement, social protection, health and wellbeing, and youth-focused institutional reforms.

XIX. Persons with disabilities (Recommendations 152.285, 152.286)

112. The GoP has introduced new legislation and policies to further empower PWDs. Additionally, a special cell exists to deal with matters of PWDs on priority basis in Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM). Financial support is extended by PBM to ensure PWDs’ accessibility through provision of artificial limbs, hearing aids, wheelchairs, white canes, etc. Transcription to Braille books by National Braille Press at National Special Education Center for Visually Impaired Persons, Islamabad is ensured.

113. National Committee for Implementation of CRPD has been constituted which would recommend policy, legal and administrative measures for protection of PWDs' rights under the Constitution and international conventions and improve coordination mechanism among the stakeholders at Federal and Provincial level. Reserved job quota for PWDs is being implemented and for participation in political processes and in decision-making. An awareness campaign was launched by Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Postal Ballot facility offered to PWDs and trainings of PWDs, and other vulnerable groups were conducted by ECP for casting votes on priority with a view to ensure their participation.

114. The Directorate General of Special Education (DGSE) has published design manual and guidelines for the accessibility and the accessibility code of Pakistan 2006 to create barrier free environment for PWDs and disseminated the same to all concerned departments. The Federal and Provincial Headquarters have been declared Disabled Friendly with facilities for PWDs at each Bus Station of Metro Bus Service and special elevators, lifts, chairs, ramps etc. are available for PWDs at government offices.

115. In mid-2019, MoHR arranged capacity building workshops of Provincial as well as Regional Governments (GB and AJK) to build capacity of officers of the relevant departments for implementation of CRPD and relevant laws, as well as follow up on actions required.

Way forward and challenges

116. Pakistan remains committed to ensuring the realization and enjoyment of basic civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of its citizens including the right to development. Consistent engagement with the UPR mechanism and follow-up actions pursuant to UPR recommendations reflect Pakistan's commitment to cooperate with the Human Rights Council and its allied mechanism. As a vibrant democracy, Pakistan will continue to uphold fundamental freedoms including meeting people's needs and providing an enabling environment for the continued exercise their rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association. Pakistan values the role of free media, independent judiciary and vibrant civil society in the advancement of respect for and promotion and protection of human rights for all.

117. The GoP is making all possible efforts to enact relevant laws, pursue policies and take administrative measures towards their effective implementation. Notwithstanding implementation in terms of capacity and resource constraints, the GoP is committed to continuously improve the state of human rights in the country.

118. Recognizing the interrelated nature of human rights, Pakistan will continue to take legislative and administrative measures to uplift people's living standards including protecting them against global financial crunch as well as climate change and natural catastrophes. Amidst recent climate induced events in Pakistan, where millions of people lost their livelihoods, and more than one thousand have lost their lives, the Government with the support of international community is taking all steps to provide relief and rehabilitation to all, especially those in marginalized and vulnerable settings.
