



**National Statement delivered by Ms. Shaza Fatima Khwaja, Special Assistant to Prime Minister during the Discussion on the General Survey ILO**

**Tuesday 6 June 2023**

**Mr. Chair,**

We take note of the General Survey.

Pakistan is proud of its longstanding tradition of women's active participation in all walks of life.

In this context I am privileged to pay tribute to Begum Ra'ana Liaqat Ali Khan, who served on the Committee of Experts on Application of Conventions and Recommendations of ILO from 1954 to 1977.

In keeping with these rich traditions, women parliamentarians in Pakistan, have steadily gained more significance in their role for advocating and working towards achieving progressive legislations, at both national and provincial levels.

**Mr. Chair,**

Pakistan's legal architecture and policies are aligned with its obligation under international labour and human rights laws.

Articles 25(3) and 26(2) of Pakistan Constitution binds the State to take proactive measures to protect women rights and promote their active and meaningful participation in public affairs. We are pleased to have made good progress in this connection.

Our Parliament passed the Amendment of Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act in 2022, which has further strengthened protections available for women against harassment.

Provincial Assemblies have also enacted legislations to criminalize various form of gender-based violence. These legislations establish an effective system of protection, relief and rehabilitation of women, children, elders and any other vulnerable persons against domestic violence.

There are 20 percent reserved seats for women in the Parliament and provincial assemblies. The current level of women's representation in Pakistan's national and provincial legislatures is amongst the top in the region.

**Mr. Chair,**

Pakistan has 4.4 million home-based workers (HBWs), of whom 3.6 million are women. The participation of women in our overall labour market is on the rise. Pakistan is working with international partners to support increased women participation in the world of



work. In the recent years our efforts have led to adoption of 10 laws by the country's provincial assemblies. The new laws are intended to extend informal HBWs' access to social security, fair wages, and improve formal women workers' access to childcare, separate toilets, transportation, to achieve equal pay, and to end discrimination. One measure of easing women's access to labor force and lifting constraints for them, improved Pakistan's score in the World Bank's 2022 Women, Business, and Law (WBL) indicators. We are committed to stay on this path.

The Government continues to take initiatives, with a view to enhancing social mobility and empowering women. We launched the National Gender Policy Framework in 2022.

There are several social security schemes to support worker. It includes the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) which provides unconditional cash transfers to eligible families. During the pandemic, the program helped poor families affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, especially women.

Prime Minister's Youth Program running for the last 10 years also has various programs including skills development, access to capital for entrepreneurship, distribution of laptops as enabling devices, with special quota for women in all these initiatives, act as enablers for women to enter the workforce.

Recently, the Government has approved a project worth of Rs. 400 million for provision of motorbikes on subsidized rates to working-women and students initially in the Islamabad Capital Territory.

**Mr. Chair,**

I would like to reiterate our commitment to the obligations under the ILO's Labour Standards and would continue to take affirmative steps to protect workers' rights, especially female workers.

Finally, I would to pay tribute to Mr. Fasih ul Karim Siddiqui and Mr. Zaki Ahmad Khan, two senior members of Pakistan Employers delegation to the ILC, who passed away few days earlier. Their deaths represent a loss but their legacy will endure.

**I thank you!**