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**Statement by Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri
at 40th Session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians**

Honourable Chair,
distinguished delegates, and
fellow parliamentarians,

It is an honour to stand among women who are not only shaping policies — but reshaping the very meaning of power.

I represent Pakistan's Upper House — the Senate — and I come from Balochistan, a land of immense resilience, rich diversity, and unshakable spirit.

It is a province that has long struggled with deprivation, yet it continues to produce women whose strength and courage illuminate the path toward justice and equality.

Through legislation, oversight, and advocacy, I have worked to transform promises of equality into measurable change.

Being the chairperson of the Human Rights Functional committee, my mission has been to ensure the voice of the marginalized especially women, laborers and wonderables and not just heard but acted upon.

I have authored and co-sponsored landmark bills along with my female parliamentarians - from strengthening anti-rape laws and factory safety protections for female workers, to empowering statutory bodies like the National Commissions on Human Rights and the Status of Women.

Our Mental Health (Amendment) Bill 2025 placed Pakistan among the few countries recognizing the right to psychological well-being — especially for women survivors of trauma — because justice must not only punish, it must heal.

The Senate Human Rights Committee has exposed and addressed critical issues: honour killings, bonded labour, mine workers' exploitation, trafficking, child abuse, and climate-induced displacement — reaffirming that human rights are not abstract principles; they are the daily realities of our people.

In 2024, I was privileged to lead Pakistan's delegation to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination here in Geneva.

That moment reaffirmed that Pakistan's women are not only participants in the global human rights conversation — we are shaping it.

Every woman in public life knows that progress comes with resistance. I, too, have faced opposition from entrenched structures that prefer silence to change.

But we have turned resistance into resilience — by building bipartisan alliances, by legislating for safer digital spaces through the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Bill 2023, and by engaging men as partners in change, ensuring that gender justice becomes a shared national value, not a women's plea.

Coming from Balochistan, I have learned that transformation begins quietly — with inclusion, persistence, and visibility.

Every time a woman from my province chairs a committee, drafts a reform, or stands up for justice, she breaks not just a barrier — she breaks history.

True transformation, dear colleagues, is not about how much power we hold — but how much hope we inspire.

It is not measured only in statistics, but in changed mindsets — when girls no longer ask for permission to lead.

Our responsibility as parliamentarians is to weave empathy into governance, integrity into institutions, and trust into our nations' future.

Transformative leadership is moral courage — the courage to act when it is easier to stay silent.

And together, as women parliamentarians of the world, we embody that courage.

I dedicate this reflection to the women of Pakistan —who carry the weight of resilience every day, and whose quiet strength continues to build the soul of our nation.

Let us lead not through power, but through purpose.

Not through dominance, but through dignity.

And let us build a world where gender no longer defines destiny — but courage does.

Thank you.
