



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION ISLAMABAD

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Press Release

Australia supports Pakistan to end gender based violence

Australian High Commissioner Margaret Adamson today launched a national level study on countering gender-based violence in Pakistan undertaken by Research and Development Solutions CEO Dr Ayesha Hameed Khan.

Supported by the Australian Government, the study explores how to improve medico-legal services and systems to counter gender based violence (GBV). The study is part of the Australian Government's AUD7.5 million Elimination of Violence Against Women in Pakistan (EVAW) program, which provides support for women and children in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provinces affected by domestic violence. The program also engages men, community and religious leaders in support of eliminating violence against women.

Ms Adamson said the Australia Government, through its EVAW program, had been pleased to support Dr Khan's study and commended the National Women's Parliamentary Caucus, Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services, Ministry of Human Rights and implementing partner Trocaire for organising the event.

"Without research, we are not informed and cannot expect to develop evidence-based policy, strengthen systems or achieve reform," Ms Adamson said. "Governments and civil society have a collective responsibility to contribute to international efforts to improve the safety of, and opportunities for, women and girls globally. For a just, equitable and peaceful society, we must reinforce our commitment to reducing violence against women through not only developing responsive legislative mechanisms, but also ensuring implementation," she said. Ms Adamson commended the launch participants, in particular women parliamentarians, on their strong commitment to eliminating gender based violence in Pakistan.

The launch of the study is a continuation of activities to mark International Women's Day. The Australian High Commission, in partnership with Trocaire and Lok Virsa had earlier marked IWD with an event - also connected to Australia's EVAW program - in recognition of the courage and efforts of Pakistani women who had challenged gender based violence and who had become gender champions within their communities.

The EVAW program aims to strengthen the capacity of Pakistan's police, medical institutions and the judiciary to respond to violence against women and to build the capacity of parliamentarians to enable them to strengthen legislation to eliminate violence against women. The EVAW program will provide more than 17,200 Pakistani women and children with direct assistance and benefit about 238,000 Pakistani women and children indirectly.

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