



PUNJAB

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Introductory Statement of Pakistan

Madam Chairperson of the UN CEDAW Committee,
distinguished members of the Committee
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honored to represent the Government of Pakistan to discuss the combined initial

and to discuss the combined initial report in this context and to further announce the

I would now like to start by giving a glimpse of Pakistan's socio economic context as it primarily affects our interaction and service delivery to the women of Pakistan. While

Madam Chairperson, distinguished members of the Committee

I will now take the opportunity to highlight some specific measures and affirmative actions that the Government of Pakistan has taken to eliminate discrimination against women and to empower them;

These measures are at policy, administrative and institutional levels.

In 1998, following the 'Beijing Platform, a 'National Plan of Action' (NPA) was launched that touched upon all '12 Areas of Concern'. A thirteenth area of concern regarding women with disabilities was added later. This was done by the Ministry of Women Development in close collaboration with UNDP under Gender Equality Umbrella Project (GEUP).

- The NPA establishes a set of priority action formulated to help achieve the agenda for the empowerment of women in Pakistan. Prepared on the basis of national

ministries, involving Federal and Provincial Governments, NGOs

categorized as social and legal as well as institutional reforms. I would highlight the following few:

Social & Legal Measures

Violence against women (VAW) is a global concern that is entrenched in a stereotypical mindset. Pakistan is no exception. Traditional mindset, as you are aware, are difficult to

environment to bring about the necessary attitudinal change.

National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women specifically contains a **section on violence against women (VAW)**. It emphasizes on:

- ✓ Adopting a zero tolerance policy regarding violence against women;
- ✓ Declaring “honor killing” as murder;
- ✓ Reviewing and revising police and medico legal procedures;

- i. Law against "Honour Killing" has been passed by the Parliament, called "Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2004";
- ii. "Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act 2006" relating/amending the much debated Hudood Ordinances has been

- ✓ **Monitoring Committees:** The Ministry of Women Development (MoWD), in concert with the provincial and district governments has set up Federal, provincial and district level Monitoring Committees for implementing key policy measures. These Policy Monitoring Committees are functional since 2003-04 at the federal and provincial levels (in 32 districts); In addition, a

- ✓ **Separate Complaint Cells:** To facilitate abused women and female victims of crime and violence, separate complaint cells have been established in the existing Police stations headed by women police officers, where women can

- ✓ Around **1300 women** languishing in jails for crimes other than terrorism and murder were **released from the jails on bail** in the year 2006, under the Law Reforms Ordinance, 2006.

Madam Chairperson, distinguished members of the Committee,

I would now like to touch upon some of the **institutional reforms** undertaken by the government in recent years;

- With government's vision of improving the conditions of Pakistani women and the growing responsibility and tasks involved in realizing this objective, the Federal Ministry for Women Development Ministry is now more focused on women issues and assumes greater scope and mandate in this regard. At provincial level, Women's Development Departments (WDD) are functioning with similar focus.
- A **National Commission on Status of Women** has been established in year 2000, with a mandate to examine the relevance and efficacy of all policies, programs and measures to the core issue of women development and gender equality.
- A recently launched **Gender Reform Action Plan (GRAP)** is the largest project on portfolio of the MoWD. Approved by the Federal Cabinet in May 2005, GRAP is mandated to undertake a coherent gender reform agenda through phased

Despite being in its nascent stage, GRAP has already set up gender units in nine line ministries, and is in the process of developing a sound Monitoring and Evaluation system.

In this process of institutional development, it may be pertinent to mention about **Jail Reforms** having special focus on female victims. These reforms include setting up of separate women jails, improving the physical environment, staff conditions, and the protection of women and juveniles from abuse and their eventual rehabilitation. Gender sensitization is being undertaken, inter alia, by including gender aspects in the curriculum of the police training colleges.

Access to Justice Program (AJP) is a comprehensive plan being implemented by the

Ministry of Law and Justice

and Population Welfare- as well as by 12 other ministries that have so far been included under the incremental MTBF reform. These amendments, honorable members of the Committee, not only demonstrate the commitment of the government for gender responsive budgeting but would also go a long way in institutionalizing the gender perspective in the government's established budgetary forms and procedures.

With all the on going programs and plans of the government, the need to build the capacity of implementing machinery/ministry and other stakeholders has become necessary. Many international donors are assisting the Government of Pakistan in building its capacity with ongoing local and international trainings. Ministry of Development with its increased role is being assisted by such international organizations as the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), UNIFEM, UNFPA, and the UNDP etc.

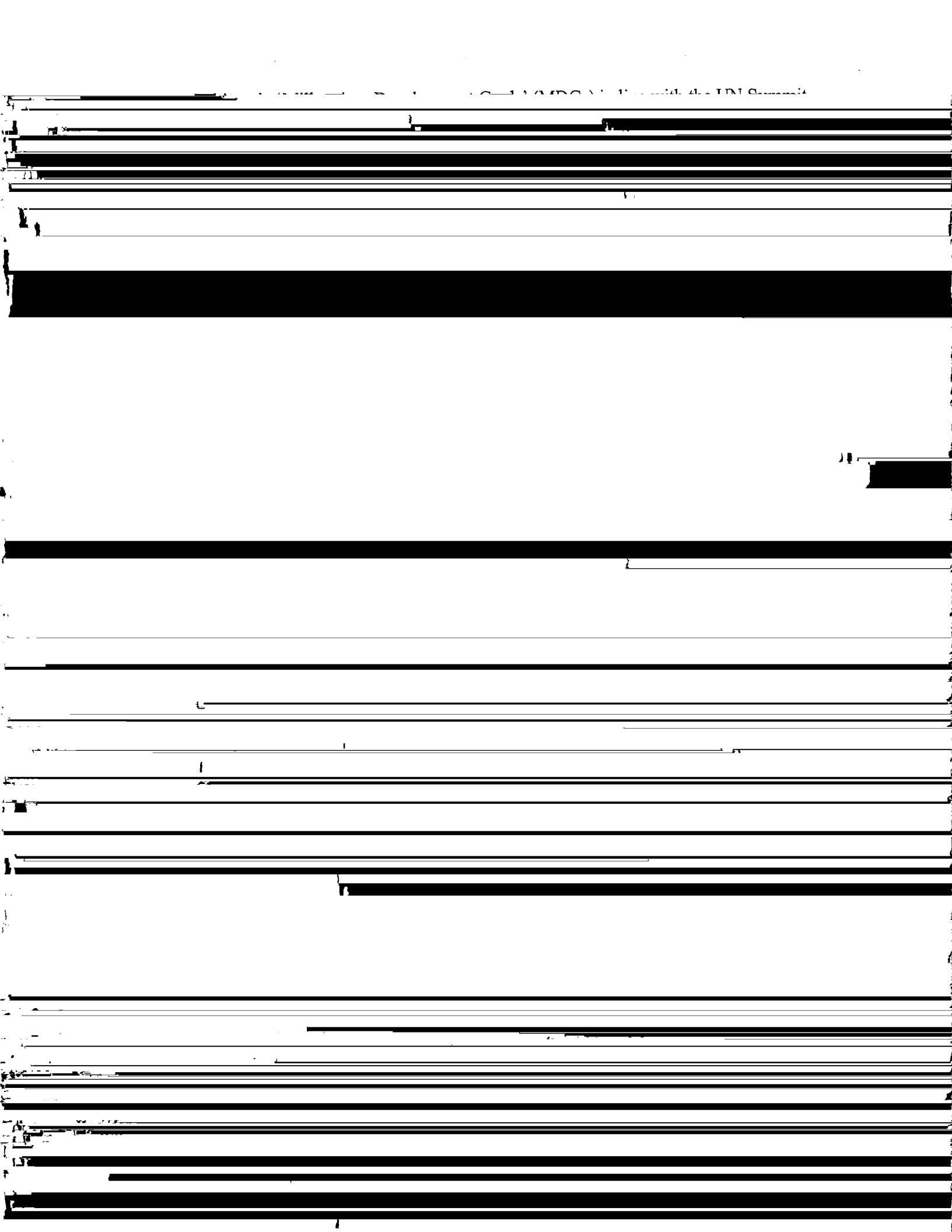
Madam Chairperson, distinguished members of the Committee

From some of the above mentioned initiatives of the government, you have a fair idea that we are determined to empower Pakistani women and to include them in the development of our country. We are endeavouring to take all possible affirmative actions in this regard. Our government remains committed to ensure provision of justice and

commit to the women so that they can lead their lives with respect and dignity

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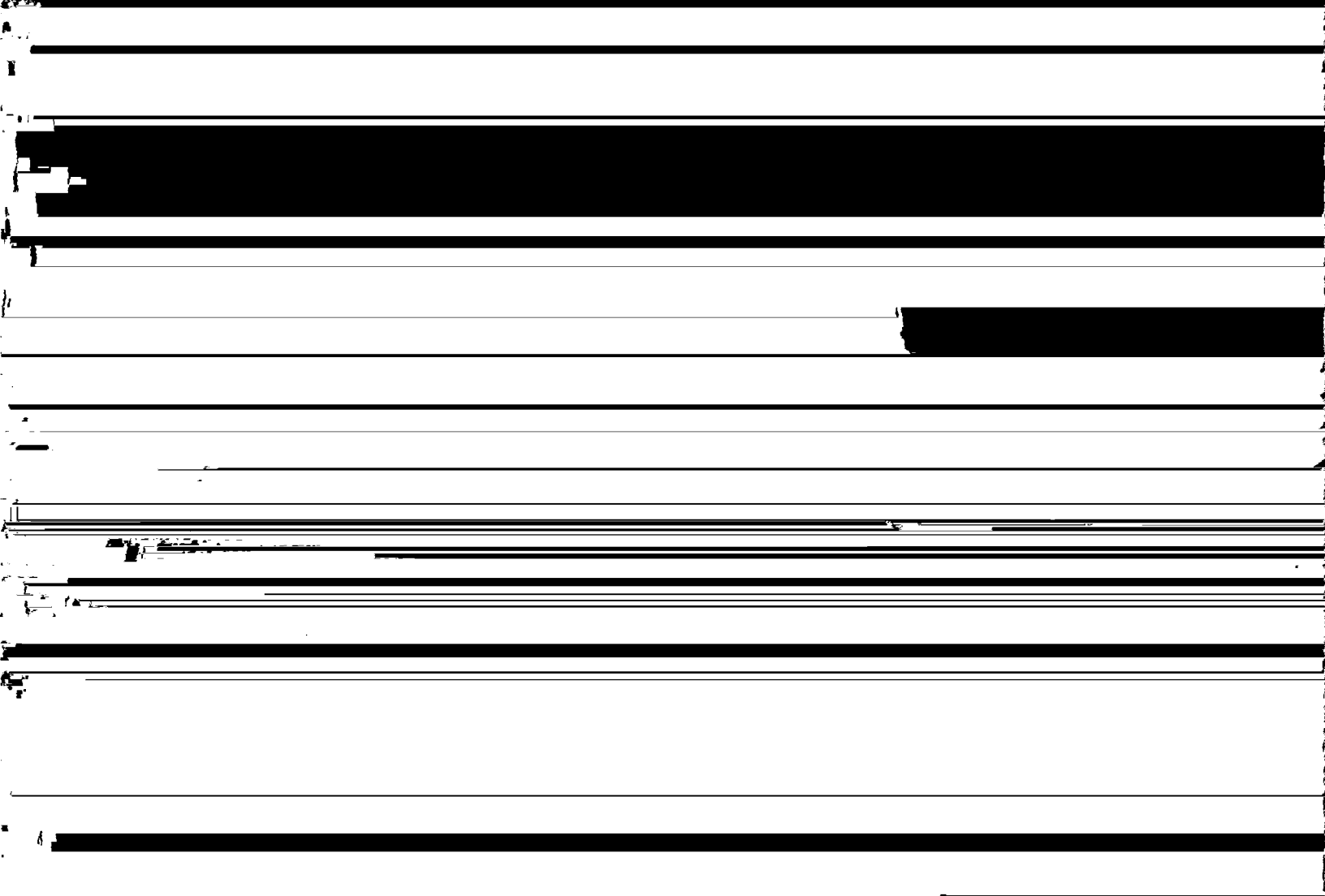
2. The international limits of resources reveals significant progress like



- ✓ Ministry of Labor and Manpower with assistance from the ILO has launched a project on “Women Employment Concerns and Working Conditions”. The Project aims at strengthening the capacity of women in Trade Unions, Chamber of Commerce;
- ✓ Minimum wage has been enhanced to RS 4000 per month during the financial year 2006-7. Katmandu Declaration signed by Pakistan is being instrumental in obliging the government to develop a policy and plan to address the issue of home based workers;
- ✓ GoP has allocated Rs. 100 million for the bonded laborers. This amount is being utilized for the on going implementation of the national policy and plan of action on bonded Labour;

As evidence of Government's commitment to empower women in all walks of life, I would now to like to share with you some of the recent unprecedented initiatives taken to

support and empower the working women at levels:



Madam Chairperson

With a forward looking Government in position, I once again reaffirm that Pakistan is fully committed to materialize women empowerment in all spheres, in letter and spirit.

Conscious of the responsibility as a State-Party to CEDAW, Pakistan is actively pursuing

a policy of gender mainstreaming through political, economic and social empowerment and gender equality in all its policies and programmes.

Enhancement of women's political representation at national and local levels facilitated women's presence and voice in law making and governance. Achievements in **Political Empowerment are unprecedented**. Providing placement of women in positions of decision-making, and their participation in electoral positions at Federal, Provincial, and Local levels under the Devolution Plan through the **Local Government Ordinance 2001** is considered as the watershed for political empowerment of women of Pakistan. It provides 33% representation of women at all tiers of local elected bodies (with 39,964 women working as councilors), and 231 women representing in Federal and Provincial Assemblies as Members of the Senate and the National and Provincial Assemblies on special women seats out of 1170 seats. In addition, the women can also contest elections on general seats. This has revolutionized political participation of women in Pakistan.

Establishment of '**Women Political Schools**' with bulk aid from the UNDP/international donor agencies and '**District Resource Centers**' for women are innovative projects

for political education and awareness amongst the women and preparing them to play

On its part, the judiciary has taken *suo-moto* cognizance of a number of incidents involving violence against women.

Distinguished Members,

Disaggregated authentic data is crucial for policy-making and

implementation. A milestone in our effort for gender mainstreaming has been the creation of a gender sensitized statistical organization devoted to the compilation of a

compendium on gender statistics providing foundation for policy formulation. The compendium has been printed and is also available on the website of the Federal Bureau of Statistics.

Madam Chairperson

Last but not the least, is the proactive role played by our civil society organizations and the NGO sector whose constant support, monitoring and constructive criticisms have rendered positive assistance to the government in its endeavors towards mainstreaming women and their empowerment. I would also like to acknowledge the role and support of

Despite all the above mentioned efforts already underway, we are mindful of the fact that much more needs to be done in achieving gender equality according to CEDAW. On behalf of the Government of Pakistan, I assure you of our commitment to the promotion and protection of women's rights under the CEDAW.

My delegation and I now welcome your questions.