

FIRST DOMESTIC WORKERS CONVENTION

Activity Report

June 16, 2014 at Aiwan-e-Quaid Auditorium, Islamabad

Homenet Pakistan organized First Domestic Workers Convention in the history of Pakistan on 16th of June, 2014 at Aiwan-e-Quaid Auditorium, Islamabad in coalition with Plan Pakistan.



The following persons were hosting the event:-

1. Fozia Akhtar (Project Manager, Plan Pakistan)
2. Saima Sarwat (Program Manager, Homenet Pakistan)
3. Saman Farhan (Project Officer, Homenet Pakistan)

The following persons were the panelists:-

1. Umme Laila Azhar, Executive Director, Homenet Pakistan
2. Shaheena Kausar, General Secretary, Women Workers Union
3. Ms. Iffat Jamil, Program Manager, Plan Pakistan.

4. Salman Yousaf Khan, Advocate High Court and Ex-Candidate Member National Assembly, NA-48, Islamabad.
5. Ms. Farkhanda, Ex-Director General, Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan.
6. Ms. Zahida, President Women Workers Federation.
7. Ms. Saima, President Domestic Workers Union.
8. Khadija Ali, Advocate and Domestic Workers Activist.



Participants:-

The participants were domestic workers from Islamabad and Rawalpindi and personalities from social sector organizations...

The Event:-

The convention started at 3:00 pm and ended at 06:30 pm. An introduction to the convention was given by Ms. Saima Sarwat from Homenet Pakistan. It was the occasion of third anniversary of ILO C-189 on 16th June, 2014 on which this convention was hosted.

Ms. Iffat Jamil from Plan Pakistan was invited over the stage. She gave a brief introduction about Plan Pakistan. She thanked people who supported the idea to support domestic workers in Pakistan.

Ms. Umme Laila Azhar was invited over the stage. She pointed out that there are around 74% domestic workers in Pakistan with having no rights at all. She informed the participants about the new law on domestic workers tabled in the senate of Pakistan. She further intimated the gathering about the efforts of Homenet Pakistan in the law making for Domestic Workers in

Pakistan. She further stressed the need to involve employers in the process of law making for domestic workers.

Ms. Saima, president domestic workers union from Islamabad highlighted the problems faced by domestic workers in the line of duty.

Ms. Khadija Ali was invited over the stage. She discussed the gaps in the new law tabled in the Senate of Pakistan.



Mr. Salman Yousaf Khan appreciated the efforts done by Senator Osman Saifullah for tabling the domestic workers bill in Senate. He shared the features of Domestic Workers Bill, 2013. Salman Yousaf Khan further gave recommendations keeping in view the needs and circumstances of domestic workers in Pakistan. He further stressed on the need of imposition of Article 25-A for free education to the children of Domestic Workers. Similarly he stressed on the need to ensure social security, medical and welfare of domestic workers. He added that criminal proceedings in cases of domestic workers shall be the subject matter of dispute resolution committee so made in result of the act to be passed. He raised the need to establish a quasi-judicial system of courts for domestic workers. He pointed out that according to section 6 of the bill; the domestic workers are required to enter into contract with the employers. He stressed that there shall be an institution with whom the domestic workers as well as the employers shall enter into a contract. He further stressed on the need to insert detailed provisions in the bill regarding the process of union registration for domestic workers, domestic workers welfare board's functioning and looking after the affairs of domestic workers, dispute resolution committee's composition and functionality, appellate forums composition and functionality. He finally thanked the domestic workers and motivated them with some poetry of Allama Iqbal for continuing their struggle for their rights.



Ms. Zahida from Women Workers Federation came and emphasized on the need to strengthen up the movement of domestic workers so that they get their due rights.



Ms. Shaheena Kausar from Women Workers Union stressed that the domestic workers shall be given training regarding the sexual harassment issues. She stressed on the need to train

domestic workers for availing remedies if any offence happens under section 509 of Pakistan Penal Code. She further motivated the domestic workers with slogans for their rights.

Ms. Farkhanda, Ex Director General Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan focused on creating ombudsman for domestic workers like the way ombudsman were created in result of harassment laws.

Outcome

A movement in proper direction for the rights of domestic workers has been given a voice through this event internationally. It was a movement initiated by Homenet Pakistan in coordination with Plan Pakistan which has taken a shape due to the efforts of many who participated in this convention. It was the first ever domestic workers convention in the history of Pakistan which showed solidarity and commitment of struggle with domestic workers in the times to come.



The Convention successfully ended with a commitment to move further with positive efforts by all the participants.

The End

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