

**Women's Action Forum  
Lahore**

**Minutes of the General Body Meeting  
12.6.06**

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**Venue:** ShirkatGah, Lahore

**Members present:**

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**Agenda: National Convention and Celebrating 25 years of WAF**

**Summary of Proceedings:**

Celebration Dates: Karachi: 15<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> September 2006  
Islamabad. Dates to be fixed but the celebrations will take place between end Nov. and 10<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2006

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National Convention and Celebration dates: Lahore: 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> November 2006

Discussion

Discussion centred on a number of issues including (i) the format of the Convention, (ii) WAF principles and working methodology (iii) Convention Agenda.

- i. Both Islamabad and Karachi had suggested closed-door sessions before opening the convention to the General Body and other participants etc. Lahore was for greater inclusiveness and an open session. However a final decision was reached to have a closed door session with working committees of all chapters, to be followed by an open session and celebrations divided over a period of three days.
- ii. There was a feeling among a number of members that given the lapse of time between the last Convention and now, there was a need to hold meetings prior to the Convention to work out the Convention agenda as well as our approach etc to the event. There was a difference of view between those who felt we should not spend time on discussing the past and look forward to the future and others who felt that we needed to reflect on WAF's history/mistakes etc. The issue was finally resolved by Samina Rahman who said it was unrealistic to think we could cut off from the past, as we needed to refer to it in order to plan for the future, however, this should be done judiciously without getting bogged down in the past.
- iii. There was also some discussion on the timing of the Convention following the Celebrations. Fareeha Zafar argued that this could be used advantageously as the celebrations could be a way of reawakening and/creating an interest in WAF, what it stands for and its future work.
- iv. Nighat argued that as there seems to be a confusion regarding WAF's charter and basic principles especially regarding issues like funding etc. We should take time off to discuss these matters with all chapters. Keeping in mind the difficulty in arranging intercity meetings, it was decided to draw up a list of WAF objectives and principles as given in the WAF Charter and subsequent policy decisions endorsed at National Conventions, and circulate them among WAF members. The issue of indirect contributions to WAF activities by NGOs in the past was also discussed.

It was felt that it was important to maintain WAF's identity as part of the women's movement, separate from donor funded NGOs as otherwise there was no point in keeping WAF alive.

- v. Keeping in mind that WAF has worked on personal donations by members, Nighat Khan suggested that members donate generously with those who can, giving Rs 1000 per month or more if they want to, till the time the Convention is held. This would provide the funds for the Convention and the celebrations. Donations would, in accordance with WAF practice, be given privately with no pressure being exerted on any one to give more than what they wanted to.
- vi. The decision was also taken to form a number of sub-committees to look into different matters. Everyone accepted Salima Hashmi's suggestion that these committees include younger people. Maisoon Aziz was asked to coordinate the sub-committees. The list of sub-committees and members is with her.
- vii. Asma Jahangir suggestion that one meeting, prior to the Convention, should be held to discuss chapter positions on various issues plus a brief look at lessons learnt was accepted. It was decided that these positions should be brought to the closed session of the Convention before the Convention was opened the following day.
- viii. Naazish suggested a 'blog' be set up for discussions on various issues. Tahira Mazhar Ali wanted to know what a blog was. Subsequently a 'blog' subcommittee was formed. Like other committees, this committee will be sharing its work with WAF. It is presumed that those of us capable of making the generational jump will be taking an active part in these discussions.
- ix. Clarification regarding WAF's position on the status of women from political parties joining WAF was made viz anyone can join, but political party office bearers could not be elected to the working committee as this would lead to a conflict of interests.