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JAF National Convention
Karachi, 22nd and 23rd December '89.

①. The Conference began at APWA Headquarters Karachi on Friday the 22nd December, with Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad chapters represented by the following members:

Karachi: Waf Karachi Working Committee (16 members).

Lahore: Hina Jilani, Fareeda Shaheed, Neelam Hussain and Shahtaj Kizilbash.

Islamabad: Samina Ahmed, Mobina Zuberi, Sara Tirmizi and Shahwar Pataudi. Noreen Mahmud was present as an observer.

②. The Conference began with a self-introduction by participants and finalisation of the agenda.

③. Chapter activity reports for the past year were presented by Ayesha Jaffer from Karachi, Mobeena Zuberi from Islamabad and Hina Jilani from Lahore.

④. There was a discussion on policies and procedures for the National Convention as follows:

i) It was decided that decisions on National policy would be arrived at with the consensus of all chapters present at the Convention.

ii) After discussion on 'Who should attend the National Convention' it was decided that

a) Only individuals with the mandates of their respective chapters could represent their chapters at the National Convention. Thus all sessions of the National Convention would be open to all Working Committee members of each WAF

chapter. In addition, a chapter may give one or more members of its General Body the mandate to attend the National Convention as a chapter representative.

b) It was agreed that in addition to the Working Sessions of the Convention there should be an Open session inviting participation from the General Body.

c) There was divergence of opinion among the Chapters on the question of opening the entire Convention to observers. While Lahore and Islamabad maintained that GB members should have the option to attend all sessions of the Convention as silent

*including issues pending from the last Convention one issue identified was whether office bearers of political parties should be members of the WAF Working Committees.

observers, the Karachi view was that all members present should be free to participate, and that national policy could only be evolved through the representation of chapter views, it was essential for participating individuals to have the mandate to represent their chapters. Karachi also maintained that for logistical reasons it would not be possible to open up the Convention to an unlimited number of participants, and that each Chapter should thus identify its representatives prior to the holding of the Conference.

Since consensus could not be reached on this issue, members present said they would take it back for discussion.

It was decided that a decision would be taken on this and other pending matters within a period of three months. *

WAF's relationship with the present government was discussed. It was affirmed that while WAF will enter into a dialogue with the government, it will do so without compromising its non-partisan and independent position.

It was also decided that WAF would re-activate pressure on the question of repeal of discriminatory legislation.

6. Future Perspectives:

While the repeal of discriminatory legislation remains a priority area, other areas of focus that have emerged are:

- i) Violence against women, cases of rape and domestic violence.
- ii) enactment of positive legislation.
- iii) Problems of working women.
- iv) Strategies for mobilisation at the mass level.
- v) Problems of women prisoners.

7. Funding.

On this issue it was decided that

i) WAF would not accept funding from governmental or non-governmental/international agencies.

ii) That the issue of accepting tickets and financial support in order to attend conferences should be taken back to GB's to evolve a national policy.

The Karachi position was that tickets constitute a form of funding and that if WAF decides not to accept funding from government or NGO's, then it should not accept tickets from these sources. If a chapter decides that representation at a conference is essential for it, then it should raise funds to meet travel costs.

Islamabad accepted in principle the fact that tickets do represent a form of funding. The members present, while not in favour of accepting tickets, said the matter had not been discussed as such within the Islamabad GB, and that they would therefore take it back for discussion.

Lahore, while accepting the view that there should be a consistent policy on accepting funds for travel said that this issue, had not been resolved in its GB, which had been left open to chapter decision at previous conventions. Lahore now proposes to re-open the issue in its General Body.

8. It was resolved to support equal voting rights for FATA and to press for direct elections to seats reserved for women in the National Assembly.

9. Three Working Groups were formed on the subject of Violence against women, Legislation and Mobilisation and the groups formulated and presented their findings.

10. A resolution based on the deliberations of the Conference was circulated and endorsed by all three chapters.

11. It was decided to promote better co-ordination between the chapters through the regular exchange of information. Mobina Zuberi and Sara Tirmizi were named as National co-ordinators by Islamabad, Shahtaj Kizilbash and Maisoon by Lahore, Anis Haroon and Tehmina Ahmed by Karachi.

12. It was decided that the 6th WAF National Convention would be hosted by the Islamabad Chapter in October '90.

Tehmina Ahmed

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For WAF Karachi Working Committee.

16/1/90