

WAF Meeting Minutes

6th October 2021

Participants

1. Elaine Alam
2. Erum
3. Farida Shaheed
4. Khawar Mumtaz
5. Mehreen
6. Nazish (Najji)
7. Neelam
8. Nighat Khan (Bunny)
9. Samina Rahman
10. Sultanat Bukhari (Popi)
11. Tauseef

Agenda Item # 1 Statements For the Press

Statements on PCSW was printed. Statement on The Afghan Refugees was not printed.

Need to protest about Government talks with TTP. The Government is not involving Parliament.

Need to ask Naila and Nighat Dad about statement not being in media.

Farida: Afghan women asking for solidarity and saying neighbours should keep their hands off Afghanistan.

Popi: referring to statement by General Tariq who said it was not a good thing for Pakistan to talk to TTP.

Contradictory statements by Government.

Rani: What the PM says is what we should be responding to. We should write a statement.

Bunny: Military being cautious, talking about APS etc, Confusing signals. May be testing the waters.

Neelam remarked that there were no good or bad Taliban, they were all bad, as they had the same views.

Agenda Item #2: Afghan Women – in Pakistan and in Afghanistan

WAF thinking of how to help the Afghan women. Would give a statement of solidarity.

But as Farida said how to get money to the Afghani women, since their banks are not working.

Government is sending food to Afghanistan, but we don't know who is getting it.

Farida: In Pakistan Afghan women being helped quietly by individuals, as Government not supportive. They need psychological help also.

Meena: We can talk to Shandana Khan.

Farida will ask Shandana how we can help the Afghan women and get aid to them.

International Community should be putting pressure on Afghan neighbours to open their doors.

Agenda Item # 3 Single National Curriculum (SNC)

There was praise for the page-by-page evaluation done by Anjum Altaf for the SNC Math books.

Members agreed that it should be translated into Urdu as well.

WAF is continuing doing its evaluation of the SNC books and when that is completed will need to put all the findings into a comprehensive document.

WAF felt that there had been a change in the Government Education Policy because of all the criticism. They were now talking about learning outcomes and allowing schools to use other books as long as the books had an NOC. Books no longer needed an NOC from the Ulema Board. Ayesha Razzaque had been inducted as Technical Advisor to the Education Ministry, which was a good thing, as her knowledge of education and her views were better than many of the others involved in the curriculum. Even the Punjab Minister for Education, who had been very rigid on the SNC was now changing his attitude, possibly because of a directive from the Federal Ministry.

Discussion on education during Covid revealed the negative impact on education globally. Nazish suggested that we should remind the Government of the loss of learning and ask them to reconsider the SNC. Basically, everyone agreed that the pressure on the Government should remain.

Neelam said that she had discovered that, sadly, TEVTA, which had excellent facilities, was underutilized and there were not enough students. So where were the funds allocated for the students going?

Agenda Item # 4: Bill on Forced Conversions

Khawar will circulate the Bill on forced conversions, which is already with a Parliamentary Committee.

Elaine said that girls from minority communities were kidnapped, sometimes raped, converted, then had a 'nikah' and documents were faked through NADRA.

WAF would like that no person be permitted to convert before the age of 18, which is the age they get their identity card and can make decisions for themselves. That should be the defining rationale.