

Pakistan chapter of anti trafficking network formed
ATSEC to ensure protection of women, children against trafficking

‘Action Against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children’ (ATSEC) pledges to work with a commitment to ensure that all children and women are protected from being trafficking and sexual exploitation, said Zia Awan, convenor of the Pakistan chapter of the network here on Tuesday.

Talking to a group of journalists he said the Pakistan chapter of ATSEC has been formed and a declaration to this effect has been signed by the representative of four civil society organizations including Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid (LHRLA), Journalists for Democracy and Human Rights (JDHR) and Pakistan Rural Workers Social Welfare Organization (PRWSWO) at a meeting held at SDPI. Dr. Aliya H. Khan of Quaid-i-Azam University facilitated the meeting. Zia Awan who a leading human rights activist and expert on anti trafficking issues in South Asia said that human trafficking is growing at the cost of the vulnerable segments of society, specially women and children. Coordinated efforts are needed by all civil society groups and media to play a role of watchdog to help end this menace, he added.

The representatives of international organizations including International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Solidarity Center, The Asia Foundation, Save the Children UK, the South Asia Regional Initiative on Equity for Women and Children (SARI/Equity), and ATSEC Bangladesh attended the process of the formation and signing of the declaration regarding ATSEC. The formation of ATSEC Pakistan has been supported by SARI/Equity that has already supported formation of such chapters in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The ATSEC core team would invite more civil society organisations to join the network and arrange a formal launch of the chapter soon. The newly formed ATSEC Pakistan chapter in a mission statement says taking note of the linkages among trafficking/sexual exploitation and issues of safe migration, mobility, socio-cultural practices and traditions, poverty, discrimination and violence, ATSEC Pakistan envisions that every child and woman is protected from being trafficked and/or sexually exploited.

The objectives of the ATSEC Pakistan are to provide a platform for the civil society organizations working against trafficking, unsafe migration, commercial sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of women and children to share information and experiences and to initiate action and to take necessary steps to engage with all tiers of government and national, regional, international organizations and networks for more effective coordination of anti-trafficking measures and interventions.

It also aims at establishing linkage and coordination mechanisms with other ATSEC country chapters in the region and to provide support to member organizations for building and strengthening their capacity to undertake anti-trafficking and related activities.

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