

UNDESA Mission Informal consultations and Visits to NGO Headquarters and Projects in Pakistan (October 2004)

All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA)

Meetings and consulting with APWA representatives and especially Begum Tazeen Faridi, Begum Laila Safaraz and Begum Meher Kermani and the Conference coordinators, Ms. Rabya Nizam and Ms. Mehreen Saeed in order to link the Conference to all MDGs as well as to discuss their new position as national coordinator for the UN-NGO-IRENE/Pakistan. APWA is an NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC since 1951 and the Government of Pakistan that aims to promote the moral, social and economic welfare of the women and children of Pakistan. This includes informed and intelligent participation of Pakistani women in the political, social, and economic aspects of development, peace, and gaining equality in the country. It also promotes and hosts social, educational, cultural and economic programs and maintains coordination with the global women's movement and the initiatives of UNICEF and ECOSOC. APWA embraces many facets of activities; health, education, international co-operation, rural construction, status of women, social welfare voluntary training, youth activities, equality, integration of women in the national development, and co-operation with UNICEF and ECOSOC.

Field Visit to the Hazara Center, Project of APWA: Adolescent Reproductive Health (ARH) Awareness Project

On Friday 8 October 2004, the Mission visited the Hazare Center with Begum Kermani, vice President of APWA and project manager. This project has been established and is greatly expanding. The objectives are three-fold: (1) capacity building and skills development training of young men and women; (2) increase the level of awareness of adolescents, their parents, and teachers regarding Adolescent Reproductive Health (ARH) issues; and (3) provide Reproductive Health (RH) services from a RH clinic. Thus, the activities and strategies focused on these three objectives as follows:

- ◆ For the first objective this included the establishment of a vocational training center, training of volunteers and peer educators, training for staff members, and youth support activities.
- ◆ Achievement of the second objective was based on health awareness sessions with adolescents, parents, and teachers, addressing the following issues: the importance of communication over reproductive health; the changes of puberty; the role of parents and teachers in ARH; adolescent nutrition; menstruation; virginity, marriage, and pregnancy; family planning; masturbation; healthy living for adolescents; unsafe sexual practices; and STDs.

- ◆ The third objective was centered on the RH clinic, which provides essential medical care for the mother and child and to young people who otherwise do not share their RH complaints with doctors.

Future plans include the replication of this model in other parts of the country, initiating a School Health Education Program in Karachi, further support and development of “Young Volunteers,” and offering more training courses to youth for capacity building.

Family Planning Association of Pakistan (FPAP)

The Mission met on Saturday 9 October 2004, in the Headquarters of the FPAP with Dr. Khallil Ahmed Shaikh and FPAP Karachi staff in order to do preparatory work to launch a High Level Consultation and Capacity building Workshop on UN-NGO-IRENE in Pakistan and to discuss FPAP responsibilities and role as potential focal point for Health (MDGs 4, 5, and 6) for UN-NGO-IRENE/Pakistan. FPAP, an NGO in roster consultative status since 1996, is a pioneer NGO in the field of family planning, conceptualizing social marketing of contraceptives, family welfare centres, and reproductive health services in Pakistan. As the largest NGO in the social sector it is the key provider of family planning services in Pakistan, alongside the government. The organization incorporates a broad-based strategy of integrating family planning into overall national development. This includes focusing on women’s social status and development, involving youth, encouraging community participation and broadening the scope of service provision to incorporate reproductive health care, safe motherhood and child survival. They provide health services, educational workshops and skills training, and network with other related organizations.

Geriatrics Care Foundation (GCF)

The mission met with Dr. Ra’ana Mahmood, President and Founder of GCF to discuss the activities of this NGO especially as this NGO just get the special consultative status with ECOSOC (2004) and would like to actively contribute with the thematic focal point for Health (MDGs 4, 5, and 6) to UN-NGO-IRENE/Pakistan. GCF is committed to improving the mental and physical health and well being of all older persons, increasing their access to better care and necessary resources. This includes promoting the development of the clinical practice of geriatrics and increasing the number of knowledgeable physicians; promoting public policy that will result in improved health care for older people, including the research necessary to establish policy; developing and maintaining coordination with community elders; and mainstreaming the important issues of geriatric care. GCF hosted numerous activities, including surveys of pressing issues facing elderly in Pakistan, mobile care teams to introduce the concept of economical care of the elderly, publications to raise awareness, setting up day care centers for elderly, and persistent efforts to bring about necessary legislation.

Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI)

On 12 October 2004, the UNDESA Mission met with the Secretary General, Mr Aqeel A. Al-Jassem of OICC as well as with his Assistant Ms Attyia Nawazish Ali to discuss their activities for women empowerment and their possible involvement in the International Conference of Islamabad in February 2005. Ms Karaborni also discussed OICC potential participation in UN-NGO-IRENE/Pakistan especially as this NGO is in roster consultative status since 1983 and an affiliate organ of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). It also represents the private sector of 57 Member Islamic Countries. Its key objective is “promoting the role of the private sector in economic activities” in order to reach its ultimate goal of the “gradual realization of the Islamic Economic Community”. It aims at strengthening closer collaboration between member countries and other similar organizations in the field of trade, commerce, information technology, insurance/reinsurance, shipping, banking, promotion of investment opportunities and joint ventures in the Member countries. In addition, the ICCI works to encourage trade, industry, agriculture and handicrafts and to propose advantageous economic policies. Through its various programmes the ICCI provides business guidance to businessmen and industrialists, aids in bridging the information and communication gap, brings the private sector to the forefront of strengthening economic cooperation, organizes training programs, offers coordination services for member states and financial institutions, and provides arbitration and reconciliation services. The Mission was informed that OICC is very committed to women empowerment and has a very extensive programme in this field. OICC is organizing a “First Forum for Businesswomen of OIC Countries.”

First Forum for Businesswomen of OIC Countries

Taking into account the important and focal role played by businesswomen, the ICCI has initiated some activities focusing primarily on strengthening the economic capacity of Muslim businesswomen. Seeing a positive response from businesswomen, the ICCI is organizing the First Forum for Businesswomen of OIC Countries to be held in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates from 4-6 January 2005. The Forum will provide a platform for women entrepreneurs to discuss on the global business direction, forge strategic alliances, smart partnerships and networking. It will focus on imminent issues related to women’s role in today’s competitive global market in business and technology as well as on new and strategic business initiatives by women entrepreneurs that will improve the state of women in our society and economy. ICCI expressed its wish to have a representative of the NGO section/OESC/UNDESA in this forum.