



# FEDERAL OMBUDSPERSON SECRETARIAT FOR PROTECTION AGAINST HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT THE WORKPLACE (FOSPAH)

Dated: 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2023

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Discussion held on the 2022 Amendments to the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010**

On 15.11.2023 the Federal Ombudsperson Secretariat for Protection against Harassment (FOSPAH) held a constructive discussion at the Head Office on the 2022 Amendments to the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 (Act of 2010). The discussion was chaired by Ms. Fauzia Viqar, the Federal Ombudsperson against Harassment, and was widely attended by legal experts, women rights activists, colleague Ombudsmen and Legal and Regional Advisors of FOSPAH. Some of the participants at the event were Ms. Aliya Zareen Abbasi, ASC; Mr. Muhammad Ahmad Pansota, ASC; Mr. Naveed Hayat Malik, President Islamabad High Court Bar Association; Ms. Fatima Batool, AHC; Syed Muaz Shah, Executive Director Centre for Islamic Law and Human Rights; Raja Kaleem Abbasi, Vice Chairman Islamabad Bar Council; and members of the Research Society of International Law.

The discussion commenced with a consensus amongst the participants regarding the wide application of the Act of 2010, in particular with the inclusion of domestic workers within the scope of complainant and open places such as highways within the definition of workplace. It was further agreed between the participants that an appropriate amendment in the law is required to curb frivolous representations routinely filed against interim orders issued by the Federal Ombudsperson. It was also highly recommended by the participants that a panel of pro bono lawyers be constituted by FOSPAH to assist the parties appearing before the forum and to enlist the help of NGOs to expand the outreach programme of FOSPAH by facilitating complainants who are otherwise impeded from approaching this forum for redressal of their grievances.

The Federal Ombudsperson endorsed the observations of the participants and assured FOSPAH's commitment to fostering respectful and dignified workplaces and to strengthening the existing anti-harassment legal regime to better protect the marginalized communities in Pakistan.

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