



## AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION ISLAMABAD

28 October 2015

### Press Release

#### **Ground-breaking ceremony for Violence Against Women Centre in Multan**

Australian High Commissioner, Margaret Adamson today attended a ground breaking ceremony to establish the Government of Punjab's first Violence Against Women Centre, the first of 36 such centres to be established across the Province in the coming years.

Canadian High Commissioner Heather Cruden and the Netherlands Deputy Head of Mission Renate Pors also participated in the ceremony which was led by the Government of Punjab.

Ms Adamson commended the Government of Punjab on establishing the centre which will pilot a 'one stop shop' model to provide safe support to women and girls who are survivors of violence. The centre will pilot the provision of services such as first aid, police reporting, medical examination, collection of forensic and other evidence, psychologist evaluation, prosecution as well as post-trauma rehabilitation all at the one location.'

"It is crucial for women and girls who have been traumatised to be able to access services under one roof from a female-run facility 24 hours a day," Ms Adamson said.

Ms Adamson also congratulated the Government of Punjab on the Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Bill 2015. "Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a crucial foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world," Ms Adamson said. "Violence against women and girls is – in all its forms – unacceptable and cannot be tolerated, in Australia, in Pakistan, or anywhere else. That is why the empowerment of women is a key foreign policy priority for Australia."

Ms Adamson noted that Australia was assisting Pakistan to eliminate violence against women and girls through an AUD7.5 million program in partnership with Trocaire. The Challenging Gender Based Violence Program, operating in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, provides support for thousands of women and children affected by domestic violence. It also engages men and community leaders to challenge discriminatory ideas about women.

During the next three years, the Challenging Gender Based Violence Program will focus on responding to Gender Based Violence through improved access to quality support services; reducing Gender Based Violence by engaging youth, women and men, including religious leaders; and encouraging the implementation of pro-women laws and policies in Pakistan.

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