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DEPUTY SECRETARY
LAW and JUSTICE COMMISSION of PAKISTAN

PRESS RELEASE

Today, the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr. Justice Umar Ata Bandial, chaired the meetings of the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee (NJPMC), Governing Body of Access to Justice Development Fund (AJDF), and the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP) at the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Islamabad. The meetings were organized by the Secretariat of Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan and Commission's Secretary Riffat Inam Butt convened the meetings.

While chairing meeting, the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan stated that for protection of fundamental rights the Judiciary is as relevant as it would be the constitutional requirement. The judiciary has to apply laws and protect the Constitution and fundamental rights of the citizens while the Commission has a vital role in reforming laws. He remarked that the judiciary is committed to provide expeditious justice despite being confronting with challenges. The Chief Justice stressed upon the need to discourage false and frivolous litigation. The Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan stated that ADR is very important tool to reduce the burden of the courts by amicable settlement of disputes and appreciated the role of ADR Committee and the Commission for taking initiatives to ensure effective implementation of ADR framework in the country.

The Chief Justice also stressed upon the use of Information Technology by the judges, judicial officers, court staff and the Bar to enhance the service delivery of justice sector. He stressed upon the need of capacity building and professional development of the judicial officers, lawyers and court staff. He urged the Chief Justices of the High Courts to take benefit of training programmes being imparted by the Federal and Provincial Judicial Academies.

The meeting of NJPMC was attended by the Chief Justice Federal Shariat Court, Mr. Justice Iqbal Hameed-ur-Rahman; Chief Justice, High Court of Balochistan, Mr. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan; Chief Justice High Court of Sindh, Mr. Justice Ahmed Ali M. Shaikh; Chief Justice, Lahore High Court, Mr. Justice Muhammad Ameer Bhatti; Chief Justice, Islamabad High Court, Mr. Justice Aamer Farooq; and Acting Chief Justice, Peshawar High Court, Mr. Justice Mohammad Ibrahim Khan.

The meeting of NJPMC was also attended by the Inspectors General of Police of respective provinces and the ICT, Prosecutors General of Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice, Islamabad, Additional Prosecutor General-Punjab, and the District Public Prosecutor-ICT.

The NJPMC reviewed the performance of justice sector institutions and judiciary in-line with its previous directions. The committee also reviewed institution, disposal and pendency of cases, vacancy positions in the

judiciary, factors hindering the efficient administration of criminal justice system, particularly, issues relating to submission of challans, conviction and acquittals, statistics of under trial prisoners, issues of jail inmates and pending appeals of convicted prisoners were also discussed in detail to devise effective mechanism to address the issues. While reviewing the data of pendency of cases, the Committee resolved that vacancies in the judiciary were required to be filled on priority basis for expeditious disposal of pending cases. The Committee also emphasized upon the need for training of Investigating Officers in Police and Prosecution to improve the quality of investigation and prosecution. Further, the Committee reiterated that the challans should be submitted within the statutory period to bring in case disposal. For better co-ordination between justice sector stakeholders, meetings of the Justice Committees may be regularly convened to improve service delivery of all the justice sector institutions for better administration of justice.

The Chief Justice of the High Courts shared that special and dedicated benches would be constituted to decide old the cases and the performance of the District Judiciary shall be closely monitored which would aid in the clearance of backlog.

While chairing the meeting of the Governing Body of Access to Justice Development Fund, the Chief Justice emphasized upon the need to expeditiously execute the projects for improvement of infrastructure in district Courts especially, to create facilities for women judicial officers, litigants and lawyers. The meeting of the GB was attended by all Chief Justices of the High Courts, Secretary Finance, Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice and Secretary, LJCP Riffat Inam Butt presented the agenda details. On special invitation, Justice Faisal Arab, Former Judge of Supreme Court of Pakistan also participated in the meeting.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan asked the Chief Justices of the High Courts to take keen interest in making this pivotal funding resource beneficial for the infrastructural development of the judiciary. The Chief Justice of Pakistan highlighted that there is lack of awareness about the free legal aid for deserving litigants and the District Legal Empowerment Committees functioning across the country should create awareness about the aid available for the needy people. The Governing Body also approved amendments in rules for the committees to facilitate easy access to free legal aid.

The Governing Body, AJDF approved various project proposals for judicial & legal research, innovations in legal education, and legal awareness. The Governing Body also accorded permission for launching of 13th Phase of AJDF to invite project proposals against the thematic areas to be finalized by the Technical Evaluation Committee, headed by Hon'ble Mr. Justice Faisal Arab, Former Judge Supreme Court of Pakistan, along with evaluation criteria and monitoring mechanism. The Governing Body of AJDF has also approved allocation of funds to improve court environment and legal and judicial research activities to be undertaken during the next year.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan also chaired the meeting of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan. All the members of the Commission comprising Chief Justice Federal Shariat Court and the all the Chief Justices of High Courts and other nominated Members including Mr. Justice Mian Muhammad Ajmal, Former Judge, Supreme Court of Pakistan, Mr. Justice Faisal Arab, Former Judge, Supreme Court of Pakistan and Muhammad Munir Paracha, Advocate Supreme Court attended the meeting of the Commission.

The Commission considered the criteria for legal research to improve the administration of justice and modernizing the laws. Commission's Secretary, Riffat Inam Butt during the meeting said that her team had made all out efforts to achieve the objectives of the Commission and organized national and international conferences including the 9th Judicial Conference covering variety of topics pertaining to the justice sector and related areas and recent Conference on Resilient Pakistan: calibrating population and resources. The Secretary also apprised the Commission that initiatives to review Arbitration laws and ADR mechanism in Pakistan that were under taken by the LJCP. The Commission constituted the Sub-committee comprising Mr. Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, Chief Justice, Peshawar High Court and Mr. Munir Paracha, Advocate Supreme Court of Pakistan to review and finalize the law reform proposals for placing before the Commission.

The Commission appreciated the role of Governing Body AJDF and NJPMC for its role for initiatives for improving the service delivery of justice sector and expressed the hope that the Secretariat will continue to play its role in improving the administration of Justice in the country.

This press release may be downloaded from LJCP website www.ljcp.gov.pk.

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