

## PRESS NOTE

Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman (FPO), in collaboration with International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) and World Bank, conducted a two-day workshop on 'Challenges of Ombudsmanship' on September 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> at Islamabad, Pakistan. The focus of workshop was to provide inexpensive and speedy justice to the citizens aggrieved by the decisions of government functionaries and to ensure good governance. The participants across Pakistan and AJK shared their wisdom, experiences and expertise and developed recommendations on how effectively FPO can transform challenges face by the Institution into opportunities so as to make available better and inexpensive services to citizens and ensure good governance.

### Following are the recommendations approved by workshop

- Information and Communications Technology be used as a force multiplier to enhance performance and productivity of all Ombudsman offices.
- A true, paperless office to be established by every Ombudsman based on digitized recordkeeping and electronic storage, access and collation of data.
- Jurisdiction issues pertinent to individual Ombudsman be addressed viz Wafaqi Mohtasib jurisdiction issue over military cantonments.
- Jurisdictional anomalies between Ombudsmen be resolved viz Insurance Ombudsman vis-a-vis Wafaqi Ombudsman.
- A codified/digitized database of maladministration cases to be maintained by all Ombudsmen.
- The FPO will hold workshops and conferences in the provincial headquarters also.
- FPO to hold such workshops every quarter for the first year beginning with this workshop and bi-annually thereafter.
- One Line budget to be adopted for all Ombudsman offices.
- Budgetary constraints especially as regards the provincial Ombudsmen of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhawa to be addressed.
- Special needs of vulnerable members of society be addressed by the respective Ombudsman viz children.
- Human rights issues especially as regards Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment of Women at workplace to be tackled effectively in all provinces. Budget, Staff and office requirements to be met on priority basis.

- Workplace harassment be appreciated in its true, gender neutral perspective and all workers be encouraged to come forth with their grievances.
- The Federal Ombudsmen Institutional Reforms Act 2013 to be adopted by the provincial Ombudsmen set-up as well.
- A concerted effort to be made to project the 'Ombudsman' through the media to increase public awareness.
- Making prime time telecasting of a common public service message to be designed by FPO for all Ombudsmen compulsory for all TV and Radio channels and the print media.
- Special attention to be paid to significantly reduce the time taken to dispose of complaints.
- Deptt's/organizations under the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman to be required to display on their websites and in their offices through banners how to get redress against public grievances from Ombudsmen offices.
- FPO to design (i) a common Organogram for Ombudsman offices; (ii) a common lean and flat administrative set-up (iii) Uniform service rules (iv) Uniform salary structure and (v) explore possibility of locating all Ombudsman offices in one building at Regional Offices to undertake one building operation of Ombudsman for redress of citizens grievances.
- Ombudsman offices to enhance focus on diagnosing and redressing systemic issues to preempt repetition of same grievances.
- Implementation to be brought under increased focus in terms of the President's directive, the Prime Minister's orders and a judgment of the Supreme Court of Pakistan in this regard.
- Ombudsmen offices to institute self accountability mechanism.

