



# End Child Marriages

6th January 2015

## Press Release

### Launch of Child Marriage Free Zone- Initiative in Pakistan and The End Child Marriages Portal

Islamabad 6th January 2015: Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) successfully **launched the initiative of Child Marriage Free Zone in Pakistan and The End Child Marriages Portal** at Islamabad Hotel (Holiday Inn) in Islamabad. This initiative will be taken forward in collaboration with A World At School (AWAS), Global Business Coalition (GBC) and collaborating partners

The welcome address was delivered by Director Programs ITA, Baela Raza Jamil in which she shared the mission to end child marriages in Pakistan through collective effort on part of civil society. This was followed by an introduction of the campaign and the components involved in it such as legal activism and alliance building by Mr. Qadeer Baig from Rutgers WPF Pakistan. Ms Bilquis Rahman from HANDS and Ms Zaynah Gilani from ITA gave an overview of the Pakistan's **first ever Child Marriage Free Zone in Matiari (Sindh)** and the socioeconomic activism involved in initiating the process of making Pakistan a child marriage free zone. Renowned filmmaker and human rights activist Ms Samar Minalallah who is also the ambassador of this movement showed a documentary which depicted the sad reality that accompanies the lives of victims of child marriages and called for action.

The End Child Marriage (ECM) portal was formally launched by The Chairperson Punjab Commission on the Status of Women, Ms Fauzia Viqar ECM Portal is a joint effort of the Alliance Against Child Marriage's partners. The portal is supported by the Global Business Coalition for Education, A World at School and Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA). **ITA has developed the portal and shall be the managing entity for the portal.**

The Chairperson Punjab Commission on the Status of Women, Ms Fauzia Viqar updated the participants about Punjab Assembly's adaptation of the resolution on underage marriages and highlighted the need to lobby for giving it legal status. The launch was attended by a range of civil society organizations including Action Aid, Plan International, Oxfam, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Sahil, Rozan, DCHD, AWAAZ, LAAS and Aurat Foundation and ended on a promising note. It presented a joint effort on part of civil society to fight the social and legal factors that lead to child marriages and deprives the children of their basic right to education and shaping their own future.

The representatives from civil society and government departments stressed the need to work collectively for making the country a child marriage free zone.