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Oath-taking ceremony: Constitution of youth caucus a pioneering initiative, says minister

LAHORE: Education Minister Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan said on Tuesday that the constitution of the Provincial Youth Caucus was a pioneering initiative.

He was speaking at the caucus's oath-taking ceremony. A plenary meeting of the caucus was also held later. Mashhood, who is the chief patron of the caucus said the group would provide young lawmakers the opportunity of formulating policies that would guide the youth of the nation.

Chairperson Vikas Hassan Mokal, vice-president Mary Gill, secretary general Irfan Daultana and Nabila Hakim Ali Khan vowed to fulfil their responsibilities democratically and give primacy to youth development over political affiliations.

Sadia Atta of the United Nations Population Fund discussed the International Conference of Population and Control 1994 with those present at the plenary meeting. She said it was imperative for youth issues to be addressed to create an industrious national workforce. Atta said the young segment (individuals between the ages of 10 years- 24 years) of the nation's population had been increasing. She said this trend was set to continue in the future. Atta said the number of people in the 15-59 age bracket was set to double by 2030.

She said it was necessary to raise awareness regarding population growth among youngsters and foster debate regarding adolescence issues.

Bargad executive director Sabiha Shaheen said the caucus had been established to address the challenges confronting the youth by making young lawmakers a part of the parliamentary process.

Law and Parliamentary Department Syed Mohsin Abbas outlined the changes made to the Child Marriage Restraint Act and proposed further amendments to it. He emphasised various problems that bedevil the effective implementation of such laws. Abbas also suggested that an implementation strategy be suggested within the law.

Chairperson Mokal said every caucus member should bring attention to the issues confronting the youth in their constituencies. The members of the caucus expressed hope that they would be able to introduce effective legislation to address youth issues.

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