

## Case Study 7.1

# Employers in Pakistan committed to implement Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2010

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This case study gives an example of awareness-raising with employers' organizations carried out by the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection against Harassment of Women at Work in Pakistan. It illustrates an approach that can be taken to implement legislation to prevent sexual harassment and shows how government awareness-raising can be carried out in partnership with employers.

The 2010 Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act requires all public and private organizations to adopt an internal code of conduct and a complaints and appeals mechanism aimed at establishing a safe working environment for working women. Employers are responsible for implementing the Act and copies of the code of conduct must be displayed in a conspicuous place in the workplace. A failure to implement the provisions in the legislation will result in fines for employers. The Act defines harassment as: "Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour or other verbal or written communication or physical conduct of a sexual nature or sexually demeaning attitudes, causing interference with work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, or the attempt to punish the complainant for refusal to comply to such a request or is made a condition for employment."

The Employers Federation of Pakistan (EFP) is committed to addressing sexual harassment at the work place through the implementation of the Sexual Harassment at the Workplace Act. In 2015 the EFP and Federal Ombudsman Secretariat, together with the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries and the ILO country office for Pakistan, organized a series of seminars on the Act of 2010 attended by a wide range of stakeholders, including employers, workers, academia, media, NGOs and government representatives.

The President of the Employers' Federation of Pakistan has emphasized the need to raise awareness on existing laws on sexual harassment at the workplace among employers and to ensure compliance in order to provide a safer and enabling environment to women workers. Because of EFP's efforts, many enterprises and businesses now have mechanisms for effective implementation of the Act, such as inquiry committees.

**Source:** ILO Press release, Islamabad, 04 February 2015. [http://www.ilo.org/islamabad/info/public/pr/WCMS\\_342562/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/islamabad/info/public/pr/WCMS_342562/lang--en/index.htm)

For further information on the 2010 legislation and the work of the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection against Harassment of Women at Work see: <http://www.fos-pah.gov.pk>