



Centre for Peace and  
Development Initiatives

# Inaugural Meeting of National Forum of Information Commissioners in Pakistan



Proceedings Report: 19-20 September, 2019

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Center for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) would welcome reproduction and dissemination of the contents of the report with due acknowledgments.

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**ISBN No:** 978-9699484-95-7

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## Introduction:

The history of Right to Information Regime in Pakistan is two decades old but it is only since 2013 that some serious citizens-oriented efforts in legislation have been made by the federal and provincial governments. One aspect of these efforts is the establishment of an independent and powerful appellate body, an Information Commission, being one of the hallmarks of second generation of RTI laws in Pakistan. In pre-2013 information regime in Pakistan, the responsibility to take the citizens' complaints was bestowed upon Ombudsman. Presently, a commission has been established for three provinces and at federal level. The commissions have three main roles to play; 1) to act as an appellate or complaint handling body in case information is denied to citizens, 2) to raise awareness among citizens about Right to Information, 3) to build the capacity of the public bodies by providing training to Public Information Officers and sending periodic advices to the public bodies on relevant issues.

Information commissioners having diverse experiences in their respective areas of jurisdiction have both good and bad experiences. CPDI realized that there is a need to establish a platform where information commissioners share knowledge, learn from each other's experiences and document their institutional histories. We believe that it is high time to build on past experiences and institutionalize it into a formal forum that can meet regularly and make a joint and concentrated effort for a more transparent and accountable regime in Pakistan. Commission's role as custodian of Right to Information has become more important given the fact that United Nations' high-level political forum is reviewing SDG 16 this year.

## Executive Summary:

Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) has established first ever National Forum of Information Commissioners (NFIC) in Pakistan. The Forum consists of all in-service information commissioners from Federal Capital Islamabad, Punjab, KP and Sindh. The first ever meeting of NFIC was held in Islamabad on September 19-20, 2019, under the banner of CPDI.

All Information commissioners gathered under one roof and discussed at length the issues and impediments in implementation of Right to Information (RTI) laws in their respective areas. All the information commissioners appreciated the idea of forming NFIC and vowed to make it a huge success. Commissioners conjointly agreed upon that NFIC meetings shall be arranged on quarterly basis to ensure better service and mutual learning among commissioners. During these deliberations, a consensus also emerged for mutual coordination for implementation of RTI laws in the country. Moreover, Information Commissioners reviewed the performance of all the Commissions and agreed that the colonial culture of secrecy must end in the country. Also they showed unanimity that transparency is the key of good governance which can only be ensured with maximum proactive disclosure and implementation of RTI laws in letter and spirit across Pakistan.

At the end, all information Commissioners agreed that transparency and good governance is possible with maximum disclosure of public information which means bona fide implementation of RTI laws in Pakistan. A declaration was also signed by the Commissioners where they pledged to ensure access to information in the service of people without any fear of favor.

## Proceedings of Day 1:

### Participants

Two day inaugural meeting of National Forum of Information Commissioners (NFIC) was convened by the Center for Peace and Development initiatives (CPDI). The meeting was attended by the following participants:

1. Muhammad Azam, Chief Information Commissioner, Pakistan Information Commission (Federal Capital)
2. Zahid Abdullah, Information Commissioner, Pakistan Information Commission (Federal Capital)
3. Fawad Malik Awan, Information Commissioner, Pakistan Information Commission (Federal Capital)
4. Mahboob Qadir Shah, Chief Information Commissioner, Punjab Information Commission
5. Saeed Akhtar Ansari, Information Commissioner, Punjab Information Commission
6. Hassan Iqbal, Information Commissioner, Punjab Information Commission
7. Syed Gul Muneer Shah, Chief Information Commissioner, Sindh Information Commission
8. Sikandar Ali Huliyo, Information Commissioner, Sindh Information Commission
9. Riaz Khan Daudzai, Information Commissioner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa RTI Commission
10. Amer Ejaz Executive Director CPDI, Islamabad
11. Mukhtar Ahmad Ali, former Information Commissioner, Punjab Information Commission - Founding Director CPDI
12. Moonus Kayinat Zahra – Program Coordinator RTI

### Welcome Address:

The meeting started with a welcome address by Mr. Amer Ejaz, Executive Director of CPDI whereby he greeted the participants and extended his gratitude to all the information commissioners for accepting the invitation and taking part in the NFIC.

Mr. Ejaz remarked that the purpose of arranging this meeting is to identify and discuss various hurdles for the implementation of RTI laws in Pakistan. While highlighting one of the major problems in implementation, he claimed that essence of RTI revolves around the maximum proactive disclosure of information by government departments. He further emphasized the need to build capacity of government officials on the subject of RTI and identified a key aspect that most of the government officials are not even aware of their roles and responsibilities as mentioned in the RTI laws. While



talking about the significance of building capacity of government officials, he further suggested to conduct training of Public Information Officers (PIOs) regularly and floated the idea of establishing a dedicated RTI Academy.

**“For the training of PIO’s and other government officials on RTI laws, an academy on permanent basis should be established by the government of Pakistan”**

He added that the purpose of designating PIOs in public bodies is to ensure the free flow of information which currently is very unlike as all the said officers do not process information request at first and tend to take permission from their relevant secretaries or heads of the departments before disclosing information to the public/applicants which in some way or another causes delay in the whole process of disclosing information. PIOs are unable to fulfil their duties as per RTI laws.

While talking about spreading the arena of RTI in Pakistan, he remarked that all learned present and former information commissioners and RTI activists should also conduct research in this area.

**“A research based journal on RTI should be compiled. This would help in spreading awareness of RTI in general masses”**

After the welcome address, a series of presentations by Commissions started. Representative of each Information Commission discussed progress, achievements, hurdles and a way forward on the path of RTI.

### **Presentation by Mehboob Qadir Shah, Chief Information Commissioner, Punjab Information Commission**

Mr. Mahboob Qadir Shah represented the Punjab Information Commission and enlightened the participants about the background and development of Punjab Information Commission. He appreciated the idea of establishing RTI Academy and remarked that he firmly supports the concept behind it. He declared the NFIC meeting as a stepping stone for implementing RTI in the country.



While sharing challenges faced by Punjab Information Commission he mentioned that the tenure of the former Information Commissioners ended on March 2017 but the appointment of second batch of information Commissioners was much delayed. Hence Punjab Information Commission remained dysfunctional from March 2017 to May 2018 while RTI complaints kept pouring in and the disposal remained closed for obvious reasons.

While setting the context before joining the Commission as the Chief, Mr. Shah mentioned that some of the important documents and records were lost during the shifting of office from Gulberg to Model Town in Lahore. He openly admitted that due to this reason, overall performance of Commission and image was affected.

He also drew a comparison of Punjab Information Commission with KP RTI Commission in financial matters. He claimed that KP has a financial independence as their budget is separately approved by the provincial government on annual basis whereas Punjab is still dependent in this regard. He further pointed out that KP Information Commission has the powers of contempt in case of non-compliance of orders by the commission whereas Punjab did not have any such powers.

**“Chief Information Commissioner vowed to move the amendment for the contempt powers granted to Punjab Information Commission”.**

Mr. Shah admitted the lack of availability of human resource in Punjab Information Commission as one of the biggest challenges. He informed that the Government of Punjab had initially approved 43 vacancies including three Information Commissioners in the Commission. However rest of the 45 vacancies are still vacant. In this regard, he appreciated the efforts of the former Information Commissioner, Mr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ali and said that during his tenure, fifteen daily wagers staff were hired. However he was critical of the capacity of staff and mentioned that government is also paying them a meager amount as salary.

Chief Information Commissioner Punjab Mr. Shah applauded the efforts made by the first batch of Commissioners in Punjab Information Commission. He mentioned that during the tenure of Mr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ali, former Information Commissioner, the office premises were set up at a rented place and a draft of service regulations were also framed and forwarded to government of Punjab on October 6<sup>th</sup> 2015.

**“We seek guidance from the remarkable orders of Mukhtar Ahmad Ali as Information Commissioner”, said PIC Chief**

### **Measures taken by the Current Batch of Information Commissioner**

While giving an overview of current situation of Punjab Information Commission, Mr. Mehboob Qadir Shah mentioned that they foremost focused on bringing the office of Punjab Information Commission into the domain of public, a place which can be easily accessed by people and hence shifted the office to a decent place as soon as it was possible.

He also acquainted the audience about the commitment of Punjab Information Commission on making the disposal of complaint as a priority. For this purpose, they proactively disposed-off the pending cases from last tenure of Commissioners. According to him 950 complaints were disposed of in total, 200 dismissed as withdrawn by the applicants themselves whereas 642 complaints were filed sine-die. He also stated that:

**“A user friendly template of lodging complaint has been prepared for the public. The special complaint form is available on the website of Punjab Information Commission.**



**However, as per the law any citizen can write the application on a simple plane paper which we also acceptable”**

He revealed that besides establishing an effective complaint management cell, first ever RTI Court was established in first week of June 2018.

**“We have done it in Punjab and we can proudly say that this is the first ever formal RTI Court in Pakistan,” said Mr. Mahboob Qadir Shah in his address.**

#### **Dissent of Commissioners:**

##### **Reason behind filing RTI:**

Punjab Chief Information Commissioner Mr. Mahboob Qadir was of the view that we should know the reasons behind RTI requests. He believed that there are a few yellow journalists who file RTI’s against different institutions only to malign them. He pointed out that few Non-Government-Organizations (NGO’s) are also making misuse of RTI. He therefore suggested that such situations needed to be balanced out while keeping in view and understanding the department’s environment. Also he was of the opinion that we should discourage the individual cases of RTI with ulterior motives.

##### **Mr.Shah said:**

**“We have introduced revised RTI guidelines under which the information requester is allowed to seek data of one fiscal year from government departments regarding a project or any other matter. To get the data for more than one year, requester is bound to file another RTI request. The government departments are not that free to spend whole of their time digging out data of years”**

Around two Information Commissioners one from Pakistan Information Commission and the other from Punjab Information Commission showed their dissent on some of the points made by Mr. Mehboob Qadir Shah. However one Information Commissioner from Sindh supported the point of view raised by Chief Information Commissioner Punjab.

Mr.Zahid Abdullah of Pakistan Information Commission criticized the opinion of Punjab Information Commissioner regarding his point of view of knowing reason behind filing of RTI.

##### **Mr.Abdullah said:**

**“This is clearly written in the progressive RTI acts of Federal, KP, Punjab and Sindh that data will be provided as a right of applicant without asking for a reason, we cannot violate the law since it has come from the law makers. State is following a path of secrecy and distrust towards its people from the time of its inception. There is significant trust deficit between state and general masses. Restricting people with providing a reason of filing RTI will undermine the whole essence of right to information. We as commissioners, should not talk about blocking the information”**

Saeed Akhtar Ansari, Commissioner of Punjab Information Commission also dissented with the Chief Information Commissioner Punjab and said:

**“RTI is a fundamental right as clearly mentioned in the constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. We cannot preview it in the ‘name of balance’. We should not judge or know the reason behind filing of any RTI by any citizen of this country”**

Mr. Ansari also pointed out that KP Information Commission doesn't have the contempt law rather in case of non-compliance of Information Commission's orders the case is sent to the relevant judiciary for taking action against the elements that did not follow the directions of Information Commission.

On the contrary, Syed Gul Muneer Shah, Information Commissioner of Sindh supported the point of view of Chief Information Commissioner Punjab on the account of balance and said:

**“We should not allow everyone to get everything”**

### **Challenges Faced by Punjab Information Commission**

Chief Information Commissioner Mr. Mahboob Qadir Shah, while narrating the challenges being faced by the commission, pointed out a few major challenges:

1. Designation of Public Information Officers

One of the major challenges is the designation of Public Information Officer in public departments. Most of the departments have yet not designated PIO. Even the designated PIOs are not fully cognizant of their roles and responsibilities under RTI Act.

2. Pro-active Disclosure of Information

He remarked that ensuring pro-active disclosure of information by the government departments is also a major challenge. The Commission has given directions to provincial departments to abide by the section 4 of Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act, 2013 but the compliance by the departments is still very low.

3. Computerization of Records

He mentioned that state of computerization, indexation and maintenance of record is also disappointing in government departments.

4. Troublesome Filing of Information Requests

He was of the view that vexatious filing of information requests and complaints by some journalists and NGOs is causing extra burden on the Commission and government departments.

Despite of all challenges, the commission has successfully held 25 training workshops for capacity building of government officials on the subject of RTI. Government officials were apprised by the salient features of Punjab RTI law and processing of information requests. More of such trainings are recommended to be held to enhance the knowledge of government officials on the RTI Law and its abidance.

## Presentation by Riaz Khan, Information Commissioner, KP RTI Commission

Mr. Riaz Khan Daudzai, Information Commissioner of KP represented the KP RTI Commission and briefed audience about the progress, achievements and challenges. He especially emphasized on the significance of RTI in the political landscape of Pakistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and said:



**“RTI is a solution for all problems generated by the bureaucracy. KP Information Commission is very committed and works under the slogan of *awareness, guidance and access*”**

The KP Commissioner took pride in saying that the provincial government of KP had taken the political ownership of RTI from the time of enactment of RTI Act. The incumbent Prime Minister Imran Khan himself attended the inaugural ceremony of the Commission back in December 2013 when he was in opposition at the center and his party formed the government in KP. He said that,

**“The presence of Imran Khan also brought Chief Minister of that time in the ceremony. Prime Minister Imran Khan kept following our commission. Even when he recovered from the accident of falling from the stage, very next day on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013 he visited our commission.”**

He told the participants that KP government has earmarked 300 million rupees for the budget of Information Commission in the province which is mostly used in salaries, allowances, purchase of assets, internet service charges etc. He also commented about the commitment of KP RTI Commission for maximum disclosure of information and speedy disposal of complaints. While giving details of the achievements by KP Information Commission he mentioned that:

**“Total 14284 requests have been filed by the citizens out of which public bodies have provided 7850 pieces of information to the citizens. KP Information Commission received 6035 complaints against different departments including the Chief Minister Secretariat. We resolved 5813 complaints which is the 96 percent of the total complaints and remaining 4 percent are in the process”**

He further stated that as per the responsibility of Information Commission, every possible effort is being made to enforce implementation of KP RTI Act, 2013. Scores of departments and individuals including the four press clubs of KP province have also been determined. He narrated the example of Peshawar Press Club where one member

Syed Bukhaar Shah sought some information from the club which was not provided to him so he therefore approached the commission and filed a complaint and later imposed penalty on the press club for non-disclosure of requested information. Interestingly, during this course of time, the applicant had become the president of the Press Club. But since the penalty was imposed under RTI law, thereby the order of Commission the club had to pay it.

Mr. Riaz Khan Daudzai maintained that bringing RTI in the domain of general masses is very crucial and the commission is taking effective measures to raise awareness about RTI.

**“Until now, we have held 270 awareness sessions and seminars in different parts of the province in collaboration with the civil society organizations,” said Daudzai.**

Mr. Riaz Khan Daudzai claimed that recently introduced 25 constitutional amendments have added 27500 square km area of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in the jurisdiction of KP Information Commission. The population of over 5 million has been added to KP. Thus the role and working of KP Information Commission has been multiplied as complaints are flowing in from the newly inserted region ex-FATA and Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA). According to Mr. Daudzai, this situation needs drastic measures for ensuring the early disposal of the complaints. He also mentioned that letters have been sent for the nomination of PIOs in different departments of ex-FATA and PATA.

### **Presentation by Muhammad Azam, Chief Information Commissioner Pakistan Information Commission**

Mr. Muhammad Azam Chief Information Commissioner of Pakistan Information Commission gave a brief overview of the current state of the commission at federal level.

He said that the Commission is facing challenges since its inception in

November 2018. The government of Pakistan established the information commission by appointing three information commissioners but the required administrative and financial support is not provided. Till date, no budget has been allocated for Pakistan Information Commission and the commissioners are unable to perform their functions.

**“We are not given office space yet, we are confined to a single room provided by Information Services Academy (which works under the Federal Information Ministry) at Zero point but, we are still working despite all the challenges,” said Mr. Azam**



## Progress, Despite Challenges

The Chief shared that despite all the odds, challenges and bureaucratic lethargy, Pakistan Information Commission is turning challenge into opportunity. He said:

**“More than 100 complaints have been received by the commission, 28 hearings have been conducted and more than 35 complaints are already resolved by the commission while some are still in process. We have notified the schedule of costs recently and also formed the service rules and that are expected to be notified soon. We have also written letters to all the Ministries’ and departments for the designation of Public Information Officers (PIO’s) following which we have got 100 PIO’s designated in different Federal Ministries and Departments. In addition, guidelines for the PIOs have also been prepared by the Commission and soon our website will be launched”, stated Mr. Muhammad Azam.**

Muhammad Azam also brought under discussion the issue related to the discrepancies in the salaries of commissioners. Under the rules of Right of Access to Information Act, 2017 all the commissioners were equal with regards to salary however in the notification of appointment; there was a salary difference among the Chief Information Commissioner and the Information Commissioners. He called it an internal matter and stated they are trying to fix it as well along with other problems related to the working of commission.

## Presentation by Sikandar Ali Hulo, Commissioner, Sindh Information Commission

Mr. Sikandar Ali Holiyo gave a short overview of challenges and progress of Sindh Information Commission. He apprised all participants about the current status of the commission and



remarked that Sindh Information Commission is also striving like Pakistan Information Commission. Mr. Holiyo was of the view that Sindh has bent towards the regime of right to information by enacting Sindh Transparency and Right to Information Act, 2016 but some basic lacunas are still present. While narrating about the challenges he said:

**“The Commissioners were appointed after the period of approximately one year and later on it took a lot of effort to open a regular bank account of the commission whereas fake accounts are being opened quite easily in the province. We are still struggling “**

He shared that terms of references for Commissioners have been prepared in August 2019 and the budget grant for the first quarter has also been released. The office building is hired and being renovated. Mr. Holiyo highlighted that although the society is transforming through the excessive use of internet and social media tools but the

bureaucracy and the systems are still on a slow pace in the province. He mentioned that the Commission has received more than 100 RTI complaints but we are unable to perform our functions due to the hurdles mentioned before. The government departments in the province are also not aware of the Sindh RTI law and are reluctant to respond to information requests by citizens.

### **Common Challenges and Impediments**

The joint discussion of the information commissioners also brought under discussion some common challenges in implementation of Right to Information Laws in their respective areas of jurisdiction. Some common challenges are highlighted as under:

1. Lack of interest by the government departments for the appointment of PIOs
2. Lack of proper training of PIOs
3. Digitalization and electronic record keep is not adopted by the departments
4. Bureaucratic lethargy is yet another issue in implementation of RTI laws in Pakistan. Bureaucracy needs to be oriented through their hierarchy and awareness.
5. A proper campaign should run for proactive disclosure of information

## Proceeding of Day 2:

The second and the last day of the meeting was chaired by Mr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ali, former Information Commissioner of Punjab and Founding Director CPDI. He is well known campaigner of RTI in Pakistan.

### Address by Mukhtar Ahmed Ali:

Mr. Mukhtar Ahmed Ali chaired the meeting and appreciated the idea of newly formed National forum of Information Commissioners (NFIC). He concurred that right to information or public access to information is a paradigm shift from the traditional mind set of secrecy by the state. Mr. Ali in particular mentioned the example of civil services rules according to which all the information is confidential unless declared public.



**“We need to make this system inclusive by giving people their right of access to information because this is the basic concept of RTI and it will ultimately help in bringing transparency in governance “said Mr. Ali while addressing the participants of the meeting.**

He also shared his experience of serving in the first batch of information commissioners in Punjab Information Commission and said that the then government and departments were not cooperative since it was a new idea in the province.

**“When commission was established, people in my circle came to know about RTI and started filing the information requests to different government departments. In the initial days we worked from our homes by using our own laptops as we did not have the office at that time,” said Mr. Ali.**

He made known to the participants that with the passage of time, the provincial information department extended help and gave a temporary place to conduct the hearings at Director General, Public Relations Office, Lahore. He said that when they started working and issuing orders, they were told by higher authorities that that Chief Minister Secretariat, Home Department and Governor Office may please be spared from the ambit of RTI. Later on, the Commission got its supplementary budget approved but non-cooperation was a still big problem. He said that the 90 percent of the notices were typed by himself.

By the support of some civil society organizations, the commission started the series of trainings of public information officers and other government officials. During the course of processing complaints, they observed that records were not easy to extract, especially from the building and irrigation department in Punjab. Many departments showed resistance on disclosure of information stating various reasons.

## Discussion and a way forward:

Mr. Mahboob Qadir Shah Chief Information Commissioner Punjab appreciated the work and contributions of Mr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ali and inquired if the papers of Public Service Commission are allowed to be shared with the complainants. Mr. Shah shared that they had fined a Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police following which the police department is now complying with the RTI Act. However there are still few other departments which are not cooperating. He added that to date there is no trained secretariat staff for the commission.

Mr. Hassan Ali Information Commissioner Punjab said that blame is put on bureaucracy, while in actual, the government of the time is responsible for such delays. He said,

**“We have restricted complainants for the data of records for a year. We have also observed that people also test the muscle of the commission”.**

Furthermore, he emphasized that there are certain institutions who should be given leverage.

**“We should not touch the High Courts and Defense institutions etc. If we entangle with High Courts we won’t win. Capacity building is must at every level.”**

Mr. Akhtar Ansari Information Commissioner from Punjab while responding to the points raised by his colleague said that, nobody questions about the judicial proceedings from any court. Referring to Mr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ali’s verdict about Chief Justice of Lahore High Court, he said that the purpose of this law is to ensure the transparency of systems.

Mr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ali while responding to the points raised by the members of NFIC said that there are few ground realities in Pakistan and our laws have given exemption to the defense services. “There is no option if we don’t do it,” said Mr. Ali. He said that Mr. Mansoor Ali Shah, Chief Justice had given information following the directions from Punjab Information Commission.

**“We have the powers of civil court but we should make our procedures simple.”**

Mr. Ali said that there are many issues of capacity on administrative side as well. During the trainings the government officials often raised questions for us regarding being black mailed, in case of disclosing information. Best efforts were to enlighten them that one could only be black mailed, in case of wrong doing. Furthermore, he told that whenever an information is sought from the department there is always hesitation to open up, but RTI law is the guideline. If law says that courts are answerable then law should be followed by the Commissions.

Mr. Azam Khan Chief Information Commissioner Pakistan asked about the world wide RTI practice with regard to the defense services to which Mr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ali responded that there is no bar in India about courts. He added that when the RTI law was enacted in India, Indian Army chief circulated an order that they do not come under this law but later on he had to withdraw his decision. Today Human Rights violation and corruption matters in defense services are still entertained under RTI in India. He also said that in Pakistan, Commissions need allies. Media and civil society organizations are natural allies.



While talking about the structure and next meeting of NFIC, Mr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ali said that commissions should own this forum. He gave example of India where an annual national conference on RTI is held. Mr. Amer Ejaz, ED CPDI suggested the next NFIC meeting shall be conducted in Lahore in the month of December.

At the end Mr. Amir Ejaz ED CPDI, extended his word of gratitude to all commissioners for a successful two day meeting of NFIC. He endorsed that together we can advocate the implementation of RTI at all levels.



*Left to Right: Amer Ejaz(ED CPDI), Hassan Iqbal (IC,PIC), Saeed Akhtar Ansari (IC,PIC), Mehboob Qadir Shah (Chief PIC), Muhammad Azam( Chief PIC), Sikandar Ali (IC, SIC), Riaz Khan (IC, KPIC), Gul Munir Shah(Chief SIC), Fawad Malik(Chief, PIC), Zahid Abdullah (IC, PIC)*

## Annexure I

### Declaration of Information Commissioners 2019

We the Commissioners of Federal Information Commission, Punjab Information Commission, KP Information Commission and Sindh Information Commission pay tributes to all those RTI and Human Right Activists, Parliamentarians and Media persons who struggled for *Freedom of Information* in Pakistan and their efforts ultimately led to insertion of Article 19-A in the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan in the year 2010 acknowledging the ***right to information*** as a fundamental right of citizens of Pakistan.

2. We consider the said provision of constitution and ***right to information*** legislations at Federal and Provincial levels as ushering in of new era for the people of Pakistan marked with respect for human rights, inclusive values, participatory democracy, accountability and good governance in matters of public importance of Municipal, Provincial and Federal public bodies of Pakistan.

3. We beseech upon all tiers of governments to put their weight behind the implementation of right to information laws eliminating the culture and mindset of ***secrecy*** as one of the vestiges of colonial era and to further empower the Information Commissions to come to the expectations of beleaguered and down trodden people of Pakistan by prevailing ***transparency*** and ***maximum disclosure***.

4. We the Commissioners hold and reaffirm our unwavering faith in ***right to information*** which is inalienable, inherent and fundamental right of citizens of Pakistan, duly acknowledged by the creator of mankind as follows:-

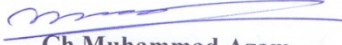
*Say, "Can those (individuals and nations) who know can be equal to those who do not know?" Only those will be remembered [who are] people of understanding and knowledge".*

***(Al-Quran 39:9)***

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5. We the Information Commissioners of Pakistan hereby undertake and solemnly declare that we will perform the sacred duty of access to information without any fear or favour, leaving aside any personal interest with a missionary zeal and taking it a sacred task in the service of people of Pakistan in particular and for humanity in general.

Mr. Zahid Abdullah

  
Ch Muhammad Azam

Mr. Fawad Malik

  
Mr. Riaz Khan Daudzai

.....

Mst Mah Talat

  
Syed Gul Muneer Shah

Shahid Gulzar Shaikh

  
Sikandar Ali Huliyo

  
Mr. Saeed Akhter Ansari

  
Mr. Mahboob Qadir Shah

  
Mr. Hassan Iqbal

Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) is an independent, non-partisan and a not-for-profit civil society organization working on issues of peace and development in Pakistan. It is registered Under Section 42 of the Companies Ordinance, 1984 (XLVII of 1984). It was established in September 2003 by a group of concerned citizens who realized that there was a need to approach the issue of peace and development in a an integrated manner. CPDI is a first initiative of its kind in Pakistan. It seeks to inform and influence public policies and civil society initiatives through research-based advocacy and capacity building in order to promote citizenship, build peace and achieve inclusive and sustainable development. Areas of special sectoral focus include promotion of peace and tolerance, rule of law, transparency and access to information, budget watch, media watch, election watch and legislative watch and development.



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