



Network of Organizations Working for People with Disabilities, Pakistan

**Press Release  
Immediate Release**

**For**

## **NOWPDP – Legal Rights Forum Offer Free Legal Aid to People with Disabilities**

**Karachi, Pakistan, 31 July 2009 – The Network of Organizations Working for People with Disabilities Pakistan (NOWPDP)**, an initiative of the Aga Khan Council for Pakistan, working for the betterment of quality of life and welfare of people with disabilities across the country in partnership with The Legal Rights Forum, a nationwide association of lawyers working toward equal legal rights, signed a Memorandum of Understanding today at a local event, whereby they will collaborate to provide free legal assistance to people with disabilities across Pakistan.

NOWPDP will facilitate the LRF in provision of free legal aid through its extensive outreach to people with disabilities and members of the Network, which number 150 organizations nationwide. Signed at the 'Juvenile Justice Implementation' seminar organized by the LRF, the MOU will enable LRF to access people with disabilities nationwide using NOWPDP's systemic network, hence making free legal advice available to people with disabilities in Pakistan, estimated at roughly 3.5 million according to the 1998 Census.

This MOU is part of NOWPDP's national initiative: 'Legal Benefits – Know Your Rights.' Advocating the rights of people with disabilities, a comprehensive booklet is also being published covering generic legal benefits and frameworks catering to people with disabilities in Pakistan and will be disseminated free-of-cost nationwide through Network members, organizations and associations.

Addressing the audience, Amin Hashwani, President of NOWPDP stated that the LRF was inspirational in terms of their dynamic approach to ensuring that Pakistani citizens' legal rights are not violated, and working with Legal Rights Forum, NOWPDP hopes to provide people with disabilities with a path toward equal opportunity and equal status before the law. Malik Tahir Iqbal, Chairman of LRF also expressed his desire to make legal rights equally accessible to people with disabilities and high hopes for a successful partnership between LRF and NOWPDP.



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### **Editors Note:**

**Network of Organizations Working for Persons with Disabilities, Pakistan (NOWPDP)** is an initiative taken by His Highness the Aga Khan Council for Pakistan, launched on the 9th of May 2008. Its primary aim is to make a significant difference to the quality of life and welfare of persons with disabilities by the provision of strategic support augmenting the functioning of organizations working for, and with, such persons across Pakistan.

NOWPDP's approach to its goal is multifaceted. The Network stands as an apolitical, non-sectarian, non-partisan and neutral platform, and will conduct its programmes without regard to faith, origin or gender. NOWPDP intends to create space and voice for persons with disabilities and the organizations working for them, and advocate the obstacles faced by them to key socio-political and economic stakeholders. As a Network, it will form linkages between organizations working for people with disabilities and corporations, the state and media. We also aim to facilitate the planning and implementation of governance, management and operations programs and activities of our member organizations as well as expand their capacity development to this end. To pursue its objectives, NOWPDP will rely on the energy, dedication, and skill of volunteers as well as remunerated professionals, and draw upon the talents of people of all faiths.

NOWPDP seeks to take effective and concrete action by working with similarly-minded organizations to create synergistic and lasting change in the existing vacuum swallowing the rights of people with disabilities and denying them the social justice, dignity and equality that is their birthright as much as it is anyone else's. <http://www.nowpdp.org/>

### **For further information, please contact:**

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