



External Communications Department

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Governor SBP underscores the importance of empowering women entrepreneurs for sustainable economic growth

Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Mr. Jameel Ahmad, emphasized the vital role of women entrepreneurs in driving inclusive and sustainable economic growth in developing countries. He was speaking during a session titled 'Capital to Scale: Women Entrepreneurs as Job Creators,' held at the World Bank Headquarters, Washington D.C., on the sidelines of the 2025 Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group (WBG).

The session brought together policymakers, women entrepreneurs, and financial leaders to discuss how catalytic capital and bold systemic reforms can accelerate women's economic participation and job creation. In his remarks, Governor Ahmad highlighted Pakistan's forward-looking policy reforms aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs and advancing gender-inclusive economic growth.

He shared that SBP's flagship - Banking on Equality - policy, the first comprehensive gender-mainstreaming framework in Pakistan's financial sector, has been instrumental in narrowing the gender gap in financial inclusion. Since its launch in September 2021, the number of active bank accounts held by women has risen from 20 million to 37 million as of June 2025, while the gender gap in financial inclusion has declined from 39 percent to 30 percent. Moreover, financing to women has also grown substantially, with female microfinance bank borrowers increasing by over 200 percent, and women's SME and agricultural financing portfolios having doubled, during the same period.

Governor Ahmad emphasized that these initiatives are not only expanding access to finance, but also contributing to job creation and institutional diversity, as banks have inducted over 14,600 women into their workforce during the past three years. He also shared that SBP is now finalizing the second phase of the Banking on Equality Policy which shall integrate digital solutions, business profiling, and remote financing channels to further support women-led micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

The Governor reiterated SBP's commitment to advancing gender equality and women's entrepreneurship as a key pillar of Pakistan's inclusive economic growth strategy and highlighted SBP's adoption of the WE-Finance Code – an initiative of the World Bank, in collaboration with international financial institutions (IFIs) and countries, to reduce gender gaps in MSME financing. Governor shared that SBP has committed to the Code along with 22 banks, marking a significant step towards building a unified national coalition for women's financial inclusion in Pakistan. This initiative will help address gender disaggregated data limitations and financing gaps for women entrepreneurs in Pakistan, and enable the banks to design targeted and gender-responsive financing solutions.

To promote entrepreneurship among women, he stressed the importance of implementing consistent gender-positive national strategies, creating women-friendly industry environments, and investing in capacity building for women. In this regard, he highlighted SBP's resolve to design and implement gender-mainstreaming policies and initiatives for



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improving women's financial inclusion and economic participation in sustainable economic growth.
