



FAFEN Preliminary Report on 39th Session of the 13th National Assembly

More than half of Members fail to take part in session

- **NA Passes 20th Constitutional Amendment Bill**

ISLAMABAD, February 17: The National Assembly's 39th session spread over ten sittings was marked by the passage of 20th constitutional amendment as 54% Members did not take part in the proceedings, says a Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) preliminary report on Friday.

The session which met for a little over 23 hours continued to witness the House failing to take up the complete agenda on the Orders of the Day with Points of Order interrupting regular proceedings.

Each of the ten sittings on average lasted for two hours and 31 minutes. Similarly each sitting started with an average delay of an hour and 12 minutes.

The House left 56% of the agenda items that appeared on the Orders of the Day unaddressed, primarily due to 150 Points of Order which consumed 34% of the total session time – 474 of 1,386 minutes. Like previous sessions, the agenda for Private Members' Day was ambitious, making it difficult for the House to complete it in a single sitting.

Overall 46% of Members – 113 male and 42 female – participated in the session by submitting agenda items on the Orders of the Day or by taking part in the debates. Female parliamentarians appeared to be more active than their male counterparts. Their participation was 55% of their total membership - 76 – while male parliamentarians' participation was 44% of their total membership – 258.

A party-wise analysis shows that 84% of MQM parliamentarians took part in the proceedings, followed by MMAP's 63%, PMLN's 56%, PPPP's 42%, PML's 30% and 25% of the ANP.

PMLN Legislators raised 28 Points of Order, followed by 21 by MQM, 11 PML, eight Independents, six ANP, five MMAP, and one each by the Members of BNPA and PPPS. PPPP Legislators took the floor 69 times on Points of Order mostly to respond to the opposition's criticism.

However, none of the Points of Order attracted the Chair's formal ruling. Without the Chair's formal ruling, these Points of Order do not lead to any output.

The attendance of Members was relatively better than the previous sessions – on average 94 parliamentarians were present at the beginning of each sitting and 93 at the end.

The Prime Minister attended seven sittings for 26% (360 minutes) and the Leader of the Opposition was present during four sittings for 16% (227 minutes) of the session time. The Speaker chaired the proceedings for 23% of the session time; the Deputy Speaker 64%; and the remaining 13% of time was presided over by Members of Panel of Chairpersons. The

parliamentary leaders of MMAP and BNPA attended seven sittings each, ANP and PMLF six each, while PML and MQM leaders did not attend any sitting.

Apart from the 20th constitutional amendment, the House passed the Private Power and Infrastructure Board Bill 2011 and the Medical and Dental Council (Amendment) Bill 2009. Three Private Members' Bills were introduced and sent to respective Standing Committees.

The National Assembly adopted three Resolutions. Moved by PMLN Members, the first resolution was against the United States congressional hearing on Balochistan and against drone attacks. The second Resolution was about setting up a parliamentary caucus on media to provide health facilities to people and the third was to reduce prices of petroleum products.

The House took up 15 Calling Attention Notices raised by 27 male and 18 female Members. Of them 21 Members were affiliated with the PMLN, 12 MQM, eight PPPP, two MMAP, one PML and an Independent.

The House witnessed one walkout and three protests. A PMLN Member walked out for five minutes in protest against remarks of the interior minister about involvement of Chitral people Karachi violence.

The first protest was by PMLN and MQM Members against increase in prices of petroleum products. The second was by MQM Members against target killings in Karachi. The third protest by a PMLN Member in the sixth sitting was against the non-release of development funds.

About FAFEN: FAFEN is a network of 42 civil society organizations working to foster democratic accountabilities in Pakistan. It is governed by Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability.