

Text of

**INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER AT THE PIPS
INAUGURATION CEREMONY,**

MAY 30TH, 2012 at 11:00 AM

Honourable Deputy Chairman Senate, Mr. Sabir Baloch!

Honourable Speakers of the Provincial and Legislative Assemblies!

Members of the PIPS Board of Governors! Ambassador Cameron Munter!

US Under Secretary of State, Ms Tara D. Sonenshine! Executive Director PIPS!

Fellow Parliamentarians, Excellencies, Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!

and a very good day to all of you!

It's my pleasure to inaugurate Pakistan's premier and first-of-its-kind training and research institute for the national Parliament and provincial legislatures – namely the PAKISTAN INSTITUTE FOR PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES.

This emulates a special moment for me and the PIPS Board of Governors, as we had been closely following up every step in the creation and development of this upcoming seat of legislative learning.

I therefore begin by acknowledging the contributions of all those involved in this process. We are grateful to the government of United States and the USAID, for their generous support with regard to the construction and provision of a fully equipped and furnished PIPS new campus at a cost of 11.5 million US dollars. This is, in deed, a valuable gift from the people of United States to the developing democracy of Pakistan. My appreciation is also due to Ambassador Cameron Munter, for his continued facilitation and making [today's](#) event a success.

The UNDP and its project of Strengthening Democracy Through Parliamentary Development continued to remain a trusted partner in starting training programmes in the initial years of PIPS. Equally important has been the collaboration with the German Foundation, Konrad Edenure Stiftung, which amply contributed to the unhindered growth of PIPS. We are, therefore, grateful to each one of you and look forward to this continued cooperation in future as well.

The contributions of the Members of the Legislative Development Steering Committee and the Board of Governors also deserve our joint praise. I would especially like to mention the services of all provincial Speakers, who regularly attended all Board meetings and also took active part in envisioning the scope and activities of PIPS.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Parliament is rightly considered the bastion of people's power. Among all the other pillars of the state, it is the Parliament, which reflects the will and the aspirations of the people and so is regarded --- and respected --- as supreme. This, in turn, also places more responsibility on the Members of the elected chambers. They are the law-makers and so, are required to be well-versed with all legal, social and strategic developments, taking place in the society. In fact, it is this ability of a Parliamentarian, which transforms the House from a mere debating chamber to a proficient

legislature. The role and need of a sustainable supportive research and capacity-building mechanism, thus, becomes all the more important. No wonder, all developed parliaments around the world are backed by numerous think-tanks and allied research institutes. Such facility, however, has remained missing in our struggling democracy. While the other two pillars of the State, namely the Executive and the Judiciary, had long established their respective training institutes and academies, the Parliament was kept deprived of any such supportive mechanism. This prime need further became important in the post-18th amendment scenario, which carved a critical and central role for the federal and provincial legislatures. This historic constitutional landmark:

- Revived the original parliamentary character of the constitution;
- Paved the way for “institutionalism” in place of “discretionism”,
- And fulfilled the long-standing promise of provincial autonomy.

Such sweeping reforms, nevertheless, called for more vibrant parliamentary performance. This means a more objective, learned and responsible role by the federal parliament in deciding about numerous state institutions, including the appointment of judges, selection of chairpersons and members of election commission, National Commission on Human Rights and Commission on the Status of Women. At the same time, the provincial assemblies are also expected to take their due responsibility by developing their respective capacities in framing policies on newly devolved areas such as health and education. This gap between the promise and performance ought to be adequately filled through a sustained process of sharing experiences and learning techniques.

It goes to the credit of the 13th National Assembly and the present Parliament that soon after its formation, we focused on addressing this persisting lacuna. The PIPS Act was amongst the very first legislations, taken up by the House as within a year of our election, the dream of PIPS transformed into a functioning reality. As the first Woman Speaker, it has been an honour for me to be the Founding President of the first PIPS Board of Governors, which has drafted the Rules for the budding Institute and has also set its future course as a meaningful think tank. Comprising of cross party parliamentary leadership and Speakers of the four provincial assemblies of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh, the BOG has continued to play an active role in developing the Institute into a centre of excellence.

It may also be mentioned here that it was through the strict belt tightening measures, adopted by the National Assembly that we were able to purchase this prime piece of land for PIPS at the cost of Rs. 34 million from our own budget. The Parliament has also assumed the responsibility of funding the PIPS operations in the ratio of one-third and two-third by the Senate and National Assembly respectively as envisaged in the PIPS Act, 2008. It is also encouraging to note that from the next financial year, the provincial legislatures will also start contributing towards the PIPS annual budget.

All such measures have set the stage for strengthening the parliamentary institutions in the country. The 13th National Assembly has already entered its fifth and final year and I am confident that our efforts will pave the way for a stronger Parliament in the days to come. At this juncture, Ladies and Gentlemen! I would also like to appreciate the Executive Director and his pioneering team for their dedicated efforts during the last three formative years of PIPS, during which they all managed to perform their duties despite limited resources.

Now, with all the needed facilities at your disposal, you have a far bigger challenge ahead of you. It will be rightly expected from you that you will turn this state-of-the-art building into a world-recognized seat of parliamentary learning. This informed policy support also holds the key in improving the performance of parliamentary committees as well. PIPS can play a vibrant role in this important legislative process by providing linkages between the federal and provincial committees, as well as with other established parliaments for sharing legislation and replicating best practices,

through video conferencing and joint courses, in order to enable the Members to have better understanding of the issues placed before them.

I would thus advise PIPS team that their journey for consolidation of the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services starts with five key values, which are: integrity, professionalism, non-partisan approach, anticipation and accessibility. I am confident that if you ensure these in your conduct of business, PIPS can emerge as an international model for parliamentary institutions.

I also urge all members of the Parliament to make full use of PIPS facilities. At the same time, I also invite them to come up with their valuable suggestions in order to ensure continuous improvement in the services, offered by the PIPS. And as I conclude, Ladies and Gentlemen! I pray and wish that [today](#)'s inauguration marks the beginning of a journey that leads us to a truly strong and robust Parliament, fully capable of addressing all challenges to democracy and people's rights in our country. Amen

Thank you very much. Pakistan Zindabad