**Press Release**

**FAFEN Unveils Plans for Observing General Election 2018**

ISLAMABAD, January 31, 2017: Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) has revealed its plans for observing electoral processes for the next general election, expected in August 2018, by mobilizing more than 22,000 trained non-partisan citizen observers in all National Assembly constituencies.

At a gathering of key election stakeholders on Tuesday, FAFEN indicated that it will start observing pre-election processes from April 2018 by mobilizing more than 6,000 citizen observers across the country. FAFEN’s pre-election observation methodology will be based on international best practices, national law, and Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP)’s code of conduct for candidates and political parties. Abiding by the ECP code of conduct for observers, FAFEN observers will report on political alignments, whether there is a “level playing field” for all political contestants, participation of women and marginalized communities, inappropriate use of public resources, development schemes, postings and transfers, the candidate nomination process, campaign financing and content, political violence, polling scheme formulation and other ECP preparations for election administration, and resolution of election complaints.

On Election Day, FAFEN plans to deploy 16,000 specially-trained and duly accredited observers nationwide. They will observe and report on election management, including whether all polling stations and booths (especially for women) are set up as in the polling scheme, the environment around polling stations including illegal campaigning and law and order, as well as voting, ballot counting and election result consolidation processes. FAFEN’s Election Day methodology will also enable it to produce a “Parallel Vote Tabulation” for each NA constituency based on vote counts collected directly from a statistically valid sample of polling stations.

After the elections, FAFEN will collaborate with lawyers to observe and study the establishment, proceedings and decisions of Election Tribunals. Based on this post-election observation, FAFEN will report on the quality and speed with which election result disputes are settled.

To keep stakeholders and citizens updated on its observations of each stage in the electoral process, FAFEN will produce periodic reports, daily updates and dissemination of observation findings online and through social media. Based on FAFEN’s experience of observing two preceding General Elections in 2008 and 2013, the network has further refined its observation methodologies and reporting mechanisms to strengthen its essential and unique contribution to elections in Pakistan.