***This Joint Declaration is agreed upon by the authorized representatives of Chambers of Commerce of Commerce and Industry of Islamabad, Karachi, Haripur, Peshawar, Gujranwala, Mardan, Rahimyar Khan, Quetta, Sukkur, Faisalabad and Jhelum, and Women Workers’ Alliance with the objective to further ameliorate the working conditions of women at workplaces covered by the overall definition of 10 laws in vogue for the time being through tangible measures in the spirit of collaboration, cooperation and coordination as a prerequisite for improving the economic situation in Pakistan.***

**Whereas** the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan guarantees equality of all citizens before the law, prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and provides for special provisions for the protection of particularly women with the aim of ensuring their full participation in all spheres of national life that includes their optimal participation in the country’s economic activity;

**Whereas** Pakistan has ratified international covenants including Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and 30 Conventions of International Labour Organization (ILO) that generally or particularly require the government of Pakistan to take demonstrable measures to improve women’s participation in all aspects of national life as critical and to fully utilize their potentialities for sustainable development;

**Whereas** Pakistan also enjoys the Generalized Scheme of Preferential Treatments Plus (GSP Plus) status in the European Union (EU) that encourages the developing countries to pursue sustainable development and good governance through trade incentives; and

**Whereas** women constitute half of the population in Pakistan but their participation in the country’s economic activity is neither proportional to their share in the population nor is it reflective of their full potential due to a variety of social, cultural and structural factors that are restrictive and exclusive and must be addressed through policy, legal and administrative means requiring the government’s attention and action.

Now, therefore, the WWA and Chambers in the aforementioned districts:

**Recognize** that women particularly working in the formal industrial and services sectors face multifarious challenges that may include unequal pay, low-paid jobs, discrimination and harassment and that these matters are seldom raised as issues of concern by representative trade unions, if any;

**Acknowledge** thatprioritizing the interests and priorities of women workers and tangible measures to improve their working conditions will not only positively contribute to the productivity, but will also encourage more women to engage in economic activity that will reduce poverty, improve general wellbeing and advance the country’s economy;

**Understand** that improvement in the labour conditions in Pakistan through full and complete compliance with 30 ILO conventions particularly its core conventions C-100 (Equal remuneration convention 1951) and C-111 (Discrimination in Employment Convention 1958) will improve Pakistan’s overall standing in the international markets and help employers and investors expanding their global outreach;

**Resolve** that the parties will take collaborative, coordinated and cooperative approach towards addressing the issues of women workers and improving their economic participation in the aforementioned districts and set an example to be followed by other cities and districts in Pakistan;

**Declare** that the two parties shall form Joint Working Groups, to be called Employers-Women Workers Working Group, in all the aforementioned districts comprising their authorized representatives, which will act as a bridge between the employees and employers in order to ensure demonstrable efforts to improve the conditions of workplaces for women workers through negotiations, incentives and capacity development for both employers and women workers. These Joint Working Groups shall particularly focus to help resolve issues of provision of minimum wage, employees’ contracts, separate washrooms for women and formation of harassment committees, among other matters as determined by the respective Chamber and the WWA. The Joint Working Groups shall conduct periodic meetings to look into the state of implementation of labour laws;

**Declare** that the Joint Working Groups shall keep a watch on the conditions of women workers in the aforementioned districts and shall also provide recommendations to the government for administrative and policy measures; and

**Call upon** the federal and provincial governments to complement this unique understanding between women workers and chambers of commerce and industry through updating the relevant laws, ensure their enforcement, introducing administrative measures to improve the working conditions of women workers for an enhanced participation in the labour force and incentivizing the employers for achieving the highest degree of improvement in the working conditions for their women employees.