



Round Table on Mental Health Legislative Reforms – Part I

A national round table on Mental Health Legislative reforms was held on 25th March 2026 in Islamabad. The objective was to engage key federal and provincial stakeholders and initiate a process of reviewing the existing mental health legislations, reflect on the challenges for implementation, and develop a consensus on next actionable steps for making these laws meaningful in practice. The roundtable was chaired by Ms. Amena Aly Kamal, Member SSD, Planning Commission, and was supported by the International Organization for Migration (UN-IOM).

Representatives from the following ministries, provincial departments of health, UN organisations, and professional associations participated in the roundtable:

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| MoNHSR&C | International Organization for Migration (UN-IOM) |
| Ministry of Law and Justice | World Health Organization, Pakistan |
| Ministry of Human Rights | United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) |
| Department of Health, Punjab | UNICEF |
| Department of Health, Sindh | GIZ, Pakistan |
| Department of Health, KP | International Medical Corps, Pakistan |
| Department of Health, Balochistan | Pakistan Psychiatric Society |
| Department of Health, AJK | Pakistan Psychological Association |
| Department of Health, GB | College of Physicians & Surgeons |
| International Forensic Experts | Legal Experts |
| Public Policy Experts | Strategic Communication Experts |



As part of a consultative process, the MHSP&C Unit has formed a working group and is coordinating a review of the provincial mental health legislations. The MoNHSR&C and the health departments of the provinces and federal areas have each nominated a representative of the department and a technical expert to be part of the working group. The Ministry of Law and Justice and the Ministry of Human Rights have also nominated one member each. In addition, experts in law, public policy, human rights, strategic communications and individuals with lived experience have also been invited to contribute to the working group to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive review process.

The provincial legislation was adapted from the Mental Health Ordinance (MHO), 2001 by the respective provinces between 2013 and 2019. However, due to capacity and resource constraints, these laws have not yet been implemented. Furthermore, the MHO, 2001, was developed prior to the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2006, and therefore does not fully reflect a rights-based approach in line with current international standards.

In accordance with the legislative development framework outlined in the Guidance on Mental Health, Human Rights and Legislation (WHO-OHCHR, 2023), the Mental Health Strategic Planning & Coordination Unit is also preparing a working document to identify rights-based gaps and implementation challenges within the existing legislations. All provinces face systemic challenges, including institutional, capacity and resource constraints. A national coordinating and steering initiative is critical for the effective implementation of mental health legislative framework across the provinces.

Mental Health Strategic Planning & Coordination Unit