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SECP Proposes Gender Policy to Bridge Corporate Inclusion Gap

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KARACHI – The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has unveiled its draft *Women EquiSmart Policy 2025–2028*, a first-of-its-kind regulatory framework aimed at strengthening women’s participation in Pakistan’s corporate and financial sectors. Announced for public consultation on Tuesday, the policy marks a strategic shift from token gender diversity measures to a structured and comprehensive approach, aligned with both national development goals and international commitments on equality.

The policy focuses on six core pillars: boosting women's leadership on company boards, mandating gender-disaggregated data reporting, fostering women's entrepreneurship, introducing gender-smart financial products, encouraging inclusive workplace practices, and enhancing institutional capacity. These measures aim to dismantle systemic barriers faced by women in regulated sectors such as capital markets, insurance, and non-banking financial institutions (NBFIs), where representation remains critically low despite rising awareness.

In its statement, the SECP acknowledged that previous efforts at promoting gender inclusion had been piecemeal and ineffective. The new policy proposes clear regulatory actions, timelines, and accountability measures for stakeholders across public and private domains. By calling for gender-sensitive reporting and innovation in financial services tailored to women-led businesses, the regulator seeks to drive meaningful progress beyond symbolic gestures. The draft policy also encourages capacity-building programs and board-level training to help women advance into decision-making roles traditionally dominated by men.



This policy draft signals a rare but welcome intervention in a space often ignored in practical governance. It recognizes the link between economic growth and female participation, especially in the financial and entrepreneurial sectors that form the bedrock of emerging economies. While some may argue that inclusion should arise organically through merit, it is clear that entrenched structural imbalances require firm and intelligent regulatory nudges. By opening the floor for public feedback, the SECP has shown a balanced and consultative approach. If implemented effectively, *Women EquiSmart* could set a precedent for gender-focused reform in Pakistan's wider governance ecosystem. The challenge ahead lies in converting policy into measurable outcomes, an area where many past initiatives have faltered. Nonetheless, this proposal reflects an important step in creating a level playing field, and one that deserves serious attention from both policymakers and industry leaders.