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NA Committee Pushes Ministries for ISO Certification

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The National Assembly Standing Committee on Cabinet Secretariat urged all federal ministries in Pakistan to pursue ISO 9001 certification, following the successful accreditation of the Establishment Division and Finance Division. The committee emphasized the importance of adopting internationally recognized quality management standards to enhance bureaucratic efficiency, improve service delivery, and promote accountability across government departments.

The committee, chaired by Member of the National Assembly Malik Ibrar Ahmad, convened in Islamabad to review the Establishment Division's operations and outstanding legislative issues. It commended the Establishment and Finance Divisions for achieving ISO 9001 certification, a global benchmark for quality management systems. The Establishment Division Secretary detailed its role in managing Pakistan's civil service groups, including recruitment, promotions, and disciplinary measures, noting that reforms such as professional pay scales and streamlined recruitment for technical positions have improved efficiency over the past five years. The committee recommended that all ministries adopt ISO 9001 standards to enhance operational performance and public trust.

ISO 9001 certification in Pakistan is overseen by the Pakistan National Accreditation Council (PNAC), which ensures that organizations meet stringent quality and management criteria. Adoption of these standards could address longstanding bureaucratic inefficiencies that affect citizens' experiences with government services. However, past challenges raise concerns about consistent implementation. For instance, in 2023, the Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) faced a temporary suspension of its ISO membership due to unpaid fees, which negatively impacted Pakistan's international standing. This history underscores the need for robust oversight to prevent superficial compliance. While the committee's initiative marks progress toward modernization, success depends on genuine commitment rather than symbolic certification. Given Pakistan's need to strengthen both governance and export competitiveness, prioritizing resources and ensuring accountability in this process is critical to avoid repeating patterns of reform inertia.