

PR. No. 49/2021

PRESIDENT'S SECRETARIAT (PUBLIC)

PRESS WING

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PRESS RELEASE

Islamabad, April 22, 2021: President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi has underlined the need for concrete efforts to address the growing menace of drug usage in the universities so as to provide a drug free environment at the educational institutions. In order to facilitate the Differently-abled Persons (DAPs) to pursue higher studies, he emphasized the need for making the infrastructure of university buildings friendly to the Differently-abled students. He said that both the public and the private sector universities must make steady progress in this direction. The universities are required to evaluate the needs of DAPs to make the buildings friendly for the persons with disabilities and identify their respective issues so that efforts could be made to address them, he emphasised.

He expressed his views while addressing a virtual meeting of the Vice Chancellors of all the public and private sector universities. Federal Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Mr. Shafqat Mehmood, Secretary M/o Narcotics Control, Capt (R) Akbar Hussain Durrani, Secretary M/o Human Rights, Mr. Inamullah Khan, Brig. Syed Mubasher Hassan Kazmi, ANF and around 165 Vice Chancellors attended the meeting. This was the second meeting held to discuss the steps to curb the use of narcotics in the universities and facilitate the differently-abled students to pursue higher studies.

The President expressed his concern that Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) did not allow differently-abled students into the engineering programs. He urged that guidelines of Professional Councils especially those of PEC regarding differently-abled students needed to be reviewed to address the matter.

The President underlined the need for creating awareness and ensuring prevention against use of narcotics inside the universities. He advised the HEC to constitute a committee of Vice Chancellors to develop content for a campaign to create awareness against the use of drugs. He underlined the importance of close coordination with the parents to prevent use of drugs by students.

Executive Director HEC Dr. Shaista Sohail briefed the President on the implementation status of the decisions made in the first meeting. She said that the HEC formulated two new policies, which were shared with the universities and were to be approved by the Commission. She said that the policy on control of drugs and tobacco in the higher education institutions was endorsed by the Ministry of Narcotics Control, as it was in line with the policy objectives of the Ministry. It was shared with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training and all the higher education institutions. "The comments received from these stakeholders and outcome of the current meeting will be incorporated

in the revised policy and presented to the Commission for approval and circulation to all universities/HEIs for implementation and strict compliance.”

Adviser HEC Mr. Awais Ahmed underlined that, earlier, the HEC did have a policy on persons with disabilities, however, it was now updated in view of the ICT Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2020. He said that it was now binding on the universities to implement the policy on persons with disabilities. He maintained that a reporting mechanism was also developed, in addition to a mechanism to handle on-campus disability and temporary disabilities.

The meeting concluded with a decision to continue follow-up meetings to review progress on the finalization and implementation of the two policies.
