

Government of Pakistan
Benazir Income Support Programme

PRESS RELEASE

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MARVI PROPOSES LEAGUE OF SOCIAL SAFETY NETS AT ADB HQ IN ASIA-PACIFIC SOCIAL PROTECTION WEEK

MANILA: Minister of State and Chairperson BISP, MNA Marvi Memon represented Pakistan in the Asia-Pacific Social Protection (APSP) Week held at Asian Development Bank (ADB) headquarters, Manila. The event is aimed to evolve a program designed to share expertise from within and outside the Asia and Pacific region, as well as to discuss development experiences and best practices in establishing comprehensive and sustainable social protection systems.



Minister of State and Chairperson BISP, MNA Marvi Memon participates in Asia-Pacific Social Protection Week at ADB headquarters in Manila, Philippines. (Dated: August 03, 2016)

While speaking in a session on ‘Excellence in governance for social protection’ the Minister

gave a bird eye view of evolution of Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) as a flagship social safety net system in the country. She termed BISP as ‘pride of Pakistan’ committed to give dignity, empowerment and meaning of life to its 5.3 million beneficiaries.

Chairperson BISP said that over a very short span of 8 years, BISP has emerged as a leading social safety net (SSN) program. BISP has adopted the best international practices, innovative procedures and advanced delivery and governance mechanisms for targeting of real poor. BISP has developed a biometric payment mechanism with more than 250,000 touch points across the country that utilizes both banks and branchless banking networks.

Highlighting the strong resolve of the government to reform the social protection mechanism, Chairperson stated that the government places special emphasis on the expansion of BISP and improvement of its delivery mechanism as BISP budgetary allocations has been increased to Rs 115 billion from Rs 40 billion under the leadership of PM Nawaz Sharif and Finance Minister Senator Dar.

Chairperson further added that BISP aims to be number one in the world by registering state of the art NSER poverty survey. Pakistan is the first country where a social safety net program is using CAPI approach (Computer Based Personal Interviewing) for collection of data, instead of PAPI (Paper Based Personal Interviewing). Pilot phase of new poverty survey has been initiated and the entire exercise is expected to be completed by March 2018.

Expressing her views on the poverty alleviation and Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) initiatives, she said BISP adopts a multi-pronged strategy to empower the poor so that they may graduate out of poverty. She highlighted that under Waseela-e-Taleem (WeT) initiative, a CCT program, 1.3 million children have been enrolled in schools. These beneficiary children, between the age of 5 and 12, receive Rs. 250 per month per child. The target of enrolling 2 million children in schools will be met by December 2016.

The Minister apprised the audience of the initiatives of Prime Minister’s Interest Free Loans and BISP’s E-Commerce which focus on poverty alleviation by encouraging entrepreneurship. E-Commerce initiative of BISP provides a platform for online sale of the handicrafts of the beneficiaries, making them financially independent.

In the end, she stated that BISP has developed exportable experience and many countries have sought its assistance in establishing SSN programs. She also acknowledged the cooperation and technical assistance of ADB and other partner organizations that have been instrumental in making BISP a success story.

Ms Memon launched the idea of League of social safety nets where data sharing from all Asian countries occurs virtually on the net so that success transfer on products and services helps

millions of Asians graduating out of poverty. She also met senior management of ADB and got positive feedback on the same.

The other participants in the week-long program include social protection experts and practitioners from developing Asian and Pacific countries, representatives of the private sector, development agencies and civil society organizations.