

**Government of Pakistan**  
**Benazir Income Support Programme**  
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**PRESS RELEASE**  
**July 03, 2015**

**BISP Board approves re-survey of BISP database**

Islamabad ( ) Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Board Members approved Rs. 102 billion budget for the FY 2015-16 in its 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting at BISP Secretariat today. Minister of State and Chairperson BISP, MNA Marvi Memon chaired the Special Board meeting. The following Board members were in attendance: representatives of Finance, EAD, Foreign Office, Cabinet Division, Dr. Zeba A. Sathar, Mr. Yawar Irfan Khan, Dr. Ali Cheema and Secretary BISP.

In her welcome note to the members of the Board, Chairperson briefly discussed the agenda items of the meeting and gave overview of the milestones achieved during the last financial year 2014-15. She stated that BISP is on the right track to prove itself ‘Pride of Pakistan’ by ensuring efficiency and transparency in its service delivery to the poorest of the poor segments of the society.

The agenda items discussed and approved in the Board meeting included “BISP budget for FY 2015-16”, “Updation of National Socio Economic Registry (NSER)”, “De-crediting policy” and “Accounting treatment of de-credited amount”.



**ISLAMABAD: Minister of State and Chairperson BISP, MNA Marvi Memon chairing 23rd BISP Board Meeting at BISP Secretariat. (Dated: July 3, 2015)**

In recognition of the BISP's services in fighting the chronic poverty, Finance Minister Mr. Ishaq Dar, in his budget speech, had announced an enhanced budget of Rs. 102 billion for BISP for FY 2015-16. BIP closed the FY 2014-15 by meeting the targets set by IMF of 5 million beneficiaries and spending Rs. 93.6 billion as actual total expenditure 2014-15. This is a 96.3% utilization vs a utilization of 71.5% in 2012-13.

BISP Board approved this budget in the meeting as recommended by the Finance Committee of BISP Board. Out of Rs. 102 billion, Rs. 93, 765.276 million have been allocated for Unconditional Cash Transfer (UTC) in the BISP budget for this financial year. This amount is 91.93% of the total expenditure. The amount for UCT in current financial year has been increased as BISP aims to raise the number of beneficiary families to 5.3 million from the current strength of 5 million. Rs. 2835.312 million will be spent in the context of service charges which stands at 2.78% of the total expenditure. This is a reduction of expenditure of 31.25% on smart card and mobile phone banking. On BDCs a reduction of 8.3% has been managed through better negotiations with banks.

2.28% of the total expenditure amounting to Rs. 2330.410 million will be utilized for administrative expenses including salaries, premises charges and other operational costs. Total administrative cost of BISP would be 5% of its total expenditure, which is minimal for a Programme of this magnitude and scale from any national or international standards.

BISP board gave its approval in principle for updating National Socio-economic Registry (NSER) as current data is almost five years old which is an appropriate time for updation from international standards since it is a considerable period for household demographics to change. Development partners like World Bank and DFID have also shown willingness to provide necessary support for this exercise. The option of resurvey was discussed in detail focusing on minimizing the inclusion and exclusion errors. However, updation of NSER would be initiated after the approval of Federal Government, once data collection tools and methodology have been jointly developed by technical resources of BISP, international experts and BISP Board while using most value for money method.

MNA Marvi Memon, Chairperson BISP emphasized that this demand of updation was not just a scientific requirement after passage of time but was a demand felt in most rural and urban areas of Pakistan where the poorest lived. This was the case because there were many who had exited poverty and needed to be taken out of the database and many who had entered poverty and needed to be included in the database to ensure that BISP was fulfilling its national duty of being a truly representative social safety net for Pakistan. She welcomed the Board and donor support for this key initiative.

The revised de-crediting policy of BISP and accounting treatment of de-credited amount were also approved by the Board members. The proposals in the revised de-crediting policy included TORs for the third party to conduct the study to ascertain the reasons of non-withdrawal and Ex-post Facto approval for the use of de-credited amount for other operational expenses. Under this policy, BISP observes the accounts of the beneficiaries on continuous basis. If no activity is observed for two consecutive years, banks de-credit the amount into BISP's main account. The account of such beneficiary is reactivated and the de-credited amount is returned once the

beneficiary proves her existence to BISP. It was decided by the board that efforts at mobilization would re-start parallel to survey efforts to ensure beneficiaries are pro-actively made active.

During the meeting, BISP management also presented key performance achievements of the last financial year to the Board members. The key highlights of the performance included the following. Firstly, BISP met the IMF target of disbursing BISP stipend to 5 million beneficiaries. Secondly, more Cards were issued during shorter period which reflects greater productivity. 415,430 new BDCs (Benazir Debit Cards) were issued during last six months at 125 BDC centers in comparison of 597,758 BDCs issued in 11 month period during 2013-14 at 166 BDC centers.

Moreover, an important initiative undertaken by BISP on assumption of charge of new Chairperson, BISP at the end of February was to start a data sanity check of its beneficiary database to ensure transparency and correctness of eligible beneficiaries. The Board was told that 125,714 records of the entire database of 5 million beneficiaries were wrong updates made with the connivance of BISP officials countrywide. To penalize the corrupt practices unearthed BISP management had started official proceedings on fast track basis. Board hailed this as a bold step in any government organization to take menace of corruption head on and wished BISP management speed in this key endeavor.

Service improvement in banking arrangements to ensure speedier service delivery at lower costs and with less middleman interference was another achievement of the last fiscal year. Board was informed that considering the high level of illiteracy in the beneficiary population a new Payments Complaints Management System had been recently launched to provide ease of lodging and getting complaints resolved. Chairperson BISP appreciated the efforts of the management but emphasized that this was an ongoing challenge and innovative products like bio-metric payment system, constant interaction with banks to cut middlemen would lead to bigger service gains and the management needed to continue their efforts in this regard.

Board members were apprised that the efforts to make Tehsil offices more transparent and service driven included anti-fraud material placement, action against fraudulent message senders, new signage of BISP carrying the vision of the organization which is to give meaning of life, dignity and empowerment to BISP beneficiaries.

Board appreciated the efforts of the management to implement the Waseele-e-Taleem program, a conditional cash transfer for enrollment of children in schools. BISP has successfully enrolled 700,000 children in schools during FY 2014-15 against the target of 600,000. Chairperson informed Board about the political direction of future conditional cash transfer initiatives to be closely worked out with provinces.