

Government of Pakistan
Benazir Income Support Programme

PRESS RELEASE

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**BISP TO ENABLE ITS BENEFICIARIES TO FACE CLIMATE CHANGE RISKS:
MARVI MEMON**

The program will inculcate the adaptation and resilience in vulnerable population

ISLAMABAD: Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) envisions enabling its beneficiaries to face the multidimensional risks emanating from climate change. It was stated by the Minister of State and Chairperson BISP, MNA Marvi Memon during her address to the participants of the brainstorming session on “Environmental Adaptation Program for BISP beneficiaries” organized by BISP at its headquarter. The session was co-chaired by MNA Marvi Memon and Senator Mushahid Ullah Khan, Minister for Climate Change. The participants included representative of several government organizations, national and international NGOs like Federal Flood Commission, NDMA, IUCN Pakistan, WFP, AKRSP, Pakistan Red Crescent Society, ACTED, Care International and others.



Islamabad: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) MNA Marvi Memon and Federal Minister for Climate Change Mushahid Ullah Khan chairing the first Environmental Dialogue organized by BISP at BISP HQs (Dated: July 30, 2015)

The purpose of the brainstorming session was to collaborate with different organizations and to provide a platform for experts to share their policy recommendations on women

adaptation to climate change risks and training programmes enabling them to deal with climate change and also supplement their incomes.

In her welcome note, Chairperson BISP said that this is the first leg of the series of the policy dialogues which BISP intends to hold on “Environmental Adaptation Program for BISP beneficiaries”. She stated that BISP is committed towards improvement of consumption patterns and cushioning the vulnerable women from the negative effects of slow economic growth, food crises and inflation. In the current scenario, people across country are facing the adverse effects of climate change like increased temperatures, heavy rainfall, floods, increased incidences of droughts, storms, low agriculture productivity, loss of local food system and biodiversity, and degradation of natural resources. The impacts of Climate Change are not Gender-Neutral and affect women more than the other groups, particularly the poor and marginalized women. In view of the importance of this biggest social safety net initiative, it is realized that this may also contribute substantially to improve the resilience of women against climate change impacts, and to achieve environment sustainability.

Mr. Mushahid Ullah Khan, in his key note address, said that the issue of climate change is considered very important all over the world. Most of the population on the earth, particularly women and children, are being affected by the climate change. The present government of the Pakistan, for the first time, has established a ministry for climate change which depicts the commitment of government towards this issue. He said that due to deforestation and Carbon emissions, temperatures in the country are rising which result into unpredictable weather conditions including heavy rain falls, melting of glaciers and floods. He underscored the significance of planting the trees and emphasized that every responsible citizen should participate in such efforts. He pointed out that the awareness campaigns can be very useful to sensitize the people in this regard.

In order to initiate the brainstorming session, Chairperson BISP shared some recommendations with the participants focusing on the inclusion of climate aid and climate finance in BISP, micro-finance through BISP, vocational and skill training for sustainable livelihood security, social mobilization, leadership training of women and mitigating economic vulnerability of women by enhancing their engagement in local level collective business activities. Further recommendations included women’s increased involvement in climate change adaptation planning by incorporating their knowledge of the environment and natural resources into local adaptation strategies and women’s equal access to up-to-date information about climate change, environment issues and adaptation strategies. Chairperson BISP also directed the BISP management to start energy conservation activities in the organization to actively participate in such efforts.

Secretary BISP, Mr. Muhammad Saleem Ahmed Ranjha also highlighted the importance of preparing the vulnerable segments for climate change risks. He emphasized that we need to translate the ongoing discussions into concrete steps along with timelines and expected outcomes. He quoted examples of many organizations which have practically adopted measures for energy conservation and the protection of environment.

During the brainstorming session, the participants gave overview of the contribution of their respective organizations in combating the negative effects of climate change. They appreciated the commitment of BISP towards vulnerable segments of the society and vision of Chairperson BISP to channelize the efforts for creating resilience in women against climate change risks. The participants gave their valuable recommendations on the issues of training programs and skill development enabling vulnerable women to deal with climate change, sustainable livelihoods, strengthening of natural resources, awareness among women, involvement of women in mitigation and adaptation strategies, community based disaster management, reforestation to reduce local temperatures. Recommendations were also made on formation of community groups seeking to diversify livelihoods, micro-lending, inclusion of women in disaster managements, gender concerns in disaster managements, seasonal plantation and nursery management by BISP beneficiaries. Among many others, the recommendation of kitchen gardening by the BISP beneficiaries in order to increase their incomes was lauded by the Chairperson BISP and the participants.