

**Government of Pakistan
Benazir Income Support Programme**

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BISP duty-bound to take lead in ensuring smarter versus stunted Pakistanis: MARVI

Islamabad () Minister of State /Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) MNA Marvi Memon said that there is an established link between cash transfer and food security and better nutrition levels and BISP has a significant food security impact. She was discussing matters of mutual cooperation with Ms. Lola Castro, Country Director World Food Program (WFP) who called on her at BISP Secretariat today.



Islamabad: Minister of State/ Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) MNA Marvi Memon discussing matters of mutual cooperation with Ms. Lola Castro, Country Director World Food Program (WFP) at BISP Secretariat today. (May 08, 2015)

In her welcome remarks, Chairperson BISP praised the efforts of WFP for nutrition and food security of children and women in different areas of Pakistan. Ms. Lola Castro discussed the significance of nutrition and proper diet for growth and mental development of children and also for mothers. She also briefed Chairperson BISP about the activities of WFP and its methodology in the various districts of Pakistan in coordination with provincial governments. WFP is covering 700,000 persons for provision of proper nutrition either through food or through cash in 26 districts. WFP uses MUAC and BMI techniques for

gauging the child and mother growth respectively. She cited the reasons of early marriages, low birth weight and lack of awareness behind mal-nutrition.

Chairperson BISP said that BISP beneficiaries were the most prone to stunting, malnutrition, lack of nutrition awareness due to their poverty levels. As such she considered it BISP's absolute duty to Pakistani nation to ensure that this segment of the population was given best possible nutrition awareness, vaccination, nutrients to ensure that they developed to becoming productive members of Pakistan's workforce versus intelligently slower. She said the future of Pakistan depended not so much on physical assets but human assets and if the workforce was compromised it would be a great disservice to creating the dream of the Asian tiger. She said that BISP's future interventions in fixing stunting through potential creation of conditional cash transfer programs would go a long way in producing Pakistanis who could race Pakistan out of being developing and into being developed. She further said that Pakistan would be facing a demographic disaster if the demographic dividend was not ensured by taking care of this health issue today. She emphasized that investing today would get benefits tomorrow, and inaction today would reap setbacks Pakistan's future generations would not forgive us for. As such she said this area of health was a joint priority for Federal Health Ministry and BISP and that both Ministers had directions from the Prime Minister in ensuring that no leaf was left unturned in this war against stunting. She complemented efforts which were already being made by Minister of Health MNA Saira Afzal Tarrar in this regard. She said that together they would work with provinces to ensure these goals were met in all of Pakistan versus only some provinces of Pakistan.

WFP representative proposed to work with BISP by sharing and getting advantage of each others' data. Chairperson BISP directed her team to coordinate with WFP team to scrutinize the data in order to check those BISP beneficiaries who are also included in the WFP data so that the duplication of the efforts could be avoided.

Ms. Lola also presented maps showing food insecure areas of Pakistan to the Chairperson BISP and offered WFP's support to BISP for nutrition mapping. Chairperson BISP appreciated this idea and stated that a joint venture may be carried out for nutrition mapping of both the mothers and children included in the BISP beneficiary families.
