

Government of Pakistan
Benazir Income Support Programme

PRESS RELEASE

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**BISP, WFP AND IRMNCH & NP PUNJAB SIGN A LANDMARK AGREEMENT
ON NUTRITION IN SOCIAL PROTECTION**

Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), World Food Program (WFP) and Integrated Reproductive Mother Neonatal Child Health Programme and Nutrition Program Punjab (IRMNCH & NP) signed a landmark agreement on an operational research project for the prevention of under nutrition within social protection in Pakistan.

The agreement was signed by Country Director WFP ad interim Mr. Stephen Gluning and DG BISP Shahid Gul Qureshi in the presence of Minister of State and Chairperson BISP MNA Marvi Memon, Additional Secretary National Health Services and Regulations Dr. Hashim Popalzai, Head of Nutrition WFP Ms. Cecilia Garzen and Programme Manager Nutrition Punjab Dr. Nasir.

Under the pilot phase of the project, BISP beneficiary households having 6-23 month old children would be provided nutrition supplements by WFP coupled with Behaviour Change Communication



Islamabad: Director General BISP Mr. Shahid Gul Qureshi and Country Director WFP Mr. Stephen Gluning signing an agreement on nutrition in social protection. Minister of State and Chairperson BISP MNA Marvi Memon is also present on the occasion. (Dated: November 21, 2016)

in Rahim Yar Khan District. The project will be implemented through Primary and Secondary Health Department Punjab in close coordination with an internationally recognized academic research institute. A network of Lady Health Visitors (LHVs) will be engaged in social mobilization for behaviour change communication. The findings of this research would demonstrate the impact of cash transfers when combined with nutrition supplements on the lives of the poorest.

Addressing the signing ceremony, Chairperson BISP stated that with 43.7% children stunted, 31.5% underweight and 15.1% wasted in Pakistan, it is a matter of high priority for us to address the situation at the earliest. She added that the Unconditional Cash Transfer of BISP is effectively helping the poor in meeting their basic needs particularly food and health. According to second impact evaluation report by Oxford Policy Management, BISP has resulted in 19% reduction in poverty, 3% decline in poverty gap, malnutrition rates fell by 4% and 71% of the beneficiaries exercise full control over their stipend that makes them financially empowered.

Chairperson BISP reiterated that the results of this research would highlight the best nutrition sensitive approach that can further be replicated all across Pakistan to address malnutrition, stunting and low IQs.

WFP Country Director ad interim Stephen Gluning said that WFP is proud to be a part of this initiative as for the first time this type of research is being conducted that would provide Pakistan a great opportunity to use the scientific findings in future policy making on social protection programmes.

Mr. Shahid Gul Qureshi, Dr. Hashim Popalzai, Ms. Cecilia Garzen and Dr. Nasir highlighted that this is a great initiative that would help the relevant institutions in tackling the issue of malnutrition.