



1. WAYS TO EVOLVE, REDEFINE BISP DISCUSSED AT WB WORKSHOP

Published in The News, April 26, 2016

Means to evolve and redefine Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) institutional systems to ensure robust service delivery and outreach to the poor were extensively discussed at the two-day workshop hosted by the World Bank which opened here on Monday.



Marvi Memon, Minister of State and Chairperson BISP, MNA Marvi Memon addressing during Stakeholders Conference: The way forward for BISP organized by World Bank. (Date: April 25, 2016)

The workshop was organised to discuss the way forward for the BISP, the largest social safety programme in Pakistan. The workshop brings together federal and provincial stakeholders, academia, civil society, development partners and international experts in social protection to deliberate on the key themes imperative for strengthening the safety net system.

In her opening remarks, the Minister of State and BISP Chairperson Marvi Memon reinforced that BISP continues to serve the poor by bringing dignity, empowerment and meaning to their lives through the transparent and efficient delivery of cash transfers to the poor.

Marvi Memon stressed the need to understand the program from the perspective of the poor

beneficiaries and keep them at the centre of the debate in the workshop as this is the essence of the program and the agenda of the Government.

She also reiterated how the World Bank support is now evolving into a programme for results, which was instrumental for supporting the government led programme. This includes: updating the National Socio-economic Registry (NSER) into a dynamic registry through re-survey to harmonize pro-poor initiatives in the country, expanding the Waseela-e-Taleem -- the Co-responsibility Cash Transfer programme through mutually conducive federal-provincial partnerships, modernizing the delivery of payments to the poor and helping BISP to link its beneficiaries to complementary pro-poor programmes being delivered by other partners for exiting out of poverty.

Senior Social Protection Specialist (World Bank) Iftikhar Malik deliberated on how the World Bank's support has evolved since 2009 to develop the national Social Safety Net System in Pakistan and reiterated continued commitment to this end through the new four year programme being designed with inputs from all stakeholders.

Dr. Tahir Noor, director general of the Cash Transfers, discussed the progress of BISP, sharing lessons and the current vision for advancement.

Currently, BISP's cash transfers are being provided to nearly 5.2 million beneficiary families. BISP's targeting efficiency is comparable to some of the best such systems in the world with over 75 per cent of these



beneficiaries belong to the bottom two quintiles of population. The NSER is being used by over 30 organizations for pro-poor beneficiary targeting of various social programs. Given the changes in Pakistan's socio-economic landscape over the past 5 years as well as the static nature of the existing data, BISP has planned to update the NSER. The first phase of the nationwide survey will be launched in 2016 in 15 districts across all provinces and regions as well as one Fata agency.



Murree: Minister of State and Chargeperson BISP, MNA Merve Menem in a group photo of participants of Stakeholders Conference: The way forward for BISP organized by World Bank (Dhaka: April 22, 2011)

BISP has also rolled out the Co-responsibility Cash Transfer (CCT) programme, linking cash transfers to primary school education, which is currently being implemented in 32 districts in all provinces and regions. To date over 1.3 million children have been enrolled in the programme out of which over 1.15 million children have taken admission in schools.

(Pakistan Observer, Frontier Post, Patriot, Jang, Nawaiwaqt, Naibaat, Jinnah, Pakistan and Ausaf also carried the story and picture)