MARVI BRIEFS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND OPENS BISP DATA FOR PUBLIC

Under the PML (N) government, BISP is committed to update the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) and make it world's number one in terms of targeting. BISP is going to open its data for public by providing tehsil wise summary of survey on its website. Academia, civil society, media and public are urged to give their feedback so that improvements in the survey process may be incorporated after evaluation of their suggestions. This was stated by Minister of State and Chairperson BISP, MNA Marvi Memon, today, during her speech in the National Assembly.

During her speech, Chairperson BISP apprised the Assembly that BISP maintains the National Socioeconomic Registry—a database containing information on the socioeconomic status of over 27 million households (HH) across Pakistan except two agencies of FATA. At the start of the Program in July 2008, no reliable data were available for the identification of the vulnerable persons in the country. The task of identification of the potential beneficiaries of BISP was, therefore, entrusted to the Parliamentarians in what was the Phase –I of Targeting. Application Forms were distributed among the Parliamentarians in equal number (8000 forms to each member of the National Assembly and Senate and 1000 forms to each member of the Provincial Assemblies), irrespective of party affiliation. The forms received were verified through NADRA database and out of 4.2 million received forms, 2.2 million families were found eligible for cash transfers.

She added that keeping in view the objective and scientific mode of targeting i.e. Poverty Scorecard (Phase-II) was launched. The nationwide Poverty Scorecard Survey, the first of its kind in South Asia, enabled BISP to identify eligible households through the application of a Proxy Means Test (PMT) that determined the welfare status of the household on a scale between 0-100. The survey was started in October 2010 (which was conducted by the independent firms hired through a competitive bidding process) and was completed across Pakistan in 2011 except two agencies of FATA. Under the survey, almost 27.36 million households and approximately 155 million individuals across Pakistan were surveyed. BISP identified 7.7 million families living below the cutoff score of 16.17. This survey was rated number 5 internationally by the World Bank.

Ms. Marvi stated that considering the transient nature of poverty, static nature of the registry and global best practices, the present government decided to update the registry in 2015. The NSER update was launched through a pilot phase which included Desk Based survey in 4 districts and a Door-to-Door survey in 9 districts all across the country and one agency in FATA. Door-to-Door survey started in February 2017 and will be completed by September 2017. Till now, more than 2.7 million households have already been registered. During the pilot phase, BISP has also successfully tested self-registration as a data collection methodology in 4 districts (Haripur, Bahawalpur, Sukkur and Nasirabad) from June 2016 to March 2017. More than 711,000

households have been registered through the self-registration approach. This approach is first step towards making the registry dynamic.

Chairperson BISP also informed that Door-to-Door survey is currently taking place in Desk Approach districts which will be completed by end of October this year. The new NSER has made considerable improvements from the previous survey which included data collection through android tablets instead of paper forms, which ensures instantaneous data transfer and availability. Once the data is collected, it is validated by a supervisor. The data quality is monitored on real time basis through MIS system which generates daily reports for the operations team as well as the survey firms for data correction. The application automatically collects GPS coordinates which ensures physical visit assurance of survey teams. Moreover, new questions have been added in survey application regarding chronic diseases, vocational training, micro-finance, characteristics of labor market, access to justice and agriculture land and farming techniques.

After the successful completion of the pilot phase, BISP will launch the national roll out in October 2017 which is likely to be completed by April 2018. The Chairperson BISP reiterated that the new NSER would be a landmark achievement of the present government which would become the cornerstone for the future policymaking of the country as this data. This data would be a treasure for all the government and non-government departments to plan and implement their development projects for the targeted population and launch pro-poor schemes.