

**Government of Pakistan
Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division
Press Release**

The multisectoral Ehsaas Value Chain Building Committee meets for the first time



October 25, 2019 – Islamabad: Eight federal ministries and 4 provincial ministries were at the table when the multisectoral Ehsaas Value Chain Building Committee met for the first time at the Prime Minister’s Secretariat.

Poverty in rural areas is deeply linked to agriculture and Pakistan is being faced with unique agriculture challenges particularly small landholdings, subsistence farming, exploitation by extractive Aarhtis (middlemen) and stress selling. Unless private sector investment is made in building rural value chains, it will be difficult to break away from the rural poverty cycle. Ehsaas’ multisectoral Ehsaas Value Chain Building Committee’s diverse perspectives will help to shape a value chain building policy to address these challenges.

Participants agreed that problems linked to agriculture are complex, and creation of value chains, and private sector investment will help farmers with fragmented and small land holdings to come out of poverty. During the consultative meeting, all stakeholders and experts gave detailed input on the major challenges being faced by agriculture sector. It was deliberated that although agriculture is the backbone of our economy, but the sector confronts problems at different levels particularly elite capture, limited technical capacity, poor awareness, access to finance constraints, extractive middlemen perpetuating the debt trap, lack

of fiscal incentives and lack of a coherent value chain building policy. Hence, farm productivity, crop yield, food security, exports, livelihoods, farmers' wellbeing are negatively impacted, and poverty is perpetuated. The Committee will convene again shortly to deliberate on a detailed analysis to be presented by the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD).

The Ehsaas Value Chain Building Committee was convened by Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation and it brings together expertise and policy influence from the Poverty Alleviation Division, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Revenue and Economic Affairs, Ministry of National Food Security and Research, Planning and Development and Reforms Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Board of Investment, Pakistan Agriculture Research Council, State Bank of Pakistan, National Bank of Pakistan, Federal Board of Revenue, Agriculture and Livestock departments in all four provinces, GB and AJK, Food and Agriculture Organization, and Pakistan Agriculture, IFAD and Dairy Farmers Association and others stakeholders. "We will be appointing technical co-chairs for this committee" so that this important work can be fast-tracked and monitored on a weekly basis, said Dr Sania Nishtar.