

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

“PASSD Ehsaas Implementation Group” agrees on future road map



Islamabad -July 23, 2019: The first meeting of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division (PASSD) Ehsaas Implementation Group was held to accelerate implementation of Ehsaas and to discuss the roles, key respective areas of execution and monitoring mechanisms of different organizations involved in the implementation of Ehsaas Program under the umbrella of PASSD. Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation chaired the meeting. Dr. Sania explained that all the organizations under PASSD involved in implementing Ehsaas were given roles that were mutually reinforcing and that there was every effort made to exploit synergy. BISP is being mandated to run cash transfers, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal’s role is to be responsible for demand side social protection whereas the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation has the responsibility for poverty graduation.

Dr Sania said that she wanted to ingrain the culture of collaboration within PASSD, and hence cross-organizational committees were being made. In addition, there will be a special emphasis on governance and integrity, which is why we have launched the Governance and Integrity policy last week” she said.

She apprised the participants that PASSD will be mainly engaged with all concerned organizations under Ehsaas to ensure policy coherence, governance oversight, coordination and

monitoring. Further to avoid duplication among the implementing organizations, an online portal will be set up to provide one window visibility of all social safety and poverty alleviation interventions being carried out under Ehsaas.

The meeting was attended by Ali Raza Bhutta, Secretary BISP, Shahid Naeem, Chief, Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform, Capt. (R) Asadullah Khan, Additional Secretary, PASSD, Aon Abbas Bappi, Managing Director, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, (PBM) and heads and senior officials from Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), Trust for Voluntary Organizations (TVO), Centre for Social Entrepreneurship (CSE) and Centre for Rural Economy (CRE).

Secretary BISP assured that BISP has all the technical infrastructure in hand to share database facilities with all the concerned stakeholders for identification and targeting of beneficiaries based on poverty score card (PSC); he shared details about the new National Socioeconomic Survey, which is underway. Dr. Nishtar appreciated the supply centered role of BISP under Ehsaas program as its national socio-economic registry survey will provide the basis for all policy interventions to be executed under Ehsaas.

Managing Director, PBM while sharing his organizational functions and jurisdictional roles said that under Ehsaas, as many as 150 schools for marginalized will be rehabilitated, 150 women empowerment centers (educational and vocational set ups) will be supported for socio-economically uplifting rural women. In addition, 5 old people homes will be developed under Ehsaas. MD PBM shared that, guided by PASSD, efforts are underway to develop a policy on orphanages.

Head of Programs, PPAF shared details of The National Poverty Graduation Initiative (NPGI) that is part of the Ehsaas strategy. It aims to graduate the poorest households out of poverty and set them on a course of economic and social prosperity. Its components include (i) 225,000 asset transfers; (ii) 3.8 million interest free loans and; (iii) vocational and skills training to make assets productive.

Dr. Nishtar reiterated that the graduation initiative is unique of its kind and aims to reduce dependence of the population at the bottom of the economic pyramid on government-led social safety nets (BISP, Zakat and Baitul Mal programs) and helps to bring this population into the mainstream of economic development and financial inclusion.

The function of TVO to support programs for street children, seasonal migrants, transgender and victims of child and bonded labor and daily wage workers also came under discussion. Similarly, it was shared that Centre for rural entrepreneurship will work around Solutions Innovation Challenge and Center for Rural Economy will support agricultural value chains under Ehsaas.

It was decided in the meeting that in order to ensure effective participation from provinces and civil society in Ehsaas implementation, Poverty Alleviation Coordination Council will be expanded. Further to ensure policy coherence among Ehsaas implementing organizations, it

was decided to constitute communications, IT and field presence committees with representation from each organization under PASSD.