

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

**Dr. Sania Nishtar: ‘The Prime Minister has strongly hinged the entire agenda of Ehsaas Program on welfare of the disadvantaged, especially women’**



July 11, 2019 - Islamabad: July 11<sup>th</sup> is being marked as, ‘The World Population Day’. Government of Pakistan, with the support of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) commemorated, ‘The World Population Day’. The theme for this year, in line with the overall theme of Nairobi Summit was ‘25 Years of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD): Accelerating the Promise’. Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation was the guest of honor and keynote speaker.

The event began with very interesting and engaging remarks and reflections on the World Population Day 2019 and Pakistan’s current population scenario by Dr. Zafar Mirza, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Ms. Lina Mousa, UNFPA Representative and Ms. Kemi Williams, Deputy Head of DFID. These distinguished population and demography specialists and experts shared their views on Pakistan’s achievements during the past 25 years regarding ICPD program of action and way forward.

Speaking at the occasion, Dr. Zafar Mirza Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination said that we are striving hard to make reproductive health and family planning services available to every household of the country under the broad-based approach. We are placing emphasis on reducing infant, child and maternal mortality rates that will prevent the deaths of one million or more children under the age of 5. The government is also providing modern contraceptives through its service delivery network. To assist with this, we need the support of religious leaders for advocacy by investing in right messaging for the right people at the right time.

In her keynote address, Dr. Nishtar said that this day seeks to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues in Pakistan with 3-4 million people being added to the population every year. The Prime Minister has strongly hinged the entire agenda of Ehsaas Program on the women's economic empowerment which is critical for better population outcomes. And, Ehsaas framework is highly skewed towards the socio-economic uplift of 6 million poor women who will benefit from the Kafaalat to preferential support for women through Tahafuz. More than 50% of the education vouchers and scholarships will be for women. Also, Insaaf Card covers health conditions for women, preferentially. In addition, labor force policies are being prepared for women domestic workers, and rural women whose work is seen as an extension of their household responsibilities. Furthermore, the second chance program for girls, drive around out of school children, and conditional cash transfers for 4.5 million children, 50% of them will also impact welfare of women, opening the doors to access, rights, opportunities and freedoms.

Further, Dr. Nishtar urged that federal and provincial governments should transform the entire family planning and health services facilities and infrastructure by introducing a new business models coupled with accountability of health measures that have already been legislated. There is also a dire need to create awareness among masses on population and development issues and politicians should not feel shy to talk about these issues in public. Ehsaas program gives us an opportunity to revive our commitment to the cause of population and development and collaborate to make these services easily available and accessible.