

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

Prime Minister unveils groundbreaking Ehsaas Nashonuma program



August 13, 2020 –Khyber Tribal District, Pakistan: Today, Prime Minister Imran Khan launched a new program that will tackle stunting and improve the nutrition of the poorest children in Pakistan, emphasising that there is no place for malnutrition in twenty first century Pakistan. The inaugural officially took place at Ehsaas Nashonuma Center set up in Dogra Headquarter Hospital, Khyber Tribal District. Prime Minister visited the center and interacted with the staff, and beneficiary women and their children present at the registration, check-up/anthropometry, awareness, and specialized nutritious food distribution counters at the centre. At the launch event, Dr. Sania Nishtar, SAPM on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation briefed the PM about the wide-ranging services being provided under Ehsaas Nashonuma. She demonstrated the android based Ehsaas Nashonuma app as well that will enable the electronic registration and tracking of beneficiary women and children under 23 months of age.

“Ehsaas Nashonuma” will focus on improving nutrition and health in the first thousand days of life, the most critical period in early childhood development, starting at conception and finishing at age two. The nutritional status of new-borns and infants is directly linked with the health and nutritional status of the mother before, during and after pregnancy. Forty percent of children in Pakistan are currently impacted by stunting due to malnutrition, with significant consequences for their health and educational outcomes.

Under the program, every quarter conditional cash-transfers will be provided to the poorest pregnant and lactating women and those with children under two years old, totalling PKR 1500 for each boy child and PKR 2000 for each girl child. Beneficiaries will be identified through Ehsaas Kafaalat and payments will be conditional upon the consumption of specialized nutritious food, immunisations, and attendance of health awareness sessions. The program is fully funded by the government of Pakistan.

The new program will sit under the Ehsaas umbrella initiative headed by Dr. Sania Nishtar, who accompanied the PM at the launch.

“Widespread malnutrition is holding our country back and previous governments have failed repeatedly to take concrete action. Ehsaas Nashonuma will be the first-time serious efforts have been made to give all children in Pakistan the best possible start in life,” said Dr. Sania Nishtar. “This flagship initiative will target the most vulnerable young children and improve their outcomes by addressing a number of interacting factors including nutrition, immunisations, and health promotion through education,” she further added.

The design of Ehsaas Nashonuma was informed by an in-depth review of existing evidence around tackling nutrition from Pakistan and around the world, with inputs from a high-level committee comprising of local and international experts, development partners and Provincial Governments. The World Food Programme has been hired as an implementing partner and will carry out the project’s activities with oversight from Ehsaas.

Ehsaas Nashonuma is being launched in the first phase in nine districts, including Khyber, Upper Dir, Bagh, Ghizer, Hunza, Kharmang, Kharan, Badin, and Rajanpur. These districts were selected in consultation with the provincial health departments. Thirty-three Ehsaas Nashonuma Marakaz will be established at Tehsil level health facilities to provide all the program’s services under one roof.