

**Benazir Income Support Program
Government of Pakistan**

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Press Release

April 08, 2019

Prime Minister releases the Policy Statement on *Ehsaas*

Details unveiled about the extensive poverty reduction program with 115 policy actions, the largest ever program of this nature in the country

The Prime Minister today, released the policy statement on Ehsaas, which is the recently announced poverty alleviation program of the government. The statement was tweeted out by the Prime Minister and was posted on the Prime Minister’s official website, today.

“I am pleased to release my policy statement on #Ehsaas, my priority poverty reduction program with its 4 focus areas and 115 policy actions to reduce inequality, invest in people, and lift lagging districts” he tweeted.

Ehsaas’ poverty reduction strategy is articulated in four pillars and it currently embodies 115 policy actions, which may be expanded as the process of consultations on the program further widen. The four pillars include: addressing elite capture and making the government system work to create equality; safety nets for disadvantaged segments of the population; jobs and livelihoods; and human capital development. This extensive agenda is meant to drive the governments entire might in the pursuit of the objectives of equality and human development.

In his Policy Statement the Prime minister outlined that “Ehsaas is for the extreme poor, orphans, widows, the homeless, the disabled, those who risk medical impoverishment, for the jobless, for poor farmers, for laborers, for the sick and undernourished; for students from low-income backgrounds and for poor women and elderly citizens. This plan is also about lifting lagging areas where poverty is higher”.

Earlier during the launch of the program on March 27th, the Prime Minister had outlined that his inspiration for Ehsaas comes from the welfare model of Riasat-e-Madina. The manner in which he links this inspiration with today’s realities of the country are outlined in his statement “Ehsaas is about the creation of a ‘welfare state’ by countering elite capture and leveraging 21st century tools—such as using data and technology to create precision safety nets; promoting financial inclusion and access to digital services; supporting the economic empowerment of

women; focusing on the central role of human capital formation for poverty eradication, economic growth and sustainable development; and overcoming financial barriers to accessing health and post-secondary education”.

To realize this vision the first step has already been taken. The Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and safety nets was swiftly created after the Cabinet approval on last Tuesday. Dr. Sania Nishtar, Chair of the Poverty Council and BISP and the architect of the Ehsaas program has assured that implementation of Ehsaas will be “super expedited” and a mechanism will be in place within a week to coordinate action on this huge agenda, which entails roles of 36 federal and provincial agencies and action on 115 policy parameters. Dr Sania added that “Institutionalizing integrity and efficiency frameworks, risk assurance and management, performance metrics, operational work plans, are urgently needed to make institutions transparent, accountable and responsive, which is a necessary for successful implementation of Ehsaas”

Ehsaas’s principles and approaches center on tapping whole-of-government multi-sectoral collaboration for solutions; ensuring joint federal-provincial leadership; and mainstreaming the role of the private sector through an approach which will provide a level playing field on the one hand and foster locally-relevant innovation on the other, to create jobs and promote livelihood in quick-win areas. The program’s premise is grounded in the importance of strengthening institutions, transparency and good governance. The policy statement can be downloaded at the following Link <http://pmo.gov.pk/documents/Ehsaas-Prime-Ministers-Policy-Statement.pdf>