

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

**Ehsaas Emergency Cash program budget increased to Rs. 203 billion; Program will reach 16.9 million: Sania**

July 16, 2020 -Islamabad: Within Pakistan, the government’s largest social protection program, Ehsaas has taken the lead in radically expanding social safety nets to help mitigate the effects of the COVID-19. Given the overall success of Ehsaas Emergency Cash and its massive demand in these unprecedented times, the government has expanded the emergency cash target to reach out to around 16.9 million deserving families with increased budget of Rs. 203 billion. Initially, the program was launched on April 9, 2020 with a budget of Rs. 144 billion for 12 million beneficiaries.

Addressing the press conference, Dr. Sania Nishtar, SAPM on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation said, “The program is fully transparent, rule and merit based, and apolitical. Sindh gains the most from this program which shows the apolitical nature of program.” Dr. Nishtar thanked Prime Minister Imran Khan for his support and appreciation.

For emergency cash payments, the digital capabilities developed over the past year as part of Ehsaas strategy have positively been adapted. Requests were sought through an SMS short code service; data analytics enabled eligibility ascertainment, using unique national identification numbers and drawing on the National Socioeconomic Registry and wealth proxies (travel, taxes, billing, assets ownership data and government employment status), and payments are biometrically verified.

To ensure payments to beneficiaries who are eligible but were facing problems in withdrawing money owing to problems with biometric identification, Ehsaas came up with a supplementary payment solution. Now, beneficiaries with this issue are being paid out exclusively in the designated bank branches of partner banks. Likewise, to ease out the payment process for families of deceased beneficiaries who are eligible, Dr. Sania has outlined a procedure. Now, families of dead beneficiaries are required to send out an application in the name of Dr. Sania Nishtar with CNIC details of their dead family member along with those of eligible family member straight to Ehsaas offices at Islamabad.

On July 8, 2020 Ehsaas launched ‘Ehsaas Emergency Cash - Know Your Status’ Portal to offer an easy window to people registered with Ehsaas Emergency Cash to check their eligibility. All applicants who have registered themselves through 8171 or Prime Minister’s Labour Portal can now easily check their eligibility status by entering CNIC number on the portal. If eligible, they can collect their cash from the nearest Ehsaas payment centers.

Till today 12.86 million beneficiaries across the country have received one-time cash assistance of Rs. 155.64 billion.