

**Government of Pakistan
Benazir Income Support Programme**

Press Release

Dated: Aug 28, 2012

Addition of free social services like health, accident insurance, vocational training and interest free financing makes BISP the most productive initiative of the Government: President Zardari

President Asif Ali Zardari performs 30th to 36th Draws of Waseela-e-Haq here in President House; 248 Waseela-e-Haq Cheques along with Benazir Debit Cards also distributed amongst beneficiaries

BISP Achieving Millenium Development Goals of Women Empowerment & Poverty Reduction: Ms. Farzana Raja

Islamabad (): Expressing satisfaction over the progress of BISP, which was developing into a comprehensive social protection, poverty alleviation and women empowerment platform, President Asif Ali Zardari has said that addition of free social services like health, accident insurance, vocational training and interest free financing for self employment will make the Programme the most productive initiative of the Government.



Islamabad: President Asif Ali Zardari and Federal Minister & Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Madame Farzana Raja handing over Waseela-e-Haq Cheque to a BISP beneficiary during 30th to 36th Waseela-e-Haq Draws Ceremony held here at President House. Federal Minister for Finance Abdul Hafeez Sheikh also present on the occasion (Dated: Aug 28, 2012)

Addressing the gathering during Waseela-e-Haq draw and Cheques Distribution Ceremony under Benazir Income Support Programme here at Aiwan-e-Sadr today, the President said that BISP was

flagship programme of the Government for reducing poverty and empowering women. He said that it was a matter of pride that the BISP has progressed and was becoming comprehensive social safety net. The President said that the Programme has attracted worldwide appreciation for its transparency, objectivity and efficiency. To reach over 7 million families, he said, in a short span of four years is indeed a major achievement. He congratulated Chairperson BISP and all those involved with the Programme for making it a success.

On this occasion, the President also thanked the international community and partners for their help and support. Their support, the President said, has enabled us to bring about a revolutionary change in the lives of the poor and dispossessed.

The President said that he was personally monitoring the progress of the Poverty Scorecard Survey. He said that it is gratifying to note that the national roll out of this survey is progressing well. The countrywide program has already been completed in Balochistan, the President remarked.

He said that the poverty score card is a transparent and impartial survey of the poor through an internationally recognized procedure. The President said that we will ensure that public money is transparently utilized for the welfare of the most deserving. He said that the Mobile phone banking is meant to ensure this.

The President also expressed satisfaction over the progress of Benazir Smart Card based payment system in a number of districts. He said that the mobile phone banking will make payments to the BISP family even easier.

The President said that provision of interest free financing through “Waseela-e-Haq” was meant to help the BISP beneficiaries break free from the poverty trap. He said that it was a matter of satisfaction that on-ground implementation of Waseela-e-Haq scheme was well underway.

The President said that giving to the poor what is their due is the best way to pay tribute to Shaheed Bibi today. He said that keeping the promises of Bibi Shaheed, our sisters from BISP family will get cash assistance for setting up their own business for earning livelihood.

He said that with the addition of Waseela-e-Taleem to BISP’s initiatives, now every poor can fulfill the dream of sending his children to school and become better, responsible and self reliant citizens of Pakistan.

The President also said that BISP has also played a commendable role in providing relief to the flood victims. My advice today to the people of Pakistan is to have faith and hope in their future, the President said on the occasion according to the prepared text of his speech. He said that peoples’ welfare and improving their lot is our foremost priority. In his speech, the President said that BISP was a realization of the dream and vision of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. He said that our Shaheed leaders continue to guides us to make Pakistan a truly welfare State. The President said that BISP was one part of philosophy of Bhutto-ism. He said that it needs a caliber and a vision to fully understand all aspect of philosophy of Bhutto-ism and we have that insight to comprehend the vision of Bhuttos.

While lauding the vision of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, the President said that Shaheed Benazir Bhutto firmly believed in democracy being best the revenge against the forces of dictatorship. He said that following her vision, he raised the slogan of Pakistan-Khappay and democracy is the best revenge when she was martyred.

The President said that tolerance was critical for smooth functioning of democracy. He said that we have proved in the four and half years of our government that we have the required capability to run the democratic system and have the required level of tolerance.

The President said that when the BISP program was initiated, there were few people who criticized it and refused to become part of the Program. But now, the President said, even those critics, realizing its utility and impact, have joined the Program and were getting its benefit.

The President said that BISP was initiated not to serve a specific class or a group of people only keeping in view their political affiliations but it was meant to serve the poor of the country regardless of any consideration whatsoever.

The President in his speech urged BISP to speed up implementation of the other initiatives of the Programme like Vocational Training and Life and Health Insurance. He said that the children going without proper nutrition, basic education and health services and the families trapped in poverty cannot wait for long. It is their right and all resources must be mobilized to complete the coverage of each and every deserving Pakistani family under the Programme, the President said.

He wished BISP all success in its endeavors.

Earlier, Ms. Farzana Raza also spoke on the occasion and thanked the President for his personal interest in the development and success of the Program. She said that the presence of the President on the occasion speaks volumes about his commitment to the less advantaged people of Pakistan and the noble cause of serving the under-privileged sections of our society, as was the dream of great leaders Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. "I have no hesitation to admit that this unprecedented success of BISP would not have been possible without your able guidance and continued support on each and every step of our journey" she said in her speech.

Ms. Farzana said that social Safety Nets were interim measures to break the vicious cycle of poverty. She said that Benazir Income Support Program was doing this through linking welfare policies, women empowerment and community development in the most crucial times in the history of Pakistan. She said that BISP is working with a vision to eradicate poverty, improve the status and alleviate the sufferings of the marginalized and under-privileged, especially women through establishment of a comprehensive Social Protection Net.

Ms. Farzana said that BISP is the major intervention of Government of Pakistan for achievement of two major Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations i.e. Women Empowerment & Poverty Reduction.

She said that BISP has successfully advanced the cause of women empowerment and their emancipation in the society.

Chairperson said that in terms of poverty eradication and redistribution of wealth, almost Rs 130 Billion amongst the 5 million most deserving families of Pakistan have been disbursed in a short span of almost four years time through the Programme. She said that Benazir Income Support Program has been able to generate a reliable and scientific databank on socio-economic conditions of our entire population through Poverty Scorecard Survey. She said that we have conducted a countrywide Poverty Census, for the first time not only in Pakistan but also in the history of entire South Asia.

The President accompanied by the Finance Minister Dr. Hafeez Sheikh also initiated computerized draws of the Waseela-e-Haq Program and distributed cheques and Benazir Debit Cards among various BISP beneficiaries
