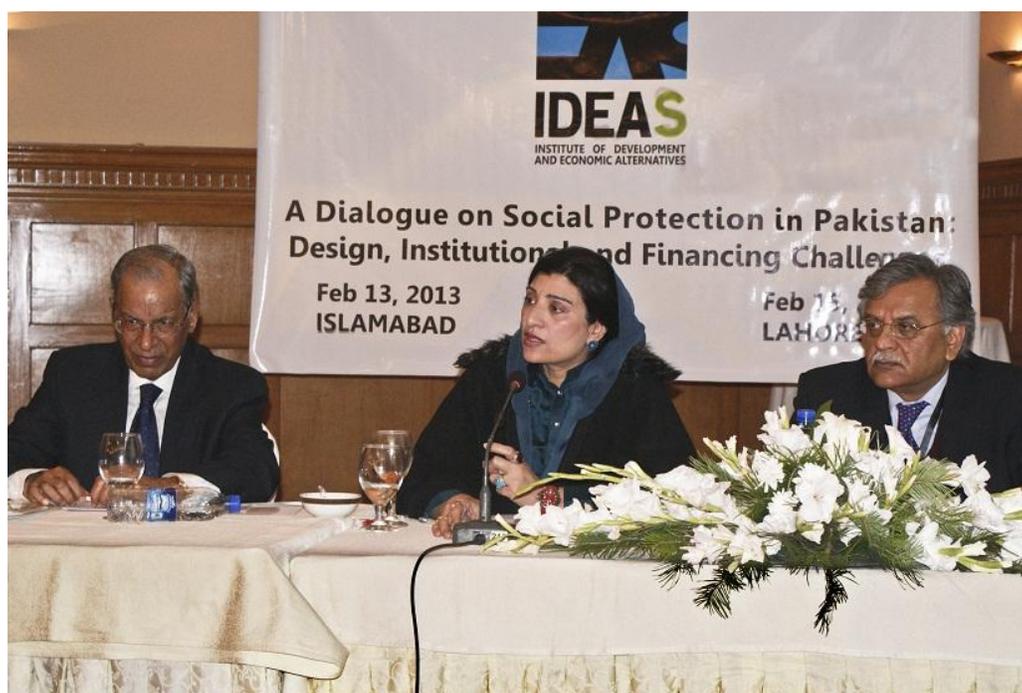


February 13, 2013

## **BISP to support 3 million children for primary education in next four years: Farzana Raja**

***Invites researchers, institutions to collaborate with BISP for the uplift of the poor, marginalized***

Feb, 13, 2013 (ISLAMABAD): BISP will support 3 million children to receive primary education with the financial and technical support of the World Bank and DFID, said Farzana Raja, Federal Minister and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) while addressing “Seminar on Social Protection” organized by the Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives (IDEAS) on Wednesday.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Madame Farzana Raja addressing to a Seminar on “Social Protection in Pakistan: Design Institutional and Financial Challenges” organized by IDEAS (Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives). Dr. Ijaz Nabi, Board Member BISP and Mr. Muhammad Sher Khan, Secretary BISP are also present on the occasion. (Dated: February 13, 2013)

Giving details she said a monthly cash payment of Rs. 200 per child/per month up to 3 children per beneficiary family will be provided to the families ensuring minimum 70%

attendance of the child/children in schools every month. This initiative will support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal related to primary education.

Farzana Raja said 9 million of BISP beneficiaries' children are unable to attend primary education primarily due to financial constraints of their families. BISP has recently initiated a primary education programme for the enrolment of children, aged between 5-12 years, of the beneficiary families. She said BISP is striving to reach out to the 20 to 22 percent of Pakistan's poorest of the poor in a view to improve their socio-economic conditions.

Farzana Raja said that the government through BISP alone cannot manage the huge mandate of social development in the country and therefore, private entities should join hands with BISP. She invited researchers, experts and academicians to come forward and suggest measures for further improvement of various initiatives of BISP for the uplift of the poor and marginalized sections of the society. She also emphasized that provinces should also play their part in institutionalizing the culture of social protection in Pakistan.

Answering to a question, Secretary BISP, Muhammad Sher Khan said BISP is providing cash assistance to the beneficiary families who have a poverty score of 16.17 or below. The cutoff mark was scientifically calculated by research experts of the World Bank, keeping in view the resources available to BISP.

BISP has signed an MOU with Transparency International (TI) in Pakistan which will oversee the procurement procedures of BISP and will provide expertise in strengthening transparency in all BISP operational areas.

Various national and international social protection experts, researchers and academicians took part in this seminar. Different experts and speakers at the seminar including Mr. Cem Mete, and Dr. Ijaz Nabi appreciated BISP's performance in ensuring objective targeting of the beneficiaries through a scientific poverty scorecard survey and praised the various measures taken by BISP for the social uplift of the down trodden and marginalized segments of society. Second seminar of this series will be held in Lahore on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2013.