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Govt committed to welfare of People; President Zardari

President Asif Ali Zardari Friday said government was committed to women empowerment, improvement in living standards of the people and to reach out to the poorest of the poor of the country. He was addressing the launching ceremony of the mobile phone banking for BISP beneficiaries of north Punjab, the draw of Waseela-e-Haq and distribution of Life Insurance certificates amongst BISP beneficiaries here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. The function was attended by a large number of BISP beneficiaries from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and northern Punjab, including a large number of women. The President, by pressing a button, initiated the computer balloting for 21st and 22nd draw of Waseela-e-Haq and distributed soft term loans of Rs 150,000 amongst those selected in the previous ballots. He also handed over free mobile phone sets and life insurance certificates amongst the BISP beneficiaries.

President's youngest daughter Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, accompanied the President at the event and warmly shook hands and hugged the women. President Zardari said mobile phone banking would ensure that money was paid to the most deserving in a speedy and transparent manner and hoped that soon every beneficiary of BISP across Pakistan would be receiving cash grants through mobile phones. The President said that the deserving would get their full share of assistance without any fear of leakage or misappropriation.



President Asif Ali Zardari & Ms. Asifa Bhutto Zardari Presenting cheque to a Beneficiary of BISP under Waseela-e-Haq initiative during a ceremony held at Awain-e-Sadar. Chairperson BISP ms Farzana Raja also present on the occasion.

He said the launch of mobile banking was well-timed to pay homage to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, whose birthday celebrations were about to commence and on whose vision the whole programme was based.

The President said that Shaheed Benazir Bhutto lived and laid down her life for the empowerment of the poor and downtrodden of the country, particularly the women.

He said the birth anniversary of Shaheed Mohtarma was an appropriate occasion to launch new initiatives for the poor and the needy and said it reflects her feelings for the poor and vulnerable sections of the society. The President said the way in which the BISP Programme has progressed

and was blossoming into a comprehensive social safety net was a matter of pride. He complimented BISP for reaching out to more than four million families in less than three years. He said that more than 6500 beneficiaries have benefitted from Waseela-e-Haq so far.

The President said that initially when the Programme was launched, few people had reservations and doubts about its implementation especially in the tribal areas. But it was heartening to note that the Programme was being successfully implemented in all areas including the tribal areas of the country. He said that BISP has helped the beneficiaries to break out of the poverty trap in which they were trapped for generations. He said that BISP was not merely for poverty alleviation.

“It is designed to be much more,” he said and added that it was a comprehensive social protection scheme and a platform for women empowerment as it covers health and accident insurance, vocational training and interest free financing for self employment.

The President said after the introduction of Benazir Smart Card and Poverty Scorecard Survey, the Mobile Phone Banking was another step by BISP reflecting that the programme has progressed into a comprehensive social safety net.

The President said that Life Insurance under Waseela-e-Sehat and Vocational training for BISP beneficiaries under Waseela-e-Rozgar schemes were already underway.

BISP has introduced pilot phase of Mobile Phone Banking for Cash Grants Beneficiaries launched by the President on December 26, 2010 at Larkana and Layyah, where more than 68,000 free mobile phones have been distributed. Currently, Mobile Phone Banking was being implemented in eight districts across the country.

These districts are Larkana, Layyah, Barkhan, Battagram, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Poonch and Gannche whereas more than 300,000 free mobile phone sets are being provided to BISP beneficiaries.

Group Life Insurance was another intervention of social protection which covers the breadwinners of each of the beneficiary’s family.

Under this scheme the dependents of the deceased would be compensated for Rs 100,000 in case of natural or accidental death of the breadwinner.

Till date State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan has enrolled one million BISP beneficiary families whereas 1.2 million more beneficiary families will be enrolled in the current year. The President said that the international community has appreciated BISP programme for its transparency, objectivity and efficiency.

He complimented Chairperson Ms. Farzana Raja and others at the BISP for their efforts in making the Programme a great success. The President also thanked the international community and development partners for their help in this initiative.

The President said that he was personally monitoring the progress of the Poverty Scorecard

Survey and said that he was pleased to learn that the national roll out of Poverty Scorecard survey was progressing well. The President said that we have to be very vigilant in ensuring that the public money was directly and transparently paid to the most deserving.

He hoped that the implementation of the other initiatives of Benazir Income Support Programme like Vocational Training and Health Insurance would also be expedited. The President also emphasized that all the resources must be mobilized to reach out to the poor and needy in all parts of the country.

Chairperson BISP Ms. Farzana Raja said the programme has run transparently and in the first phase Rs 54 billion have been distributed amongst the beneficiaries of BISP, who were recommended by parliamentarians of political parties other than the Pakistan Peoples Party.

She said on the contrary an amount of Rs 25 billion has been distributed amongst those who were recommended by the Pakistan Peoples Party and it shows volumes about the transparency being observed in the programme.

Ms Raja paid rich tributes to the President for attending all the events of the Benazir Income Support Programme and said it clearly showed his commitment towards the uplift of the downtrodden sections of the society.

She said certificates have been distributed amongst one million beneficiaries, while others were in the process of getting it soon. She said, on the directions of the President and with the approval of the Prime Minister health insurance scheme would be launched in four districts in July.