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**International support for BISP is reflective of Programme's transparency; says Turkish President Abdullah Gul; Promises Turkey's contribution for BISP on continuous basis;**

**Madame Farzana Raja meets Turkish President, hands over special letter of President Zardari**

ANKARA, 3 October 2011: Federal Minister and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Madame Farzana Raja met here today with Turkish President H.E. Mr. Abdullah Gul at the presidential palace in Ankara and handed over a special letter of the President of Pakistan Mr. Asif Ali Zardari. Madame Farzana Raja was leading a high level delegation comprising Secretary BISP Mr. Sher Khan, Pakistan's Ambassador to Turkey Mr. Muhammad Haroon Shaukat and senior officials of BISP and Pakistan Embassy.



Turkish President H.E. Mr. Abdullah Gul welcoming Federal Minister and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme Ms Farzana Raja at Presidential Palace in Ankara on 3rd October 2011

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On the occasion, President Gul congratulated the Pakistani leadership on launching a programme like BISP and said that the programme was a role model for the international community for poverty alleviation. He said that the BISP was the best homage to the name and legacy of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto.

“International support that BISP is receiving from top financial institutions and world donors is reflective of the transparency of BISP, said President Gul. He referred to pledges made during FoDP conference in Tokyo and ensured that Turkey would fulfill all its commitment. He also promised that Turkey would contribute positively towards BISP on a continuous basis.

Abdullah Gul on the occasion also requested Madame Farzana Raja to convey his warm greetings to President Asif Ali Zardari.

Madame Farzana Raja said Pakistan is facing many challenges including poverty and terrorism which are interlinked. The best response was through targeted social safety net in the shape of Benazir Income Support Programme, she said.

The Chairperson gave a detailed briefing about BISP. She informed that under the programme, over 5 million families are being provided cash grant and this figure will reach to 7 million with the completion of ongoing Poverty Survey. She also briefed the Turkish President about the poverty survey, which is the first of its kind in South Asia.

In addition, these families are being provided life and health insurance, microfinance and technical and vocational training. “With the support of World Bank and DFID, BISP is soon launching a conditional cash transfer to encourage poor families to send their children to school,” informed Madame Farzana Raja.