

“Move Towards Social Protection Floor: Concept to Reality”

Concluding Remarks by the Chairperson, BISP

First of all I would like to thank Planning Commission especially Deputy Chairman Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque for inviting me to chair this very important and informative session on Social Protection Floor

Secondly, I would also like to thank Mr. Markus Ruck and Prof. Ravi Srivastava for sharing with us two very well researched and informative presentations on the conceptual dynamics of the Social Protection Floor and its implications for regions like South Asia.

I am very much in concurrence with the underlying theme of this session suggesting the provision of social protection floors for all, as human right.

Considering the provision of social protection as human right BISP was launched as a means to provide financial assistance to the poorest of the poor adversely affected by the high inflation and the impact of the international economic crisis.

However, we are developing BISP in to a comprehensive social protection net by provision of Monthly Cash Grant, Vocational & Technical Training, Micro Finance for gainful self-employment and Life Insurance for the bread earner of the beneficiary's family.

BISP has, in a short span of time, reached out to more than 4 million families across the country. We are lucky to have the patronage and supervision of the President and continued encouragement and support of the Prime Minister.

BISP has gained enormous support and trust of international donors and financial agencies and that is because of the transparent and efficient nature of its approach and operations.

We also believe that provision of social safety net facilities to each and every deserving citizen of Pakistan is not only morally the right thing to do but it is also the right economic approach.

This is economically right because through this approach we can enable the huge chunk of our population living below the line of poverty (almost 40 %) to start doing something for generation of resources for them and their families.

Lack of resources and skills is the major impediment in the quest for sustenance of the under-privileged segments of our society

By provision of social protection facilities to these sections of our society we can basically make a huge portion of our population economically active.

Realizing this, BISP is not only providing monthly cash grants to its beneficiaries but we are also providing them interest free financial assistance to start any small business of their choice

This initiative is based on the belief that poor have as much right to work and economic facilitation as the rich. This initiative is also a substitute of normal banking practices, which refuses any economic assistance to the poor by labeling them un-creditable

Along with this financial assistance we are also providing them counseling and training to start any viable business. Thus promoting small entrepreneurial activity in the national economy

Besides facilitating this entrepreneurial activity, BISP is also providing demand driven technical and vocational training to the one member of beneficiary's family thus enabling them to start any technical job or small business and become economically self sufficient.

Inflow of technically trained labour force in the domestic market could further improve the quality of production thus benefiting the overall economy of the country

We are also keeping in mind the demands of international market while offering the technical trainings to our beneficiaries.

Export of technically well equipped labour force to the international market could be instrumental in earning foreign exchange, in shape of foreign remittances, for the country.

In the end I would once again thank you all for sharing these very interesting and informative presentations with us.