

# **Seminar on “BISP’s Technology Based Governance for Poverty Alleviation and Women Empowerment”**

## **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

**Assalam - o - Alaikum,**

It is an honor & privilege to welcome you to the Seminar on “*Benazir Income Support Programme’s Technology Based Governance for Poverty Alleviation and Women Empowerment*”.

According to the PPP manifesto and vision of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, the BISP focuses on the vulnerable segment of society,----- it is a social revolution, and a real change for our underprivileged communities.

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 safety net by provision of Health & Accident Insurance, Vocational & Technical Training, Micro Finance for gainful self-employment through the Waseela-e-Haq Programme. Women empowerment is an integral part of the design of the programme, as all benefits to the deserving families are being provided through the woman of the family. Also registration of women with NADRA, particularly in remote areas of the country has picked up as possession of CNIC is a pre-requisite for eligibility under BISP.

BISP has, in a short span of time, reached out to more than 2.6 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

Ladies & Gentlemen, BISP does not aim to foster dependency on handouts. We are promoting a self sufficiency strategy of vocational and technical training for a member of a family.

For microfinance under Waseela-e-Haq – The Right Source - female beneficiaries are randomly selected through computerized balloting, who are then pre-qualified to undergo the verification process as per the poverty scorecard, to be subsequently certified by NADRA. The certified beneficiaries will also be provided counseling and technical assistance in starting a business. A monitoring mechanism is also being devised.

To provide the emergency needs of IDPs as a result of the operation against terrorism in FATA, Swat and Malakand, BISP is providing financial assistance to over three hundred thousand affected families. BISP is also making sure the well being of more than four thousand families affected by the 2008 earthquake in Baluchistan, Victims of Terrorism and Bomb Blasts across the country.

The purpose of gathering here today is to share with the representatives of civil society, media and academia BISP's experience of introducing technology based management systems and adoption of international best practices towards our mission to eradicate poverty and empower

the women of Pakistan. We hope to gain from your insights and suggestions and also try to answer any questions that you may have regarding the Programme.

Technology is considered to be a lever for development. The development of Information Technology (IT) has a wide potential in all aspects of societal development. For developing countries, IT is a useful tool for overall change and economic growth.

It has been proven that Management Information Systems when efficiently and purposefully implemented, can be an important tool for greater efficiency in the provision of public services. Technology has the potential of being a major instrument for achieving “Good Governance”.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With the objective of reaching out to the maximum number of poor people in the shortest possible time, BISP started its mission by seeking the support of the Parliamentarians across the political divide. More than 3.5 million BISP enrollment forms were distributed across the country through the Parliamentarians. However, in order to improve the targeting and make it more objective we decided to reform the targeting system in accordance with international best practices. The Poverty Scorecard is the internationally recognized targeting instrument for identifying beneficiaries for cash grants world over. The Proxy Means Testing method is employed under the system, which has proven to be the most cost effective and reliable method for targeting cash grant programs. Pilot Phase of the Poverty scorecard survey has been completed in 15 districts and the nationwide rollout would inshAllah be launched within the current financial year.

NADRA is our technical partner in developing software and systems for ensuring transparent and objective selection of beneficiaries.

My colleagues will give you an overview of the technical aspects of the methodology. Here, I would like to commend the support and assistance provided by the World Bank and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom in helping BISP develop the design and implementation mechanism of the system.

Initially, we started disbursements through the Pakistan Post Office. However, to make the system more efficient and transparent we are switching to Smart Card and Mobile banking based payment mechanism. The system has already been launched as a pilot in our assistance to the IDPs. The advantages of such a payment mechanism is the system of real time reconciliation and check on leakages.

This technology will not only make the payment system more efficient but also empower the woman who will be issued the smart card and entitled to receive the payment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Here, I would like to convey Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's words and true feelings to our audience i.e. "We are coming back to create the real change in all disturbed lives of Pakistan" Insha Allah we will do our best according to the vision of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and BISP will provide mother-like shelter to the poor section of the society. We are endeavoring to "Change the System" in accordance with the vision of our leadership.

Distinguished guests:

I would humbly like to say that BISP, in a short time has gained the support and universal acceptance not only in Pakistan but across the world.

Our government is committed to provide all possible assistance through this programme to jump start the social sector of Pakistan.