

## **Speech for Ambassador's Dinner**

- Distinguished guests, members of Chinese public sector, business community and corporate sectors, representatives of charity organizations and diplomatic dignitaries, Assalam-o-Allekum and Ni Hou.
- First and foremost I am extremely thankful to all our Chinese and Pakistani friends who have taken time out to be present here. I am equally thankful to Ambassador Masood Khan and all the members of his team specially Mr. Zahoor Ahmed for arranging such a fruitful visit for us and for providing me the opportunity to meet all of you face to face and share my experiences with you and to learn from your experiences.
- I feel specially happy to be in Beijing as we are celebrating the current year as the Pak-China Friendship year. Pakistan and China are not only good neighbors and friends but we are like a family that is why that though it is my first visit to China I am feeling completely at home and Beijing feels like a second home to me.

We had decade's long association and friendship established by our great leaders Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

- In fact the foundations of strong friendship with China were laid by the visionary policies of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. During the period when most Western countries were trying to isolate China, Pakistan took the bold step of being the first non-socialist country to sign a Border Agreement with China in August 1963.
- Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, speaking to the National Assembly as early as 1962, said these historic words that were to become the foundation of Pakistan's policy towards China to this day. He said: **"I should like to make it clear beyond all doubt that we have friendly relations with the People's Republic of China and that nothing will be permitted in any way to endanger those relations. Our relations with China are an independent factor in our foreign policy and not contingent on any other "**.
- Same spirit of friendship was displayed by Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed who even before her assumption of power as

Prime Minister of Pakistan after the 1988 elections announced that her first official visit would be to China. And true to her words, she visited China in February 1989.

- Now its up to us to further consolidate, expand and strengthen the friendship and to transfer to our coming generations a legacy of even closer and stronger bond between both the nations.

Ladies & Gentlemen

- I am standing here not as a Minister of Pakistan or Chairperson of BISP rather as a representative of millions of poor men, women and children of Pakistan who are surviving on less than \$ 2 per day; who cannot arrange the second meal of the day to satisfy the hunger of their children; whose children have never seen the face of a school; and who have neither resources nor access to consult any doctor for the treatment of their ailing children.
- As you would know the great Chinese Leader Chairman Mao Zedong had once said:

**“Our point of departure is to serve the people wholeheartedly and never for a moment divorce ourselves from the masses, to proceed in all cases from the interests of the people and not from one's self-interest or from the interests of a small group, and to identify our responsibility to the people ...”**

- It could be said that present Government of Pakistan has the same manifesto of **‘serving the people wholeheartedly’**. That is why the present Government of Pakistan is making every possible effort to reach and help these unfortunate people; but the volume of misfortune is so big that it is beyond the reach of the Government alone to satisfy even the basic needs of these unfortunate people.
- Developing Pakistan into a welfare state was the dream of the father of the nation Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. This dream became mission of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and her daughter Mohtarma Shaheed Benazir Bhutto. Both sacrificed their lives for the fulfillment of this dream. Now the present government is pursuing this mission with enormous zeal and vigor.

- That is the reason that I am I am here to learn from the Chinese experience in the field of social welfare and social security and for establishing contact which could help us in building long term cooperation and collaboration with the Chinese public as well as corporate sector.

Ladies & Gentlemen

- To protect the poor from the economic shock of food and fuel inflation of 2008, Government of Pakistan established Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP).
- In lines with the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations, BISP is pursuing the mission of poverty alleviation and women empowerment to help the underprivileged of Pakistan.
- BISP has designed and launched various instruments for attaining the objective I just mentioned.
- First of these instruments is the monthly cash grant. BISP provides cash grant worth Rs, 1000 per month (approx. \$ 12) to each beneficiary family. This assistance is provided to woman of the

family through money orders, Benazir Smart Card and Mobile Phone Banking;

- Second, to empower beneficiary to become skilled earning worker who can support himself and his family, BISP offers opportunities of free of cost Vocational and Technical Training to each beneficiary or her nominee;
- Third, to reduce the economic risk of these under privileged families BISP provides insurance cover of Rs. 100,000 (\$1176) for the life of the bread earner of the family;
- Fourth, to ensure their sustenance and to promote self-employment among its beneficiaries, BISP provides interest-free returnable financial assistance upto Rs.300,000/- (about \$ 3530) to almost 1000 randomly selected beneficiaries families every month;
- Moreover, BISP is about to launch two new initiatives. Under first initiative, for the first time in the history of Pakistan, we will provide a health cover of Rs 25000 (around \$ 300) to our beneficiary families.

- Under second initiative financial incentive will be given for the primary enrollment of the millions of school going age children of the BISP beneficiaries.
- As we have a firm belief in the words of Chairman Mao that “ **The people, and the people alone, are the motive force in the making of world history**” so BISP has already disbursed more than \$ 1 Billion among the 5 million poorest of the poor beneficiary families through its multiple interventions.

Ladies & Gentlemen

- I feel enormous pleasure to share with you that transparency and objectivity of BISP operations is considered unprecedented even by multilateral financial institutions and international donors. That is why, institutions like the World Bank, and Asian Development Bank are our major donor and partners.
- BISP supports the families irrespective of their political affiliation, geographical location or religious orientation. The only condition

for being a BISP beneficiary is that one should be a Pakistani and deserving.

- As you would know success of any social safety programme depends on two important factors; first, objective identification of deserving and second, efficient and transparent distribution of the benefits.
- BISP is unique in the sense that it has ensured the objective and scientific identification of the most deserving families. For the first time in South Asia BISP has conducted a poverty census of the entire country. In this survey each and every household, across the country, has been approached by BISP to record their economic conditions. In total we have approached around 25 million households in entire country.
- For efficient and transparent distribution of the benefits, BISP has employed multiple options. Apart from normal benefit delivery through Pakistan Post, BISP has started using Benazir Smart Card, and Mobile Phone banking, again for the first time in history of Pakistan.

- Here I would like to share with you that almost in the entire world facilities like smart card and phone banking is a facility for the rich and well off people. But BISP has provided these services to the most down trodden segments of our society.

Ladies & Gentlemen

- It is alarming that initial reports of the poverty survey suggest that with the completion of this survey in September, 2011 the numbers of BISP beneficiary families would touch 7 million mark. This means BISP will be assisting more than 42 million individuals (almost 25% of the entire population), which will require huge amount of funds for their continued support.
- While ongoing ‘war on terror’ has adversely effected our national economy and is still consuming a considerable portion of our national resources, situation is ripe for breeding even more frustration among the masses making them more vulnerable to extremism.

- Considering this, I have been given this special task by the President of Pakistan, who is also the Chief Patron of the Programme, to identify long term cooperation and collaboration opportunities with the public, private and corporate sector of the world.
- I choose China as my first destination due to the fact that China is our most trust worthy and all weather friend. Pakistan-China relations are close, time tested and unaffected by radical changes in the global political environment.

Ladies & Gentlemen

- I came to China with a hope and believe that our Chinese brothers and sisters would be as warm and as forthcoming towards me as they were towards my leaders. And now at the end of my visit I am very happy that I made the right choice. I am deeply touched by the warm and generous hospitality extended to me and my colleagues by our Chinese host China Cultural Heritage Foundation. I am equally happy with the China Foundation for

Peace and Development for their confidence in BISP. BISP has signed MoUs with both of these organizations for extended cooperation in the vocational training initiative of BISP and for establishing a bilateral cooperation mechanism for the international communication and collaboration between Pakistan and China.

- During this visit I have learnt a lot from the Chinese experience in the social welfare and social security. And for establishing a long term cooperation and coordination in the social development sector of both the countries I have thought of following suggestions:

- I) Possibilities may be further explored for the Chinese corporate sector working all over the world to incorporate labor trained by BISP under its Vocational training Initiative;
- II) As Chinese Health Insurance companies have extensive experience and capacity so possibilities may be explored for their collaboration with BISP in provision of health insurance to BISP beneficiaries;

- III) Pakistani business community in China may organize themselves and may establish a Fund involving corporate sector of China for investing in various initiatives of BISP
- IV) Business community may appoint focal persons who should collaborate and coordinate with Chinese corporate sector and should act as a bridge between BISP and corporate sector of China
- V) Pakistan Embassy in Beijing may also appoint a focal person for following up with the various ministries and organizations on the basis of our discussions with them during this visit. Focal person should also be responsible for coordination between BISP and Chinese public and corporate sector.
- In the end once again i would borrow from the Great Chairman Mao who had said **“Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness. Kindness in giving creates love”**.

- We are trying to CREATE LOVE for that mother who does not know how to make her hungry children sleep.
- We are trying to CREATE LOVE for that helpless father whose ailing child dies in his arms and he cannot bring him to any doctor;
- We are trying to CREATE LOVE for that young girl who has to walk tens of mile daily to provide her family clean drinking water
- We are trying to CREATE LOVE for that child who has never held a pen in his hand and who does not know that a day has three meals.
- I would request all of you to be our partner in this mission.

Thank you very much.