

Address by Chairperson BISP

Honorable President of Pakistan

His Excellency Mr. Gordon Brown, UN Special

Envoy on Global Education

Ministers, Parliamentarians,

Excellencies, Dignitaries, and

Representatives of International Partner

Agencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Asslam-o-Alaikum and Good afternoon to you

all.

I am extremely grateful to the President for gracing the occasion and for his continuing patronage of BISP. I am particularly thankful to His Excellency, Prime Minister Mr Gordon Brown, UN Special Envoy for Global Education for his presence at the launching of the first ever, largest primary education initiative of the country.

I am really honored to welcome you all on the launching ceremony of Waseela-e-Taleem program. The launch of Waseela e Taleem, the Right to Education, is a landmark in the history of the country. This co-responsibility cash transfer program is the first ever and the largest initiative for primary education; it focuses on the children belonging to the most vulnerable and the poorest families.

I take pride in the fact that under the guidance and support of the honorable President, Benazir Income Support Program has evolved as the most comprehensive social safety net in the country. It is making every possible effort for the betterment and uplift of poorest of the poor and weakest segments of society.

Taking this opportunity, I also would like to convey my gratitude to the World Bank and DFID for joining hands with BISP in this initiative which by far is one of the most significant components of BISP aiming at promoting education, empowerment and emancipation of children.

It also gives me a great sense of satisfaction that BISP has been fulfilling the vision of father of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The dream of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Mohtrama Benazir Bhutto to make Pakistan a welfare state is also coming true.

As the father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam

Muhammad Ali Jinnah aptly said;

“Without education it is complete darkness and with education it is light. Education is a matter of life and death to our nation. The world is moving so fast that if you do not educate yourselves, you will be not only completely left behind, but will be finished up.”

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are convinced that all children around the world have the right for education. All children deserve a chance to grow into healthy, educated, and competent people no matter where and when they were born. Along-with the parents, governments also have an important role in tapping the potential of this precious human resource.

Our great leader Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed had the vision and the foresight to seize the importance of children's education. To quote her words;

“For all of us who care for children and for the common bond of humanity that linked us, we dedicate ourselves to building a world where each little child that is born can hope to live without dying through infant mortality, can hope to gain an education, find a home and a career and build a family and community.”

Distinguished Guests

Poverty is a gross violation of Human Rights, as its distressing impact creates disparities, inequalities in society and defeats the purpose of growth. The purpose of development is to reduce poverty, inequality, unemployment and to provide basic needs. We all recognize that poverty and illiteracy have a direct linkage; a poor man would rather send his child to work to earn livelihood than send him to school.

Dear Guests

Pakistan is fighting two wars; First - the Conventional war against terror through our brave armed forces and Second - the unconventional war against poverty through BISP. In fact, BISP has emerged as the vanguard in Pakistan's war against poverty as well as illiteracy. Our objective is to transform Pakistan into a welfare state by promoting social justice, equity in the distribution of

resources and providing every opportunity to the poor to send their children to schools.

Distinguished Guests

BISP is the manifestation of government's resolve to meet the Millennium Development Goals of eradication of extreme poverty, women empowerment and universal primary education by 2015.

BISP's latest initiative, Waseela-e-Taleem, the Right to Education, aims at educating at least 3 million children of the poorest families in 4 years. This is being done by convincing BISP's beneficiary families and providing them incentives of additional cash grants for sending their children to school.

Ladies & Gentlemen

We are mindful of the enormity of the challenge. Out of 60 million children worldwide who are not going to primary schools about 12 million children are in Pakistan. We are aware that it is a long term investment and there will be no quick dividends.

Here I must emphasize that Waseela-e-Taleem will be providing a helping hand to all stakeholders, particularly the provincial governments, in achieving the Millennium Development Goal of primary education for all by the year 2015.

Distinguished guests,

The road ahead is not easy and we are under no illusions about the challenges we face.

The future of our children needs to be secured from the lurking danger of illiteracy and violence. However, in this mission for the future of Pakistan, any failure is not an option.

God bless Pakistan

Thank you.