

**Government of Pakistan
Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division
Press Release**

Dr. Sania Nishtar: ‘Ehsaas Program wishes to draw on existing ‘knowledge and thought partnerships’



July 10, 2019- Islamabad: The Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI) organized a seminar on ‘Poverty Alleviation in Pakistan: Learning from Success Stories’ in the capital. ISSI is an autonomous, research and analyses think tank organization, devoted to provide an in-depth understanding and objective analyses of regional and global strategic issues, affecting international peace and security. The Institute also promotes a broad-based and informed public understanding of vital issues affecting Pakistan and the international community.

Honorable President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi inaugurated the seminar, Dr. Sania Nishtar was the opening speaker and Shafqat Mahmood, Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, was a keynote speaker. The purpose of the seminar was to find ways and means to facilitate policy makers and experts on addressing the issue of poverty through a well-rounded intellectual discourse. The event brought together a core group of experts and officials from philanthropic and government organizations including Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, National Rural Support Program and Akhuwat Foundation.

Speaking at the event, honorable President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi emphasized that all institutions should work together to bring social change and alleviate poverty from the country. He highlighted the importance of poverty alleviation in his speech and gave very touching examples from his personal life on how he engaged with the poor and marginalized communities. He also quoted extensively from Quran about the importance of poverty alleviation and social welfare.

In his keynote speech, Shafqat Mahmood, Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training said that Ehsaas is a collaborative program and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has its own targets under the programmatic framework. He shared that his ministry is working very closely with Special Assistant to the PM on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation. Further, he talked about the importance of skill building, literacy, one curriculum and out of school children as important end points under Ehsaas.

Following the welcome note by DG ISSI, Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation in her opening remarks on the occasion said that social protection and poverty alleviation is the foremost priority of the Prime Minister and therefore, Ehsaas program is a well-timed step in Pakistan's quest for alleviating poverty. In order to expedite the implementation of Ehsaas, the Prime Minister is driving the program himself. This social safety and poverty alleviation program will help steer prosperity for the marginalized and deprived segments of Pakistani society, she added.

Further she shared that 'knowledge and thought partnerships' are very crucial for results-based implementation of Ehsaas framework and that there is no need to reinvent the wheel when the capacity already exists within the government and state system. Hence, Ehsaas wishes to draw on these prevailing knowledge competences, she said. Further, appreciating the work of ISSI, she added that ISSI has broadened its mandate by including dimensions of human security and traditional security paradigm and it is an extremely important decision. And, human security, poverty alleviation, social security, social protection, safety nets have shared agendas. She said that Ehsaas program looks forward to exploring ways of collaborating with ISSI especially in its capacity as the convener of civil society think tanks in Pakistan.