

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

**Dr. Nishtar inaugurates PPAF's International Conference on Research and Learning- 'Beyond Action, Towards Transformation'**



October 30, 2019- Islamabad: Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) held the 3rd International Conference on Research and Learning 'Beyond Action, Towards Transformation' today in Islamabad. The conference focused on developing further dimensions in knowledge and assessed how PPAF's interventions for the poor have led to transforming lives and communities. Research scholars, national and international speakers, representatives from Government of Pakistan, academia, donor agencies, civil society, media, PPAF partner organizations and community members attended the conference.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Dr. Sania Nishtar was a keynote speaker at the inaugural session of the conference. Addressing the audience on the occasion, she said, "I would like to congratulate PPAF on putting together the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Research and Learning which shall help us all in navigating the impact of the Graduation Program on a national scale. Through the Poverty Graduation Program we aim to make the beneficiaries independent and self-reliant by providing the vulnerable segments of society with livelihoods and social protection. The government in the battle for greater social and economic equality is constantly striving towards this goal and aims to enhance the process of transformation. Under the ambit of Ehsaas we envision to empower millions across Pakistan by laying greater emphasis on asset transfer."

CEO PPAF, Qazi Azmat Isa, shared his thoughts and said, “The 3rd International conference on Research and Learning is a reaffirmation of our commitment towards enabling the poorest of poor. Through our Poverty Graduation Initiative we aim to provide opportunities and support households for economic stability.”

Other notable speakers included Hubert Boirard, Country Programme Manager, Pakistan, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Dr Imran Rasul, Professor of Economics at University College London, Mr Ijaz Nabi, Mr Rehan Rafay Jamil, Ms. Ruven Menikdiwela, Country Representative for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Pakistan and many others.

The key objective of the two-day international conference is to learn from both successes and failures of various projects while showcasing the diverse work of PPAF and its partner organizations. It allowed participants to examine issues in both a comparative and global context, with the ultimate aim of not only enhancing knowledge but also facilitating transformation in and across the development sector. Another important goal was to create prolific opportunities for further collaboration between various institutes, giving way to productive and extensive research work and eventually translating into more apt and sustainable policies and actions.

Day one of the conference focused on the impact of the poverty graduation program with Dr Imran Rasul presenting key findings on Asset vs Cash transfer as sustainable option for ultra-poor. He said, “Structural inequalities and macro-economic trends impact strongly on poverty, in order to move people out of the cycle of poverty and induct them into cycle of prosperity it is imperative for them to be financially independent, asset building is a key step towards this approach.”

It was further discussed how graduation approach could extend to supporting the rural ecosystem by creating opportunities for households to link up to value chains and local markets. The first day featured panellists both from the academia and industry including Dr. Hadia Majid, Assistant Professor of Economics, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Mr. Qaim Shah, Development Sector Specialist, Dr. Farrukh Iqbal, Executive Director, Institute of Business Administration, Mr. Marcel Stallen, Chief Technical Advisor/Project Manager, Food and Agricultural Organisation and Ms. Mehr Shah, Director Knowledge Management and Communications, Karandaaz, Founder and Mr Yasir Asfaque, CEO Pakistan Microfinance Investment Company.

This is the third consecutive International Conference on Research and Learning organized by Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund-PPAF. The conference is a reflection of PPAF’s long-standing commitment to innovation and sustainability in its approach, ideas, and methodologies by bridging the gap between the development world and that of research. By sharing the results of all the ongoing and completed research studies, PPAF enriched the existing literature on development work within the country.