

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

**Dr. Nishtar inaugurates WB's Second Human Capital Summit in Islamabad**



February 20, 2020- Islamabad: At Pakistan's Second Human Capital Summit held today in Islamabad, participants highlighted the need to invest in girls' education and women's economic empowerment as crucial to Pakistan's sustained growth.

While last year's Human Capital Summit focused on policymaking, the Second Human Capital Summit engaged practitioners, learning from insights on the ground in Pakistan. Building upon the 'Girls Learn, Women Earn' initiative launched in December 2019, the Summit – co-hosted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and World Bank Pakistan – marked the progress being made in Pakistan in efforts to enable girls to excel in school, and women to thrive in the workplace.

The conference was opened with remarks from Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety to the Prime Minister, and Dr. Shinichi Kitaoka, the President of JICA.

“Government of Pakistan's Ehsaas program has a very serious intent to drive forward the agenda of women empowerment. Ehsaas stringently follows fifty percent rule across the board for women inclusion in all Ehsaas initiatives including interest free loans, scholarships

and asset transfers”, said Dr. Sania Nishtar. “Likewise, Kafaalat that has recently been launched by the Prime Minister will ensure financial and digital inclusion of 7 million disadvantaged women across Pakistan who will now benefit from the monthly stipend of Rs. 2,000 along with access to bank accounts and affordable smart phones.”

Dr. Kitaoka emphasized on the importance of investment in Human Capital. “Investments in Human Capital, such as education, health and nutrition, are inevitable for building a progressive foundation for Human Security,” said Dr. Shinichi Kitaoka.

The challenges and constraints of the education system in Pakistan to promote girls learning were discussed by the panels. Poverty, distance from home to schools, and parental perception of schools’ safety were noted as three of the main determinants of school attendance for girls. In the ‘Girls Learn’ panel, it was highlighted that young girls in rural areas are the least likely to have full access to education and the gender gap in enrolment is a persistent issue across education levels. In order to tackle these challenges, panelists showcased Accelerated Learning Program which provides overaged out of school children with learning opportunities for their Human Capital development as a good practice from within Pakistan. “Every additional year of schooling for a girl increases her future earnings by up to 10%,” said Illango Patchamuthu, World Bank Country Director for Pakistan.

Another panel on ‘Women Earn’ emphasized the potential for women’s access to finance and affordable, safer transport as two key areas that can unlock women’s participation in the economy. Current research shows that only 11 percent of women in Pakistan utilize banking services, and Pakistani women are four times less mobile than men.

Representatives from the government, academia, development organizations, commercial banks, telecom industry, startup ecosystem, fashion industry, civil society and media also participated in the Summit.