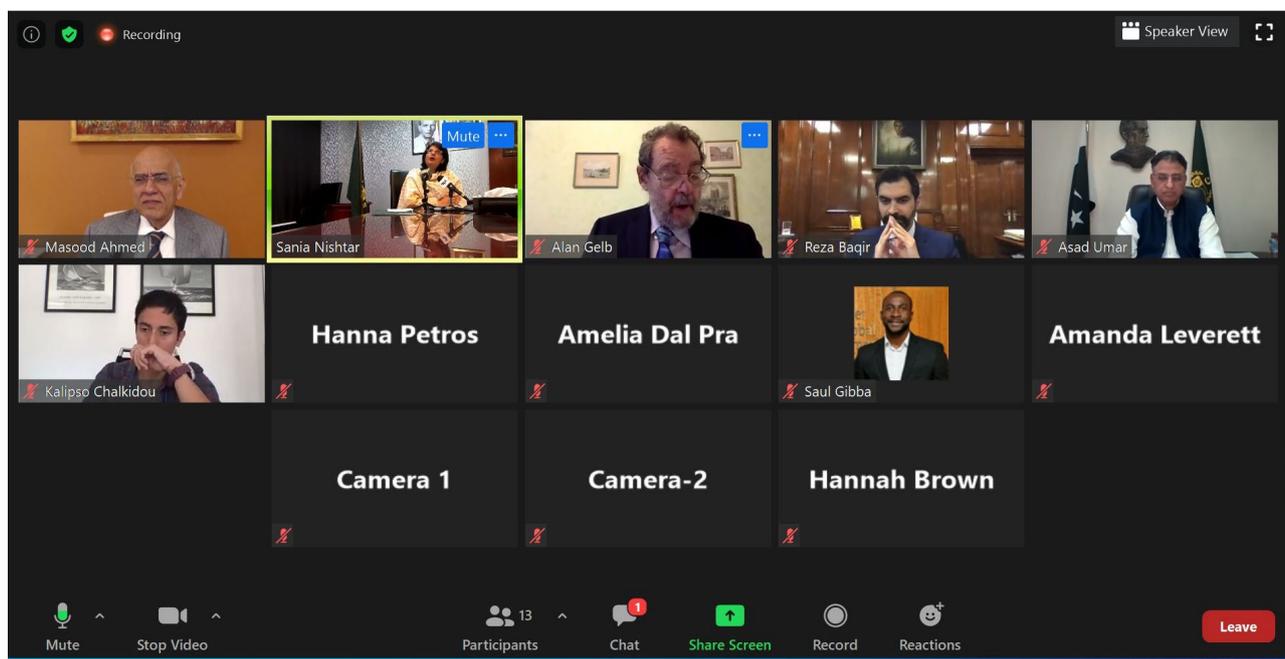


Government of Pakistan
Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division
Press Release

Pakistan's COVID-19 response globally lauded at high-level CGD event



September 22, 2020: A high-level global thinktank, Center for Global Development, hosted an international forum, 'Coping with COVID-19: The Pakistan Experience' today that brought together Asad Umar, Federal Minister for Planning, Development, Reforms and Special Initiatives, Special Assistant to the PM on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation, Dr. Sania Nishtar and Dr. Reza Baqir, Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan to exhibit the success of the Pakistan's smart lockdown strategy and Corona relief package tackling COVID-19 restrictions.

In the high-level panel discussion, the three panellists were virtually joined by two international experts, Dr. Kalipso Chalkidou from Global Health team at CGD and Dr. Alan Gelb who leads a workstream on the use of digital ID systems for safety nets in Pakistan and other countries. To foster local participation and engagement at the event, the CGD joined hands with CDPR, the Pakistani economic research consortium.

Positioned in Washington D.C. and London, CDG extends worldwide advisory support capitalized on policy and research to alleviate global poverty and make better lives. International experts highly lauded Pakistan's whole of the government approach to address the socio-economic damage induced by the Coronavirus. They acknowledged Pakistan's efforts to control the spread of the virus and its economic consequences that led to better outcomes than most other countries.

Federal Minister for Planning Asad Umar highlighted the overall government of Pakistan's response to COVID-19 crisis. He shared smart lockdown strategy of the government that brought Pakistan into the list of ranked countries in the world who successfully confronted COVID-19. He attributed this success to the well-coordinated decisions taken in a timely manner with consensus.

Sharing Ehsaas Emergency Cash experience, SAPM Dr. Nishtar said, "To mitigate the socioeconomic damage from the pandemic, the government of Pakistan launched Ehsaas

Emergency Cash, the largest social-protection programme in the country's history. Rolled out 10 days after the lockdown began, it is delivering one-time cash grants totalling more than \$1.2 billion to 15 million households, covering approximately 50% of the country's population. Recipient families are given 12,000 rupees (US\$75) to cover immediate subsistence needs.”

Continuing, she said, “The Ehsaas Emergency Cash programme's end-to-end digital approach, with transparency hard-wired into its design, offers lessons about how to use personal identification systems. Phones, internet connectivity and national IDs, and a digital, demand-based social-protection system were combined to reach out to the deserving at a national scale. The legacy of programme goes beyond short-term relief. Built into its design are long-term goals to strengthen the safety net and increase financial inclusion, both of which will bring lasting benefits to recipients and to Pakistan as a whole.”

Discussing the overall macroeconomic impact in the context of COVID-19, Governor State Bank of Pakistan shared policies of the government to support economic activity amid COVID-19 that helped contain the huge damage that could have been caused otherwise.