

Government of Pakistan
Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division
Brief

Pakistan National Nutrition Coordination Council

On October 5, 2020 Prime Minister Imran Khan chaired the meeting of Pakistan National Nutrition Coordination Council (PNNCC). Prime Minister in his first speech to the nation held up the MRI of a stunted child and highlighted the key issue of malnutrition and committed to addressing the issue. Since then, efforts have been ongoing to deliver programs to address stunting. The recently launched Ehsaas Nashonuma is a conditional cash transfer program aimed at tackling stunting among children under two years of age, along with pregnant and lactating mothers. In the first phase, 35 Ehsaas Nashonuma Centers have been opened across 9 districts of Pakistan.

There was no serious effort made in the past to address the serious issue of stunting and this area remained unaddressed which caused more than 40% stunting in children. That is why the federal government of Pakistan has institutionalized the inter-ministerial PNNCC, chaired by the Prime Minister Imran Khan and there are 8 Cabinet Ministers in the Council. This is the first time in the history of Pakistan that the inter-ministerial PNNCC has been created to steer nutrition specific agenda in the country.

Dr. Sania Nishtar SAPM on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation is the Vice-Chair and hosts the secretariat of the Council. Other Cabinet Members in the Council are: Syed Fakhar Imam Minister for National Food Security and Research, Asad Umar Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Dr. Fehmida Mirza Minister for Inter-provincial Coordination, Shafqat Mehmood Minister for Education and Professional Training, Abdul Razak Dawood Advisor to the PM on Commerce and Investment, Abdul Hafeez Shaikh Advisor to the PM on Finance and Revenue, Malik Amin Aslam Khan Advisor to the PM on Climate Change, Dr. Faisal Sultan SAPM on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Chief Secretaries of all four provinces, GB and AJK, Federal Secretaries and experts from UNICEF and SUN.

PNNCC is country's coordination body at federal level on nutrition and all allied matters. Building synergies to support Ehsaas program, the Council has been assigned the mandate to lead National Nutrition Policy and specific strategies and to ensure cross-country, cross-ministerial, inter-sectoral and inter-provincial collaboration for prevention of stunting and malnutrition among children. Alongside that, the Council will meet at least once every six months and periodically review progress made by all stakeholders.

The role of the Council is very important in Pakistan's federal system where nutrition is a decentralized subject and a provincial responsibility. The issue of nutrition is multifactorial with an interplay of agriculture and food systems, health and hygiene, poverty, inadequate dietary intake and household environment. Hence, it is truly multisectoral and the need for federal stewardship is very important and therefore, the role of this Council is critical.

The role of federal government is to coordinate high-level policy but not to micromanage. And, there is a good inter-ministerial coordination between Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division, Ministry for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives and Ministry for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination. The foremost and primary objective is to deliver on this endpoint. The second role of the federal government is to provide the visibility of nutrition specific data and information and to that end, 'Nutrition Dashboard' is being released. Nutrition dashboard has been developed under the umbrella of Ehsaas to analyse and track data of nutrition programs and take corrective actions, as and when required. The third major role of the Council is to steer special programs and we are doing Ehsaas Nashonuma, the conditional cash transfer program centred on Nutrition.