

Government of Pakistan
Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division
Press Release

Sania presents post COVID-19 Ehsaas strategy at an Asian intergovernmental event

October 14, 2020: Today, SAPM Dr. Sania Nishtar addressed the webinar, How can we reduce inequalities in later life as societies aged? co-organized by Asian Development Bank, HelpAge International and ESCAP. The largest regional intergovernmental platform with 53 Member States and 9 associate members, ESCAP has emerged as a strong regional think-tank offering countries sound analytical products that shed insight into the evolving economic, social and environmental dynamics of the region.

The objective of the webinar, taking Asia's population ageing into consideration, was to strengthen clarity and consensus about the priority steps governments can take to reduce inequality among older people in two dimensions: healthy longevity and income security.

Alongside the presentation by Dr. David E. Bloom, Professor of Economics and Demography, Harvard University from Harvard University, SAPM Dr. Sania Nishtar was joined by Dr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Senior Advisor at the Khazanah Research Institute, Malaysia. The panel discussion was a true highlight of the webinar with practical national and sub-national level experience and global perspectives.

Bringing post COVID-19 Ehsaas perspective to the table, SAPM Dr. Nishtar shared steps being taken by the government of Pakistan to address the needs of the elderly during the COVID-19 crisis more broadly as part of social protection under Ehsaas.

The webinar was attended by the national governments in Asia, including representatives from ministries responsible for social affairs and welfare, health, education, labour and human resources development, local governments, home affairs, as well as other concerned ministries; other civil society organisations, as well as private sector entities with experience in working with older persons, and academics and research institutions engaged in generating data and research on the situation of older people and in influencing policy makers.

The focus of the discussion was on public policies and systems – that is, the role of governments. The post-pandemic period presents an opportunity to conceptualise how “building back better” focusing on middle-income countries in Asia, though as appropriate drawing on lessons from high-income countries and suggesting future directions for low-income countries.