

Government of Pakistan
Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division
Press Release

The Ehsaas Labour Expert Group meets for the 8th time in three months



July 25, 2019 – Islamabad: Under the framework of the overarching Ehsaas program, the planning for many social protection and poverty alleviation initiatives is under way and several of them are on the way to implementation. Among these Ehsaas initiatives, the Labour Expert Group was constituted three months ago. As part of its first charge and marching orders, the expert group was given a mandate to develop recommendations to bring informal workers in social safety nets.

In its initial couple of meetings, the experts of the group came to the conclusion that in order to accrue welfare to informal workers, their registration is the first step because registration will then open the door for their inclusion in labour safety nets e.g. Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI), Workers Welfare Fund (WWF) and Employees Social Security Institution (ESSI).

The group has met eight times and has put together an unprecedented effort as it is quite unique for committees and groups to meet this frequently. The following are the regular members of the group and have come to the table on these eight occasions. The membership includes Mr. Zahoor Awan, Secretary General of the Pakistan Workers Federation, Daud Abdullah, Iftikhar Ahmed, Competitive Labour Law specialist, Shaukat Ali Khan, Director Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Waqar Hasan, Director Labour Islamabad Capital Territory, Ingrid Christensen, Country Director International Labour Organization along with Rabia Razzaque from ILO, Dr. Aliya Khan, Member EAC, Dr. Lubna Shahnaz, Member PRIDE, Majyd Aziz, President Employer's Federation Pakistan, Raja Faizue, Consultant, Provincial Director Labour Punjab, Provincial Director Labour KP, and Ms. Shaista Sohail, Secretary Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety Division along with other staff.

During the consultative meetings all stakeholders have been giving detailed input. At the last consultative meeting this week, Mr. Zahoor Awan, Secretary General of the Pakistan Workers Federation gave a comprehensive presentation on the current status and social safety needs of workers employed in informal sector. He divided the informal workers into several categories namely agriculture, construction, mining, brick kilns, private transport, hawkers, domestic workers, cobblers, private security guards, seasonal workers, artisans, street children and employees working in workshop and auto mobile industry. His presentation brought compelling evidence on the table about marginalization that informal workers suffer from. He drew attention on the pressing need of the hour for the welfare and social safety of informal workers particularly their health cover and pension.

With this presentation, the phase of presentations by experts of Labour Expert Group has been concluded. At the conclusion, Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation constituted a writing committee to furnish a report on urgent basis so that practical steps can be taken to commence registration of informal workers.