

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

Dr. Sania Nishtar visits PPAF to discuss Ehsaas' poverty reduction plan



July 19, 2019, Islamabad: As the present government's fight against poverty picks pace, Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation had detailed deliberations with the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund's senior team at the latter's offices to discuss its plan of action in reducing poverty under the Government of Pakistan's flagship Ehsaas Programme. Qazi Azmat Isa, PPAF Chief Executive Officer, Captain (R) Asadullah Khan, Additional Secretary, Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety Division - PASSD, Amir Naeem, PPAF's Senior Group Head, Financial Management and Corporate Affairs and Samia Liaquat Ali Khan, PPAF's Senior Group Head, Graduation Group & Programme Director, National Poverty Graduation Programme were also present.

The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) is the lead implementing agency for the government's National Poverty Graduation Initiative - NPGI, launched two weeks earlier by the Prime Minister, under "Ehsaas Programme; and NPGI is an important component of Pillar II of Ehsaas. The programme aims to provide the vulnerable segments of society livelihoods and social protection.

At the meeting, an overview of PPAF's initiatives and growth over a period of past twenty years was given, including its mission, vision, and strategic trajectory. PPAF's values in line with its work towards relief of the poor and the vulnerable, its programming network and elements of output, were also discussed. The institution's work in the microfinance sector's development, strategic pillars, innovation, compliance, inclusion and diversity programmes, and its impact as it eliminates poverty throughout the country were also key elements of discussions.

Dr. Sania Nishtar lauded PPAF's impact in bringing social and economic change to hundreds of thousands of communities across the country and discussed its collaborative efforts with the government in the battle for greater social and economic equality in the country. She said that PPAF is the lead institution in the country that is laying the foundation for stable social safety nets and livelihoods among the poor and vulnerable on a large-scale.

With its work on interest-free loans, PPAF is the lead implementer of the government's interest-free loans programme under the newly launched Interest Free Loan Programme, whose financial outlay is Rs. 5 billion. With the launch of "Ehsaas Interest Free Loans", PPAF already started disbursing 80,000 loans every month. The "National Poverty Graduation Initiative - NPGI" will provide relief to the masses through interest-free loans, vocational and skills trainings, and asset transfers. Interest-free loans come with easy and simple eligibility criteria for people to build their own businesses.

Dr. Sania said she was hopeful and confident about the social safety sector's development. One especially with PPAF's expertise and work with interest-free loans programme. The interest free loans, worth Rs. 5 billion, will be called '*Ehsaas bila sood karzay*'. The Special Assistant also appreciated Management Information system of PPAF that will be available to people to make them informed for taking better decisions as they avail the government's social safety initiatives. She also expressed confidence that efforts to pull the poorest out of poverty and towards prosperity will be achieved with the collaboration with other social safety institutions.