

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

FAO and Ehsaas explore options to drive forward the progressive agriculture and nutrition agenda



February 15, 2020 - Islamabad: Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation, welcomed the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Mr. Qu Dongyu, and his delegation to Ehsaas Secretariat to explore collaborations for Ehsaas, the Prime Minister's flagship poverty alleviation programme. This was Mr. Dongyu's first official visit to any country in Asia. The meeting discussed avenues of cooperation to drive forward the progressive agriculture and nutrition agenda and working closely to deliver to the small farmers and disadvantaged people in rural areas of Pakistan.

Poverty in Pakistan is closely linked to agriculture as our country is being faced with several agricultural issues predominantly small landholdings, subsistence farming and exploitation by extractive middlemen and monopolies which are major contributors to poverty. Hence, Ehsaas has been designed to promote equalities, which amongst other things stands on Jobs and Livelihoods of which agriculture is a core element.

In her opening statement, Dr. Nishtar stated, 'This is an opportune time that FAO has come to the table with Ehsaas. The Government realizes that in our agriculture-based economy, tackling agriculture is fundamental to poverty reduction since the sector employs 43.5% of labour force and contributes to around 21% of our GDP.' Adding further, she said, 'With the convening of 'Ehsaas Development Partners' Forum', 'Ehsaas Rural Value Chain Building Committee' and 'Pakistan National Nutrition Coordination Council', Ehsaas is fully determined to change the landscape of poverty in the country through a multisectoral approach by capitalizing on FAO's technical expertise and strategic advice in a well-coordinated manner across agriculture, food and nutrition.'

Acknowledging the multisectoral construct of Ehsaas, Mr. Dongyu said, 'FAO looks forward to partner with the Ehsaas particularly in endeavours around food security and agriculture development to support vulnerable farmers and is excited to explore new collaborations on the road ahead'. He then continued, 'In line with Ehsaas vision, FAO will extend technical assistance in food and agriculture to benefit the vulnerable and small farmers. FAO and Ehsaas can together help communities reach their full potential by tackling the social and agricultural determinants of poverty, through sustainable agriculture, food and nutrition programmes.'

The FAO is part of Ehsaas Value Chain Building Committee, which comprises of diverse stakeholders exploring how to most effectively shape a value chain building policy to address challenges faced by farmers in rural areas of Pakistan. The FAO is also a member of Ehsaas Development Partnership Group, which provides integrated, coherent and aligned technical support to the Government of Pakistan for the implementation of Ehsaas strategy.

In 2018, FAO launched its five-year Country Programming Framework (CPF) in Pakistan, underscoring three high-priority development collaborations, including zero hunger, climate smart resilient agriculture and sustainable ecosystems, and inclusive and efficient agriculture and food systems.