

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

**Declaration of the Corporate Coalition for Viral Hepatitis Elimination in Pakistan**



Islamabad – July 17, 2019: Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation was a keynote speaker at the launching ceremony of the initiative ‘Corporate Coalition for Viral Hepatitis Elimination Pakistan’. Dr. Allah Bakhsh Malik, Secretary Health, Clifford M. Samuel, Senior Vice President, Access Operations and Emerging Markets, Gilead Sciences, Damian P. Halloran, Vice President Infectious Disease Emerging Markets, Abbott Rapid Diagnostics and Osman Khalid Waheed, CEO Ferozsons Laboratories Limited were also present at the occasion.

In her address, Dr. Nishtar stated that within the government system, I am responsible for Prime Minister’s flagship program on social protection and poverty alleviation, ‘Ehsaas’. This is first whole of government program in which implementation of 115 policy actions will be the responsibility of 28 federal ministries, agencies and divisions. The strategy of Ehsaas will be soon in public domain for soliciting comments and feedback. Following it, a commitment program to support Ehsaas targets implementation will be up and running with the private sector’.

Talking about the launch, she added that we hope to eliminate viral hepatitis in Pakistan by promoting public private collaborations. It is important area for us to focus on, as this disease disproportionately inflicts the poor and marginalized who usually suffer at the hands of bad health systems and practices. For all these reasons, the public health goal of viral hepatitis elimination and the launch of this coalition to support this cause is extremely opportune. It is indeed, a very pragmatic step by the industry and stakeholders. There is a need that we understand that elimination of viral Hepatitis on a national scale requires public awareness and appropriate prevention strategies to tackle the epidemic.

The keynote address ended with the signing of a declaration by some Pakistan's most important private sector employers in a joint commitment to the cause of hepatitis elimination in Pakistan by 2030 in line with commitment made at the World Health Assembly in 2016.

The ceremony brought together managements representatives of the companies including Abbott, PepsiCo, Coca Cola, Nestle, Engro Corporation, Engro Foods, Sapphire Group, Servis, Packages, Fatima Fertilizers, Atlas Honda Pakistan, Habib Bank Limited, Jazz, Descon Engineering, Gilead Sciences, Ferozsons Laboratories. Being the socially responsible corporations operating in Pakistan, these companies are the founding members of the coalition. They pledged to support activities for public awareness and education against viral hepatitis in the country. Pakistan is a signatory to the World Health Assembly 's resolution to eliminate viral hepatitis as public health threat by 2030.

Viral hepatitis impacts an estimated 5% of the population, places a significant burden on the country's economy and constitutes major threat to the quality of life of its citizens. Medicines are now available that can cure Hepatitis C in over 95% of patients and highly effective vaccinations and treatments are available for Hepatitis B, enabling the worldwide elimination of viral hepatitis. There is a need for the private sector to play its role in supporting Pakistan to the Sustainable Development Goal of eliminating viral Hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.

In addition to Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation, Dr. Nishtar, is best known for her bold and transformational leadership in health. She currently co-chairs the WHO High Level Global Commission on non-communicable diseases along with President of Uruguay; President of Sri Lanka; President of Finland; and Minister of Healthcare of the Russian Federation.