

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

Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal and PPAF sign MoU to exploit synergy within Ehsaas for women empowerment



October 19, 2019- Islamabad: Under overarching Ehsaas framework, two of the executing agencies of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division (PASSD)- Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) and Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), signed an MoU here in Islamabad to capitalize on impactful synergies. This partnership based on collaboration and leveraging is primarily aimed at women's economic empowerment and their uplifting in society. As part of the MoU- 25,000 women trained by Women Empowerment Centres (WECs) of PBM will be provided with interest free loans by PPAF, enabling them to become economically sustainable.

Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation and Shaista Sohail, Secretary Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division witnessed the signing ceremony as Aon Abbas Bappi, Managing Director, PBM and Qazi Azmat Isa, CEO, PPAF inked the MoU.

Speaking at the occasion, Dr. Nishtar termed the new collaboration within Ehsaas, as a great initiative and hoped that it will benefit deserving women to graduate out of poverty. She

further stated, 'all organizations under PASSD involved in Ehsaas implementation are given roles that are mutually reinforcing to maximize cross organizational synergies. BISP is being mandated to run cash transfers, PBM's role is to be responsible for demand side social protection whereas the PPAF has the responsibility for poverty graduation'.

Secretary PASSD urged PBM and PPAF to work in close collaboration to help PBM's women beneficiaries in acquiring demand driven skills and creating linkages between skilled women and interest free loans.

While paying tribute to the working women, Managing Director PBM said that women of Pakistan have really come forward and proven their worth in all walks of life. He said that PBM is taking tangible measures for the promotion and protection of women rights by accommodating them in the fields of healthcare, education, economy, rehabilitation and self-reliance with its 160 WECs throughout the country. Managing Director PBM also expressed his enthusiasm for the expansion of WECs in order to accommodate the maximum number of poor women across Pakistan.

CEO PPAF, Qazi Azmat expressed hope that this MoU will provide a strong framework for leveraging strengths between PBM and PPAF and advancing socio-economic transformation in lives of poor women. 'After being provided with the interest free loan, these women will also be given technical support for setting up their own enterprises', he added.

The key focus of Ehsaas is on closing the gender gap and women empowerment. Ehsaas seeks to link to existing and emerging livelihoods and community level programmes in ways that promote diverse income opportunities and enhance women's control of resources in the household.