

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

The Ehsaas Labour Expert Group's recommendations report in the pipeline



December 10, 2019 – Islamabad: The Ehsaas Labour Expert Group (LEG) in its tenth meeting today afforded the opportunity for all stakeholders to sit together, around one table, and flesh out avenues for ensuring that every worker in Pakistan whether they work in the formal or informal economy is provided the protection and minimum standard of living, as pledged by the Constitution of Pakistan. The expert deliberations were held around the key findings of draft report furnished by the LEG for extension of social protection services to the informal labor sector in the first phase of its working.

Under the Ehsaas framework, the LEG had been mandated with a unique opportunity to draw together federal government departments, provincial governments, international development partners, researchers, the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labour rights groups, and representatives of workers and employers from across Pakistan for expert deliberations on the draft report furnished by a writing committee of LEG so that practical steps can be taken to commence registration of informal workers. It was agreed that the draft report of LEG will be disseminated to the provinces for inputs before it is released in the public domain next month.

The LEG is highly concerned that the overwhelming majority of workers in Pakistan's informal sector, as well as in the agricultural sector, do not have any social security coverage. As a first step towards providing social security coverage for every worker under the 'Mazdoor ka Ehsaas' programme, the Expert Group has presented its recommendations that the Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division and OP&HRD devise a mechanism to register the informal workers and open their bank accounts to ensure minimum wage rate.

During the course of nine meetings held in 3 months, representatives of provincial government departments and stakeholders presented progress achieved in their provinces, with a total of 15 presentations delivered during the Expert Group meetings. The Expert Group is co-chaired by the Secretaries of the Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division (PASSD) and Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Division (OP&HRD).

Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation concluded, “Ehsaas believes in dignity of labour and has undertaken a holistic plan for the welfare and well-being of the workers and their families, including domestic workers”. She appreciated the work of the LEG and reiterated that preliminary findings will help to address elite capture on the one hand and will help to formalize the informal sector on the other.

The Ehsaas Programme is Pakistan’s largest ever social protection and poverty alleviation initiative. ‘Mazdoor ka Ehsaas’, literally “compassion for workers”, is about reducing inequality and investing in people.