

Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination

Press Release

Social Protection Through Health Insurance Landmark achievement of Present Government

Islamabad, 06th December 2017: Federal Minister for National Health Services Saira Afzal Tarar said Pakistan is fully committed to achieving the health-related Sustainable Development Goals. Pakistan adopted SDGs in February 2016 through a parliamentary resolution that was passed unanimously. Pakistan's National Health Vision 2016-2025 is fully aligned and in synchrony with the Sustainable Development Goals. While she said this addressing 8th Annual Public Health Conference today in Islamabad.

Minister said that Pakistan is fighting the final battle against Polio after major achievements by our country, winning appreciation of the international community. There has been an increase in coverage of children vaccinated under Expanded Program on Immunization by 15-20 percent. Vaccine Logistics Management Information System VLMIS has been introduced. The entire supply and storage system has been certified by ISO in accordance with international best practices and appreciated by GAVI as a model to be replicated. We are working to optimize the use of antimicrobial medicines in health sector, agriculture and animal health sector through implementation of a multi-pronged strategy in line with our national AMR policy.

Minister said Pakistan's Joint External Evaluation of International Health Regulations and Global Health Security Agenda have won appreciation from global health community and are being seen as a model for others to follow. For the first time in Pakistan, we introduced a comprehensive and futuristic Drug Pricing Policy which will eliminate all discretionary powers and also allowing for reduction in drugs prices. Pakistan is fully committed to implement the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) with specific reference to SDGs by taking legislative, administrative and coordination measures to implement FCTC provisions.

She said Achieving universal health coverage ranges high among internationally and nationally agreed objectives. One of the biggest achievements of this government in the realm of universal health coverage and social health protection is by launching the landmark National Health Insurance initiative in 2015 by our leader and former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. Prime Minister's National Health Program is a social protection initiative in Pakistan providing financial protection to families against Out of Pocket Expenditure especially catastrophic health expenditures. A program for the provision of free of cost health insurance to 3.1 million families in 40 districts living below poverty line of US \$ 2 per day to access cashless health care services package of 0.3 million rupees per family per year available in both public and private sector through a health card issued by a highly transparent mechanism. Thousands of poor patients have benefitted from the treatment facilities including deliveries, cardiac

surgeries, cancer and other major diseases in the best private and government hospitals in their districts, without spending a single rupee.

After the success of phase 1 the government is going to launch the phase 2 of this program in order to expand this safety net. We are committed to expand this program till every poor citizen of this country is covered under the PMNHP.

Minister said Our Government accords the highest priority to health which is a clear reflection of our political manifesto. In order to be a prosperous and to create a socially equitable future, social health protection and insurance programmes can lead to achieve universal health coverage in near future. I am thankful to Provincial Health Ministers and Departments for their commitment and all out support to health sector interventions without letting political differences come in the way