

## **THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH ON OCCASION OF DISTRIBUTION OF LONG LASTING IMPREGNATED NETS FOR MALARIA TO THE PROVINCES**

Federal Minister for Health, Makhdoom Shahabuddin,  
Federal Secretary Health, Khushnood Akhtar Lashari,  
Provincial Chief Secretaries,  
Friends from the International Agencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Assalam-o-Alaikum

I am glad to be with you this evening for a noble cause of protecting the people from the deadly disease of Malaria by providing them with bed nets. The recent floods have wreaked havoc across all the four provinces, including Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gigit-Baltistan.

Such is the all-encompassing nature of devastation that the raging waters decimated whatever came its way. Health services also happened to be worst hit by the floods with hundreds of basic health units washed away.

What actually compounded the health problem was the fear of outbreak of epidemics and diseases in the flood affected areas. In order to cope with this challenge proactively, the government took emergency measures.

Health Coordination Hubs have been set up, and a Disease Early Warning System is serviced by a total of 479 fixed health centers and 544 mobile outreach camps in the affected areas. In addition 33,222 Lady Health Workers were also engaged in flood relief activities in 57 districts of the country.

We are determined to undertake the important task of rebuilding Pakistan's flood-battered healthcare system which is a mammoth task, requiring billions of rupees to repair and rebuild health infrastructure. The extent of damage can be measured from the fact that 236 health facilities such as basic health units, dispensaries and hospitals were damaged while around 200 have been destroyed in the flood-hit areas.

Considering the magnitude of the disaster, this gigantic task cannot be achieved alone and the international community should play its part to help Pakistan get its healthcare system back on its feet.

The Government has commenced the distribution of Watan Cards to the flood affected families, entitling each family to a Rs. 20,000/- relief payment in the first phase. The remaining 80,000 rupees would be paid accordingly. Eligible people are being registered by the National Database Registration Authority (NADRA).

The government has set up National Oversight Disaster Management Council (NODMC) with representation of all the federating units to oversee the rehabilitation process and ensure transparent utilization of money.

The international community had predicted that while the first wave of deaths had come instantly as the flood water struck, the next wave, they predicted, would hit in after a month or so from diseases and epidemics.

While the outbreak of epidemics has been checked to a large extent through timely intervention by the government, the current situation can lead to the breeding of disease vectors of malaria. It calls for a timely action on the part of all stakeholders to cope with the challenge.

Let me tell you that the government is fully alive to the situation and today's gathering organized for the distribution of long-lasting impregnated nets for Malaria among the provinces is the reflection of its resolve to do everything possible for the rehabilitation of the flood affectees.

As the flood water recedes, the threat of Malaria will grow progressively. The utmost vigilance and surveillance along with effective preventive measures need to be put in place to avert the threat.

I am pleased to note that the Ministry of Health has moved fast in providing a preventive net of health services with a result that we have had no epidemic anywhere in the country.

Provision of insecticide treated bed nets would ensure that our people are protected from the onslaught of the deadly diseases.

I am very glad to know that our partners such as WHO, UNICEF and the Global Fund have arranged substantial quantities of bed nets for the flood victims and I am very pleased to hand over these bed nets to the provincial governments.

I also take this opportunity to thank all the organizations and individuals who have worked in the flood affected areas especially those who have rendered health-related services on the field. I look forward to deepen this cooperation.

Let me reiterate the commitment of our Government to accomplish the rehabilitation process of the flood affectees. We will not rest till every one of the flood victims is rehabilitated and enabled to resume his life with honour and dignity.

Thank you very much

Pakistan Pindabad