

PRESIDENT'S SECRETARIAT (PUBLIC)
PRESS WING

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ISLAMABAD, May 8 (APP):President Mamnoon Hussain on Tuesday stressed upon promotion and easy accessibility of assistive technology for the rehabilitation of people suffering from disabilities or weakness, which was imperative for the progress and development of society.

The president said all human beings were equally important and valuable, therefore, the people suffering from any kind of disability or weakness could not be left behind at the mercy of fate.

He was addressing the inauguration of consultative meeting on 'Improving Access to Assistive Technology' organized by the Ministry of Health Services, Regulations and Coordination in collaboration with the World Health Organization.

The president said Pakistan played a leading role at the international level for provision of "assistive products" to people suffering from physical disabilities, including introduction of a list of essential assistive products at the World Health Assembly, and lauded efforts of the federal minister for health.

He observed that Pakistan had the honour of being the first country to present the list of essential assistive products at the international level.

"I hope that after the adoption of this resolution in World Health Organization (WHO), necessary equipment will be easily available to all disabled persons around the world and Pakistan's services, in this regard, will also be commended at the global level," he added.

He said Pakistan had a very positive and progressive vision regarding the rehabilitation and provision of health facilities to the disabled persons. "The Government of Pakistan has taken numerous steps in this respect, including Prime Minister's Health Insurance Programme and other welfare projects. The government is making all possible efforts to provide health and medical facilities to the masses," he added.

The president said destitute and low income segments of society were availing free medical treatment facilities from the government and private institutions through those measures. Those programmes were broad-based and many countries from across the world had shown their willingness to benefit from those initiatives, he added.

President Mamnoon noted that the world was facing numerous challenges and problems and the number of disabled persons was continuously increasing due to growing population, increase in elderly people, national disasters, warfare and terrorism.

"Under the circumstances, no society could afford to overlook its responsibility towards the disabled persons. Therefore, continuous research is imperative to make them a productive part of the society," he added.

Similarly, he said, exact data was required so that the community could also contribute towards the national development.

Access to assistive technology was like a blessing and there was a need that measures might be taken to ensure its access to the concerned, he added.

The president assured that the government would continue to play its role towards creating synergy between research and development apart from developing programmes and strategies.

"We believe that it is our primary responsibility to provide state of the art facilities and products to all of our citizens, especially those having disabilities. The Government of Pakistan is fully aware of its responsibility and is making all possible efforts towards this noble cause," he added.

The president noted that the consultative meeting was held with a noble objective of bringing the disabled persons into mainstream of the society.

“I would like that in addition to improving the production and accessibility of assistive products this platform may also focus on making these products available at an affordable price,” he stressed.

The president also underlined the importance of research & development and the training of experts and human resource in the field. The endeavours, he added, would not only help in achieving the targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2030 but also facilitate in providing equal opportunities to all members of the society. Minister for National Health Services, Regulation & Coordination Saira Afzal Tarar stressed upon the collective efforts by all the stakeholders, regional and world bodies to serve the humanity.

She said the Government of Pakistan achieved different targets in the health sector with hectic efforts.

She called upon the technical people and the experts to come forward and assist the governments in tackling the issues for rehabilitation of people with disabilities.

The president also presented an official letter of the World Health Organization to Dr Sana Hafeez designating her as Global Champion on Assistive Technology.

Dr Sana also recounted her experiences and ordeals in her life after developing disability due to a tragic incident.