

PRESIDENT'S SECRETARIAT (PUBLIC)

PRESS WING

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Islamabad, 04 December 2020: President Dr Arif Alvi has underscored the need for financial inclusion of the Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) enabling them to play their role in the socio-economic development of the country. He said that it was essential to bring differently-abled people (DAPs) into the mainstream and empower them economically. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting on financial inclusion of PWDs, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. The meeting was attended by SAPM on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety (PASS), Dr Sania Nishtar, Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Dr Reza Baqir, Chairman Pakistan Banks Association (PBA)/President Habib Bank Limited (HBL), Mr Muhammad Aurangzeb and the CEOs/Presidents of 27 leading banks of the country also participated via video-link.

Addressing the meeting, the President stated that DAPs were a vulnerable segment and it was the collective responsibility of society to work for their facilitation and economic welfare. He emphasized the need to enhance financial inclusion of DAPs and improving the accessibility infrastructure for them.

SAPM on PASS, Dr Sania Nishtar apprised the meeting of the measures taken for the uplift of DAPs under Ehsaas Program. Governor SBP, Reza Baqir, briefed the meeting about the compliance status of the decisions taken in the previous meeting held with CEOs/Presidents of banks in February 2020. He highlighted the initiatives taken by SBP for the welfare and facilitation of DAPs. He remarked that SBP had made it mandatory for all banks/Micro-Finance Banks to construct ramps and ensure accessible banking infrastructure for PWDs. He said that SBP had allocated targets to banks with regard to refinance schemes and had also instructed them to ensure the construction of ramps at the entrance points of banks within a period of 2 years. He apprised that a Working Group to be comprised of representatives of banks, SECP and PWDs would be constituted to make recommendations for the economic empowerment and well-being of PWDs.

President HBL/Chairman PBA, Muhammad Aurangzeb, updated the meeting about the steps taken for the facilitation of DAPs. He informed that 525 branches with accessible infrastructure had been completed while 1100 PWDs had been provided financial assistance and 151 Talking ATMs were installed throughout the country. The CEOs/Presidents assured that they would continue to support the efforts for the facilitation and financial inclusion of DAPs.

The President appreciated the measures taken by the Central Bank and other commercial banks of the country for the facilitation and economic well-being of PWDs. He underlined the need for creating awareness among the DAPs about the refinance schemes and other facilities being offered by banks.
