

Declaration

Advancing National Commitments in Pakistan ahead of the Global School Meals Summit

27 August 2025, Islamabad

Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad

Representatives from the Government of Pakistan convened for a "Strategic Dialogue on Advancing National Commitments on School Meals in Pakistan" on 27th August 2025. This event was organized by the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training in partnership with the Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Ministry of Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety/ Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Office of Senate Standing Committee on Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety and United Nations World Food Programme, Pakistan and key development partners.

In response to the collective reaffirmation of the significance of school meals within a child-centered educational framework designed to improve educational outcomes, all provinces and regions have made substantial commitments during the "Second National Consultation on 'School Meals'" held on June 2-3, 2025. These commitments from the federal, provincial, and regional governments are grounded in the "National Education Policy Development Framework (NEPDF) 2024," which integrates school meals into its broader focus on access, quality, and equity in education. Formulated by the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, the framework aims to provide cohesive guidelines for provincial policies while respecting regional contexts.

Furthermore, the Prime Minister of Pakistan has proclaimed an Education Emergency in 2024 due to the alarming number of out-of-school children, alongside the Government of Pakistan's commitments regarding the role of school meals in addressing the 25 million out-of-school children and improving learning outcomes during the afore-mentioned national consultation.

Government of Pakistan is also a signatory to the Global Coalition on School Meals in 2021, ensuring that every child in the nation can enjoy a healthy and nutritious meal at school by 2030, thereby supporting the full realization of their human potential.

Provincial Declaration & Commitments

In light of the above considerations, the Government of Pakistan is committed to fulfilling these responsibilities in collaboration with all stakeholders, thereby fostering the development of children into productive and healthy members of the global community in accordance with the respective provinces & regions commitments as outlined in the report of second national consultation on school meals in Pakistan (attached):

1. Federal Government will expand the school meals programme within Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu & Kashmir, with regular progress updates to ensure effective implementation. School meals will also be included in the education sector programme of AJK, while GB to scale up the current programme to 10 districts with prioritisation of expansion to girls' schools and marginalised communities and enact a School Meal Policy by 2026.

2. Balochistan plans to extend its school meals programme to an additional 8 districts within the province by 2030, in addition to the current district.
3. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government is set to scale up the ongoing girl's stipend programme, while also exploring the launch of a pilot school meals programme in collaboration with partners.
4. Punjab province to expand the ongoing School Milk Programme to 25% of its districts in the upcoming financial years and eventually to the entire province with possibility of additional food commodities.
5. Sindh to design a pilot school meal programme; the work is underway, and school meals programme will be included into the provincial School Education Policy and upcoming Education Sector Plan (2025–2030).

Based on the above announcements and commitments by the respective provinces and the regions, the Government of Pakistan is committed to the following declaration for the next two-three years:

1. **Develop a National School Meal Roadmap:** Government of Pakistan pledges to explore opportunities for developing a clear roadmap aimed at establishing a context-specific national school meal programme, outlining objectives, stakeholders and implementation strategies. Expansion and contextualised delivery will require decentralized programmes and tailored to the local context.
2. **Institutionalize School Meals in Policies & Plans:** Government of Pakistan has also committed to integrate school meal programmes into all provincial and federal education & nutrition sector policies and plans, ensuring legal and budgetary provisions for sustainable implementation for expanded programmes. This necessity has already been highlighted in the National Education Policy Development Framework 2024.
3. **Prioritize School Meals under PM's Education in Emergency Initiative:** Government of Pakistan acknowledges the incorporation of school meal initiative into the Prime Minister's Education in Emergency initiative as per his shared message during Second National Consultation on School Meals in June 2025 and Education Task Force National Action plan.
4. **Mobilize Innovative Financing:** Based on the developed National Action Plan, mobilize innovative financing, including public-private partnerships, donor contributions, debt-swaps, domestic resources/ in-kind contribution, to support the nationwide scale-up of school meal programme in the country.
5. **Strengthen Capacity of Education Departments:** Train and equip education department staff in all provinces & regions with skills and tools to design, implement, and monitor school meal programmes.
6. **Establish Federal-Interprovincial Collaboration Platform:** Create a Federal-Interprovincial School Meal Coordination Mechanism to facilitate cross-provincial learning, resource sharing and joint planning. This could be under one of the technical working groups of the PM's Emergency Education Taskforce and the National Education Development Partners Group (NEDPG).