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Biofortification to play major role in tackling 'hidden hunger'

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's agriculture and livestock research as well as development priorities have been made more nutrition sensitive, as improvement of nutritional diversification through agriculture, horticulture, livestock and fisheries has been identified as main policy thrust.

This was said by Federal Food Minister Sikander Hayat Khan Bosan while addressing a round table meeting titled, "Harvest Plus Biofortification Programme in Pakistan". The minister highlighted that the Ministry of National Food Security and Research has launched multiple initiatives to address undernutrition. He said that biofortification could play a major role in tackling the 'hidden hunger' or micronutrient deficiency, adding that biofortification is sustainable, cost effected and targeted, as more nutritious staple food could reach the rural communities often missed by other nutrition interventions such as dietary supplementation and food fortification.

The minister said that the ministry is actively engaged in the provision of support to the provinces for development in this area as per the prime minister's vision 2025. After promoting iron fortification of wheat and salt with iodine, the wheat biofortification programme has been launched in the country. Under this programme, wheat, which is the main staple food crop, has been targeted to develop zinc rich wheat variety 'Zincol-2015'. **STAFF REPORT**