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Altaf Hamid Rao.

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MIRPUR [AJK]: October 09: Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that despite financial restraints the government was spending Rs. 71 billion to ensure provision of electricity and flour to the consumers on inexpensive and subsidized rates across the State.

The Prime Minister Haq said this while addressing a ceremony held to mark 19th anniversary of October 08, 2005 deadly earthquake, under the auspices of leading social welfare organization- Kashmir Orphan Relief Trust (KORT) at KORT Educational and Rehabilitation complex here on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, the PM said that the main objective of his political struggle was to see a progressive, prosperous and developed Kashmir where people would have all the amenities of life available. He said that the present government has struggled hard to break the decades long status-quo that has hampered progress in the region. He said that through austerity measures, the coalition government saved Rs. 10 billion rupees, which ultimately led to the establishment of Social Protection Fund (SPF).

” Under the SPF scheme financial assistance will be provided to economically less-privileged sections of the society”, the PM added. He said that more than 190,000 people have submitted their applications to seek financial assistance under the SPF. Referring to the federal government’s wholehearted support to the government of Azad Kashmir, the PM said that the Government of

Pakistan has always provided generous assistance to Azad Kashmir and its people. Pakistan, he said, had stood with Kashmiris in every thick and thin. "Be it natural calamities, reconstruction or provision of funds, Pakistan has gone extra mile to provide help and facilities to the citizens of Azad Kashmir", he added.

Appreciating the Kashmir Orphan Relief Trust (KORT) for its significant contribution and unprecedented services to the society, the PM said that the KORT has become a symbol of our identity. He said that the KORT introduced Kashmir's new face to the world thereby projecting the region's soft image to the world.

He said that the way in which the KORT has been utilizing the charity money effectively has raised people's confidence and trust in the institution. The AJK premier on the occasion assured the KORT chairman of his government's all out support in execution and accomplishment of its projects saying that the government was always ready to cooperate and provide help wherever and whenever needed.

The function was also addressed and attended by the founding chairman of the KORT Chaudhry Muhammad Akhtar besides the AJK government ministers including Chaudhry Arshad Hussain, Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq, Nisar Ansar Abdali, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Chaudhry Yasir Sultan, Special Assistant Ms. Sabiha Siddique, donors and notables of the city were present on the

occasion