



Meeting with TDRI, August 10

Follow-up action	Person	Deadline
Review TDRI analysis on universal welfare society	All UN agencies	September
Follow- up meeting on the preparation of the DCS	UNRCO, ILO, TDRI	August

Venue: Thailand Development Research Institute Foundation, 565 Soi Ramkhamneng 39, Ramkhamneng Rd., Bangkok 10310

Time: 14:00-16:00

Present

For TDRI :

- Dr. Worawan Chandoevwit, Research Director (Social Security)
- Dr. Amonthep Chawla, Research Specialist, Macroeconomic Policy Program
- Dr. Somchai Jitsuchon, Research Director for Macroeconomic Development
- Dr. Viroj Na Ranong, Research Director for Health Economics and Agriculture, Sectoral Economics Program.

For the SPF Joint Team :

- Kwanpadh Suddhi Dhamakit, National Liaison Officer, IASU
- Chayanit Wangdee, Social Policy Assistant, UNICEF
- Sophia Sarynia, National Programme Officer, Social and Human Sciences Sector, UNESCO
- Ratchakorn Kulsawet, UNESCO, Senior Program Officer, Education Policy and Reform Unit, UNESCO
- Valerie Schmitt, Social Security Specialist, ILO
- Jittima Srisuknam, National Program Officer, ILO
- Celine Felix, Associate Expert in the extension of social protection, ILO

Discussion

After an introduction of all participants in the meeting, Jittima Srisuknam (ILO) explained the purpose of this meeting between the UN Team and TDRI colleagues: this meeting is an opportunity for both sides to exchange information and knowledge on the issues related to social protection (and/ or social welfare), as well as getting to know each other. It is also an opportunity for the UN Team to introduce the Social Protection Floor Initiative and the UN Joint Team on Social Protection to the TDRI, and to discuss with TDRI on possible collaboration in the near future.

Then, Valerie Schmitt (ILO) made a presentation on the **Social Protection Floor Initiative**. She gave background information on the launching of the initiative and presented global and national activities (i.e. in Thailand) in this framework. – *presentation available on the team's workspace online.*

A discussion followed with the researchers on the different components of the “Floor”. While they deem access to water and sanitation is guaranteed for the entire population, they acknowledged equity problems in health, problems in terms of quality of education.

Looking at the “translation” of the social protection floor in the Thai context, they said that burial insurance as well as savings should be taken into account and included in the “package” to ensure basic coverage to the entire population.

The problems of schemes’ overlapping, fragmentation of the system in place, extension to the informal economy and the financial sustainability are points that should be discussed at national levels.

TDRI shared some of its work done in matter of access to basic services and mentioned they have done less work on minimum income. They gave information on the work undertaken with a network of NGOs on income security for the elderly (2007) – work with Dr Worawet. The institute carried out by another study on the saving funds (financing and governance). Dr Viroj presented his work on the extension of social security to the informal economy (by SSO), mainly costing exercise and contribution setting.

Discussion on what is being designed in Thailand followed:

- The implementation of *universal welfare and the welfare society by 2017*, involving the government and other actors in a 5-6 year period. A committee under the Prime Minister was set up with a working group of which TDRI is a member. A special module on the households’ needs for social security and their willingness to pay was added to the socio-eco survey (work with NSO). TDRI is responsible to conduct an analysis (inventory, assessment and recommendations on the ways forward). This exercise seems very close to the one that the UN SPF team was considering undertaking.
- The development of Plan 11 by NESDB. A study on **social investment** was approved. In this framework, the entry point is to look at social security from birth to death. Four pillars are identified: social services, social protection, social assistance, and working together as partners.

TDRI pointed out the distended link between research and policy making. They indicated working more closely with the civil society.

Areas of UN support identified included:

- Best practices examples from other countries, challenges faced in design and implementation
- Contribute to more coherence between actors involved in social protection (in design as well as implementation)
- Review the TDRI analysis made for the Committee on the Welfare Society and provide critical feedback, based on other countries’ experiences. (Kwan and Céline will coordinate)
- Propose (if need be) a complementary / analysis assessment.

The **Development Cooperation Seminar** was presented to the TDRI team, who gave their approval in principle to organize the event. They recommended NESDB as possible partner

on the government side. They also suggested clarifying the concepts that will be discussed at the beginning of the seminar to avoid fruitless discussions on concepts and focus on priorities the country should take.