

- Let me share my insights on the topic and some key points on the presentations of our panel of experts.

We will all agree that when we talk of social protection and social protection floors, what we want is transformative social protection which enables recipients to move out of dependence on social protection provision into a situation of sustained higher productivity and reduced poverty.

Cash transfers alone will not result to transformative outcomes because they are used primarily for consumption purposes. There is a need for the provision of complementary interventions which are intended to promote the accumulation of a range of skills and assets to support the likelihood of graduation.

When we say graduation, as stated in our reference document for this workshop, refers to those beneficiaries who, having crossed an income, asset or human development threshold, are no longer in need the same level of support.

- At this point, I would like to thank the panel of experts for presenting their own models of supporting families to graduate out of poverty through integrated packages of services and transfers.

Based on the presentations, cash transfers were provided alongside, mother and child social insurance, access to education through back to school programs among others, skills development through vocational training, income generation through the provision of livelihood support and access to micro-finance schemes.

In the provision of these social protection programs, the presentations showed that scientific targeting of beneficiaries proves to be very important for the appropriate design of the package of services and transfers as evidenced in Benazir's Income Support Program, Chile Solidario, India's Convergence Program, and the One Stop Crisis Center of Thailand. Because of very clear targeting and careful identification of people's needs and case management mechanism, they were able to provide adequate packages of protection for the poor and vulnerable groups. This is consistent with the intent of the ILO Recommendation on National Floors on Social Protection which states that SPF interventions should be combined with additional measures to promote education, literacy, income generation, vocational training, productive skills and employability, entrepreneurship and sustainable enterprises.

The integration of skills development to social protection provision also proves to be necessary for the poor to graduate out of poverty. However, some key questions to ask which are being surfaced by social protection experts are: 1) Is there demand for the skills in which participants are trained?; 2) Where the skills are more oriented to the promotion of self-employment, are they likely to result in increased productivity? and, 3) Are the skills provided those which beneficiaries would prioritize, given their knowledge of the local market? There is a need therefore to ensure that this link between skills development and social protection will result to increased income, productivity, and employability.

As to livelihood programs, there might be a need to look into its sustainability. Social protection experts put forward a value chain approach to make households resilient through sustainable livelihood. The value chain approach takes a market system perspective that recognizes that

recognizes the inter-connections among firms (including microenterprises) in an industry, the business environment that governs an industry, and the support market that supply services (e.g. finance, transport) to the firms. Engaging the poor within a market system creates greater value rather than economic activities that are fragmented, small-scale, and on a subsistence level. The challenge to this approach is to design a vision for sustainability focused on household themselves, enabling them to achieve self-reliance and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

- These considerations are especially helpful to the Philippines since we are in the process of developing a national convergence strategy on establishing a social protection floor for those in vulnerable employment particularly the workers in the informal sector which accounts for 15 million or 41 percent of the labor force in the Philippines as of 2011. Actually, as I speak, the Department of Labor and Employment is now celebrating Labor Day for Workers in the Informal Sector where a partnership agreement among 27 government agencies, workers groups, and employers group will be signed to establish the SPF for this group of workers. It is a tripartite agreement where representatives of informal sector workers themselves are not only part of the conceptualization and planning stage, but also in the targeting and profiling of beneficiaries, as well as in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Initially, we are looking at the 2.5 million self-employed and unpaid family workers such as farmers, fisherfolks, vendors, service workers, and homebased workers who have insufficient income in cases of sickness, disability, maternity, and other risks. Cognizant of the principle of progressive realization, we will be conducting an assessment based needs dialogue this year in partnership with ILO to establish a social protection floor for the poor, vulnerable and marginalized.

President Benigno Simeon Aquino III wants social protection to be the focus of his administration for the next three years to achieve the goal of inclusive growth. Social protection is prominent in the Philippine Development Plan, 2011-2016 and the Labor and Employment Plan, 2011-2016 as integral to achieving a better and improved quality of life for individuals and their families against risks, particularly in times of crisis that can push them down to poverty. Last year, the country adopted a social protection operational framework that defines social protection in the Philippines and identifies key components. These are social insurance, labor market interventions, social safety nets, and social welfare.

There is very high level commitment in providing social protection for the poor, vulnerable and marginalized in our country and we are capitalizing on this to ensure that recipients of the program graduate from poverty.

Thank you for this opportunity to learn from these sharing of experiences and good practices which I will bring home to my country.