

Remarks of Ms. Claire Van der Vaeren, UN Resident Coordinator in Cambodia

Workshop on Integrating Social Policies and the Delivery of Social Protection Floors, 29 May 2013, Siem Reap, Cambodia

Your Excellency Dr Yim Chhay Ly, Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Council for Agriculture and Rural Development,

Your Excellency Dr Sann Vathana, Deputy Secretary General of the Council for Agriculture and Rural Development,

Your Excellency Mr. Jean-François Cautain, European Union Ambassador to Cambodia,

Your Excellency Mr. Yuji Kumamaru, Ambassador of Japan in the Kingdom of Cambodia,

Mr. Maurizio Bussi, Director of the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for East, South East Asia and the Pacific,

Ms. Mega Irena, Head of the Social Welfare, Women, Labour and Migrant Workers Division at ASEAN Secretariat,

Mr. Francisco Simplicio, Chief of Division at UNDP's Special Unit for South-South Cooperation in New York,

Officials of the Royal Government of Cambodia,

Other distinguished guests, dear participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations. A consensus had been reached about the dignity and worth of the human person and his or her inalienable equal rights and fundamental freedoms.

Social security is one of these inalienable rights; the right to strive for, and be given the conditions for, a better life; a life that can be lived with dignity and the full development of one's personality.

When we build floors of social protection, we allow people to escape from poverty and social exclusion; to use their full potentials and build their resilience.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Building a robust social protection floor is our shared commitment:

- First, at the global level, with the UN Social Protection Floor initiative which was launched in 2009 as a response to the global economic crisis;
- And in Cambodia, where over the past three years the Government has been building the National Social Protection Strategy for the Poor and the Vulnerable, with the support of the United Nations.

The National Social Protection Strategy provides a vision for the development of a coherent social protection system, in a phased approach, starting with the establishment of a social protection floor for all those in need of protection and ensuring that more and more people can access progressively higher levels of social security.

This experience of working as one, interministerially and among UN agencies, is providing and we hope will continue to provide, insights for other ASEAN countries that are striving towards the development of coherent social protection frameworks, through the coordination of all actors.

Launching the National Social Protection Strategy is a commendable beginning. The next challenge ahead is to move towards the implementation of the strategy, in an integrated and coordinated way.

I am pleased to report that the UN through its various technical agencies is already supporting the pilot-testing of several flagship programmes of the NSPS, in the fields of:

- access to essential health care,
- access to proper nutrition and safe delivery for pregnant mothers,
- access to nutrition and education for children,
- And access to better employment opportunities, skills development and work injury for the working age.

More importantly the UN is striving towards better coordination.

First, this coordination will happen at the **planning level**:

- We will soon start the development of our new partnership agreement with the Royal Government of Cambodia, the UNDAF, in support of the next National Strategic Development Plan's implementation. Social protection will be an integral part of the next UNDAF.

Second, this coordination will also happen at the **implementation level**:

- The establishment of a single window service for social protection by the Royal Government of Cambodia will be the cement of our coordination on the ground.
- All the programmes supported by specific UN agencies (cash transfers, public works, health care programmes) will use this single window to reduce costs, increase efficiencies and sustainability, and provide effective access to a combination of services and transfers.
- This will reinforce the ability of local authorities to provide services and enable the poor and vulnerable to gradually be lifted out of poverty.

Ladies and gentlemen, we also welcome Cambodia's openness to a south-south cooperation approach with the support of the UN South-South cooperation initiative, through which Cambodia has been able to receive support from countries like India and Thailand in the design of its social protection programmes. We wish to thank participants who have come from far away to share their experiences at this workshop.

Cambodia is already one of the countries, at ASEAN level, leading the discussions on social protection, and providing a vision of "ASEAN integration with a human face".

We hope that in a few years' time Cambodia, based on the successful implementation of its National Social Protection Strategy, will be able to inspire other countries to adopt the **single window service mechanism**, within ASEAN and beyond.

Let me take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Council for Agriculture and Rural Development and all the line ministries, sub-national government, the civil society, workers and employers organisations, that have contributed to the development of the strategy and are today fully embarked in its effective and coordinated implementation.

Your Excellencies, the United Nations stands ready to support you in making the social protection floor become a reality for all in Cambodia.

Thank you. Ockun Chran.