

Summary of Panel discussion 5

Successful cases on South-South cooperation for social protection floors (SPFs)

7 September 2016

This panel was chaired by Ms Anita Amorim, Partnerships and Field Support Department (PARDEV) ILO. The three following questions had been asked to the four panellists:

- 1) Why is South-South and Triangular Cooperation useful to you?
- 2) How can South-South cooperation contribute to universal social protection?
- 3) How can South-South cooperation contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal, Target 1.3?

Mr. Liu Yutong, Director for Technical Cooperation, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS), China

Social security is a human right, but there is a need to work on this correctly, otherwise it will not become a reality. Before implementing universal social protection, one needs to think carefully and study the country context. Social security is critically important for a country. A mechanism (a social security institution) should be installed to deal with contingencies and reduce the costs. This is how you can create a level playing field.

“SPF would be a just cause for China to work on South-South cooperation.”

Ms Mei Wei, First Vice-President, Geely Holding Group

The Geely Holding Group is a young corporation that is only 30 years old. The Group acquired Volvo in 2012 and the London Taxi Company in 2013. It is now a multinational enterprise based in the United States, Spain, China, Sweden, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Ethiopia, among other countries. There is further development ahead since the Group’s ambition is to become one of the top-10 carmakers.

Geely counts nearly 50,000 employees globally. Very good social security provisions are provided to all employees and the Group complies with social security laws in the different countries where it operates. Additional benefits include a mutual assistance fund within the enterprise and a housing subsidy provided to all staff members, including migrant workers. Geely is looking forward to a future where more multinational companies will develop social protection guarantees and support the extension of social protection globally. Workers create value for enterprises, therefore enterprises can create value for society.

The Group cooperates with developed countries, such as Sweden, and sometimes faces communication problems. For instance, when Chinese workers are sent for a short period of time to Sweden, the company has to contribute to social security, although these workers will not be entitled to benefit from the pension scheme. Hopefully, bilateral agreements can contribute to solve this practical problem.

“We are looking forward that in the future more private sector multinational companies will develop social protection guarantees and support the extension of social protection globally.”

Mr Flabio Pazeto, Embassy of Brazil in Beijing

Brazil has some very positive experiences to share through South-South cooperation in the field of social protection. Brazil is involved in 46 South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) projects – some of them with the ILO – amounting to US\$92 million.

The Brazil-ILO SSTC programme was established in 2009. It has mobilized US\$14.2 million so far to support a number of countries in Latin and Central America, Africa and Asia. SSTC is useful to Brazil because it has strengthened its capacity to provide support to other countries and also to systematize its own practices. For example, Brazil has contributed to the integration of several social conditional cash transfer (CCT) programmes in Paraguay and supported the country in its extension of a national social security system. As part of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), Brazil has supported the adoption of the Maputo declaration, which reaffirms the importance of SSTC. In Timor-Leste, Brazil contributed to the development of the country's first social security scheme, which provides pensions to civil servants and will be expanded to salaried workers.

There is a tendency to think that one country is more developed than the other country in SSTC projects; however, the situation in our country is sometimes less developed than expected. Therefore, SSTC projects have also helped us to solve our own internal problems and to improve our system.

“SSTC has strengthened our capacity to provide support to other countries and also to systematize our own practices in the field of decent work.”

Mr Helder da Costa, g7+

Timor-Leste is part of the g7+ that includes 20 fragile countries and aims to develop SSTC among fragile states (fragile to fragile cooperation). Since its independence, Timor-Leste has benefited from SSTC. For instance the country learned from Brazil's Bolsa Família programme. At the same time, Timor-Leste learned from Australia, New Zealand and other countries.

What can Timor-Leste offer to fragile states?

- We can provide expertise on natural resource management to countries like South Sudan, Haiti and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which are rich in natural resources. Timor-Leste has a fund of US\$65 billion from petroleum extraction and we are using this fund for social protection.
- We can also provide support in peace building. We learned a lot in the field of conducting free elections and we have recently supported Guinea-Bissau.
- We can also provide support in the management of displaced people. This was the case when we went to Bangui, Central African Republic, where children have no access to schools and elderly have no access to hospitals, among other issues. The SPF is really needed for displaced people.
- We have also developed a peace and reconciliation model based on the experience between Indonesia and Timor-Leste. We have a long-lasting relationship despite years of conflict between the two countries. This model can be useful for other countries.

“China has the convening power, capacity and expertise to share. If you are able to convey senior officials once per year, SPFs will get more traction and this will put more pressure on governments to finance social protection floors and ensure that social protection is extended to vulnerable groups.”

Mr Tang Hong (Steven), Director, Asia-Pacific Division, International Department, All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), China

ACFTU is the first trade union confederation to engage in SSTC to trade unions in ASEAN. ACFTU has paid attention to SSTC since 2005. After 2012, the ACFTU established an SSTC programme with the Bureau for Workers' Activities of the ILO (ACTRAV).

ACFTU has three SSTC programmes: (1) ACFTU has organized a number of training seminars with ACTRAV in Asia and the Pacific; (2) ACFTU has organized seven training workshops in Asia and the Pacific since 2003 and trained 145 participants from Asia and the Pacific trade unions with ACTRAV Turin (International Training Centre of the ILO); and (3) ACFTU has conveyed more than 2,000 trade union leaders from Asia and the Pacific, Africa and Latin and Central America to attend ACFTU seminars since 2005.

In 2014, ACFTU organized two activities in Beijing and in Bangkok. One was on "Trade Union Training on social protection and social security for all", and the other was on "protecting workers in the informal economy". ACFTU has paid special attention to training programmes.

"Training programmes for trade unions is very important because although the Asia-Pacific region is the engine of the world's economy, we still face a number of challenges".