

## Summary of the closing session

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### Learning points and way forward

8 September 2016

**Ms Aidi Hu, Senior Social Protection Officer, Social Protection Department of the ILO**, facilitated the last session of the ILO-China-ASEAN High Level Seminar to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on universal social protection through South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC).

#### **Ms Pitchanuch Supavanich, ASEAN Secretariat**

Social protection is a complex issue that requires a long and sustained effort to achieve. It is important to recall that access to social protection is a human right. Although countries must tailor approaches to social protection to fit their own systems and their unique contexts, similarities do exist between systems. Thus, exchanges make sense and should be encouraged. There is a lot to be learned through peer-to-peer exchange among ASEAN countries

The international day for SSTC is on 12 September. As for the ASEAN secretariat, SSTC is and will remain at the core of our agenda, not only between our Members, but also together with our partners such as China and the ILO. Such collaboration will be needed to support the implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection

*“There is a lot to be learned through peer-to-peer exchange among ASEAN countries.”*

#### **Ms Isabel Ortiz, Director of the Social Protection Department of the ILO**

We are going to work together for the next 15 years under the framework of the SDGs, Target 1.3 in particular. This work will make the dream where all countries have social protection systems for all a reality. We aim for universal coverage with adequate benefits. By 2030, many more countries will have achieved universal social protection and a lot of this change will be achieved through South-South cooperation and with the support of donors through triangular cooperation. We will know how to build social protection systems, including social protection floors (SPFs), through national dialogues that ensure that there is ownership by all stakeholders.

Social protection is a State responsibility that can be achieved in various ways. There is no one-size-fits-it-all approach. The extension of social protection has to start with national dialogue. SPFs are affordable in the majority of developing countries; however, there is a lot of pressure to consolidate budgets and reduce expenditures. We shall respond to this; there are many arguments to reject this short-term vision. The middle class needs support for sustainable development. Focusing on the poorest will not suffice since the middle class is poor in many developing countries.

Pension privatization – recommended by the some institutions in the 1990s – is being reversed. Many countries that had privatized their pension schemes are now reversing these reforms and coming back to pay-as-you-go pension schemes. Globally, there has been a significant shift in the policy paradigm from the Washington Consensus to pro-poor growth. Today’s debate calls for universal social protection and for the State to take responsibility for sustainable development. There are many options for countries to find fiscal space for social protection. In the next 15 years we will be working together and carefully monitoring the extension of social protection and progressive achievements of the SDGs on social protection.

***“We can make our dream a reality, where all countries have social protection systems for all. We aim at universal coverage with adequate benefits.”***

**Mr Virgilio Levaggi, Director of the Partnerships and Field Support Department of the ILO**

We have one holistic concept that leads our work and that is Decent Work. Social protection is part of this policy concept and proposes an integrated approach. We cannot continue to work with a “silo mentality”.

We have one way of working together; we are developing one cooperation style. The beauty of SSTC is that it is based on mutual respect, innovation and the sharing of experiences. We try to reconcile the answers coming from governments and civil society.

We have a clear target: no one should be left out of sustainable development. This is not a slogan; it has to be a reality. Social protection is important because it can change the lives of people.

To promote social protection as part of the political agenda, we need political commitment. We need to emphasize that the political dimension of our work is critical for the achievement of the technical work.

***“We have a clear target: no one should be left out of the path of sustainable development. This is not a slogan, it has to be a reality. Social protection is so important because you can make a change in the lives of people.”***

***“The beauty of South-South and Triangular Cooperation is that it is based on mutual respect, innovation and experience sharing.”***

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

It is great that we have covered so many topics with very active participation throughout all the six panel sessions. Our goal is to push towards the SDGs and social protection through SSTC. Your presence has made this event possible for us. It was a very colourful and productive seminar. You have made a consensus that social protection is a human right and should not be kept away from the people.

The political dimension is indeed not to be neglected. Social protection has a direct impact on the economic growth of China and a huge social impact for the country. It gives people increased purchasing power and contributes to sustainable development.

We had some discussions with ILO colleagues on ways to move ahead. Thanks to the ILO, this was one of the most productive ASEAN-China events. We very much look forward to a similar event next year—if you do not leave us behind! China will be very committed to SSTC with you. Please treat your Chinese colleagues as special agents of South-South cooperation!

The last word would be “thank you”.

***“You have made a consensus that social protection is a human right and should not be kept away from the people.”***