

PANEL DISCUSSION 6: SUCCESSFUL CASES ON BUILDING NATIONAL STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOORS

ILO-China-ASEAN High Level Seminar to
Achieve the SDGs on Universal Social Protection
Through South-South and Triangular Cooperation

8 September 2016, 9:00-10:30, Beijing, P.R.C.

According to Article 22 and Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), everyone has a right to social security and a decent standard of living, including access to essential social services.

Social protection powerfully contributes to reducing poverty, exclusion, and inequality while enhancing political stability and social cohesion. It can also be a powerful tool to prevent and recover from the economic crisis, natural disasters, and conflicts. Social protection is needed for economic reasons as well. Social protection contributes to economic growth by supporting household income and thus domestic consumption. Furthermore, social protection enhances human capital and productivity, making it a critical policy for transformative national development. Social protection is therefore essential for inclusive development and social justice.

Today nearly 73 per cent of the world's population lack access to adequate social protection coverage.

While countries in the Asia and the Pacific region have made considerable economic progress in the last two decades and lifted millions out of poverty, not all have benefitted from these gains. Millions of people are still poor, deprived of basic rights, and vulnerable to increased risks resulting from global economic crises and climate change.

Following the adoption of the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), many member States of the ILO have acknowledged the importance of social protection in their development agendas and made significant progress in the extension.

The establishment of social protection floors has increasingly been recognized by all countries as an efficient approach to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience to natural calamities and other shocks, as well as combating poverty, inequality, and exclusion. The level of engagement on social protection has increased dramatically as evidenced by the number of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) that prioritize the development of social protection. Several UN agencies have joined forces to promote social protection floors and support countries in designing and implementing their national social protection strategies.

Assessing existing policies and programmes, as well as identifying policy gaps, implementation issues, and financial bottlenecks, are vital to the further design, implementation, and development of efficient, effective, and sustainable social protection programmes and the establishment of an SPF for all. The use of a national dialogue with representatives from government, non-government, workers', and employers' organizations to produce the ABND reports allows the social protection situation to be captured from a range of perspectives and enables progressive consensus-building on key social protection ideas in line with the four SPF guarantees. This facilitates a holistic definition of a national SPF that aligns with the visions of different segments of society – and thus will vary from one

country to another. This lends legitimacy to domestic policy choices, helping to secure the necessary fiscal space and in turn helping to ensure their sustainability.

Specific objectives of the session:

The main objective of the session is share different experiences in terms of design and implementation of social protection floors, including the role of:

- National dialogue and consensus building in the development and implementation of National Social Protection Strategies,
- Adequate legal frameworks and a rights based approach, as well as
- Innovative and effective implementation mechanisms to reach those who are not yet covered by the system

General question:

What is the role of national dialogue and consensus building in the development and implementation of National Social Protection Strategies?

Specific questions for countries

Lao PDR

Could you share with us the latest developments in terms of extending Health Insurance to workers in the informal economy in Lao PDR?

What are the main challenges in reaching those working in the informal and rural economy? Could you please share with us the Vang Vieng model? Will it be replicated in other districts?

We understood Lao will be developing a new Social Protection Strategy? Any special area of focus? How will this process be carried out? Do you plan to involve other ministries?

Mongolia

We know that Mongolia conducted with the support of the UN an ABND. What were the main lessons from that exercise? How important was the dialogue process to forge consensus?

One of the Social Protection flagship programmes in Mongolia is the Universal Child Grant. Could you share with us what are the key factors for its success?

We are aware that cash alone does not solve all the problems. Can you share with us the Mongolia government approach in bringing the services close to the beneficiaries through the use of single windows?

Myanmar

Myanmar has carried out an assessment based national dialogue on social protection in 2013/14. What are the main lessons learned from this exercise?

Myanmar is going through a moment of significant political and economic reforms. On 30 December 2015, the Government of Myanmar launched its National Social Protection Strategic

Plan in Nay Pyi Taw. How do you see the role that the National Social Protection Strategic Plan can play?

In terms of the Social Security Board what are the main plans in terms of extending its services to groups that until now did not have access to social security?

Thailand

Thailand has carried out an assessment based national dialogue on social protection in 2012/13. What are the main lessons learned from this exercise?

Could you share with us the key ingredients for the success in reaching Universal Old Age coverage in Thailand? What were and are the main challenges?

What triggered in your view the shift from a means tested benefit into a Universal one? What are the main advantages of Universal coverage?

Viet Nam

We are aware that Viet Nam is working on a Master Plan for Social Assistance Reform.

What are in your view the most significant elements of the Reform?

What are in your view the relevance of evidence and the role of an institution like ILSSA in this type of exercises?