

**Inter-Sectoral Consultation on  
The Development of a Plan of Action for  
the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection  
8-9 December, 2014  
Siem Reap, Cambodia**

**Summary Report**

The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) integration planned for 2015 will remove trade barriers, nontariff barriers and introduce free labour mobility for skilled laborers in ASEAN Member States. ASEAN integration is also a good opportunity for better coordinated social security among its Member States. Indeed, the expected economic changes call for a comprehensive response by ASEAN Member States, especially with regards to the role of social protection. ASEAN Leaders have recognized this need for reinforcement of the social protection systems, by adopting the **ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection** at the **23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Summit in 2013**. As stated, to achieve growth with equity and “**Integration with a human face**”, ASEAN Member States declared to enforce adequate social protection measures, expand social insurance to the informal sector and social assistance to the unemployed and vulnerable groups. They also pledged to carry out evidence-based national assessments of the social protection delivery systems in the respective ASEAN Member States, in order to identify a number of concrete actions to improve the quality, coverage, and sustainability of social protection. ASEAN Member States, guided by Royal Government of Cambodia, are now developing a plan of action for the implementation of the Declaration.

The **Inter-Sectoral Consultation on “The Development of a Plan of Action for the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection”** was organized on 8-9<sup>th</sup> December 2014, in Siem Reap, Cambodia. The meeting was hosted by the Royal Government of Cambodia represented by the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) and Ministry of Social Affair, Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), and it was organized in collaboration and support from FAO, UNICEF, ILO, WHO and Government of Japan through ASEAN secretariat. Taking in consideration the increased need to put the **ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection** into practice, a multi-sectoral consultation aimed discussing a coordinated plan of action.

Thus, the proposed objectives of the **Inter-Sectoral Consultation** were:

- To prepare a draft plan of action to implement the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection (this plan of action will subsequently be finalised by the relevant ASEAN sectorial bodies through appropriate procedure facilitated by the ASEAN Secretariat);
- To foster a regional cooperation/coordination platform for ASEAN sectorial bodies (including SLOM, SOMSWD, SOMHD, SOMRDPE, ACDM, ACW, SOMAMAF, SOMDP) on social protection.

The senior officials of ASEAN sectorial bodies representing SOMSWD, SOMAMAF, SLOM, SOMRDPE, SOMHD, SOMDP, ACW and ACDM from ten ASEAN Member States participated. It was a first meeting that brought more than eight sectorial bodies of ASEAN together under social protection umbrella. The meeting was attended by the representatives of ministries in charge of social welfare, labour, health, poverty reduction, food security, disaster management, development planning, and finance from ten ASEAN Member States. The following participants actively engaged with the discussions:

- Representatives of the ASEAN Secretariat.
- Representatives of ILO, FAO, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, WHO, ADB, World Bank.
- Representatives of International Council of Social Welfare (ICSW) (issue of social protection of vulnerable groups), HelpAge International (issue of ageing society), Asia DHRRA (issue of poverty reduction)
- Representative of Trade Union and Employer Association
- Partner Organization

The meeting provided fora for the identification of social protection gaps, under diverse perspectives such as life-cycle and national context, with the mapping of the institutions involved in the implementation of social protection policies in each of the ten ASEAN member state. In consideration of national priorities of social protection interventions, the consultation identified key issues and formulated recommendations to promote within the region synergy between social protection, rural employment and agriculture and food security.

The identification and validation of national social protection priorities, and the consideration of these at regional levels from a sectorial perspective, guided the review of the zero-draft Plan of Action for the implementation of ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection (SP). The workshop also drew the identification of actors, coordination mechanism, support and a timeframe of the highlighted concrete actions and commitment. The consultation discussed draft Plan of Action to implement the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection.

The consultation commenced officially with welcome remarks delivered by **H.E Alicial dela Rosa-Bala**, Deputy of ASEAN Secretariat and Minister of Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, followed by the opening address from H.E Samheng Boros, Director General, MoSVY and officially opened by H.E Ngy Chanphal, Vice-Chairman of CARD, Secretary of State, Ministry of Interior. On behalf of ASEAN secretariat, H.E Alicial dela Rosa-Bala, expressed congratulations to the Kingdom of Cambodia to hosting this event for the initiative of the ASEAN SP framework that was proposed in 2012 leading to this inter-sectoral consultation today. As the year 2015 is about to come and this will bring both opportunities and challenges and it is important to understand the regional dynamics in the economic and political context. Strengthening of social protection is a way of keeping peace, ensure that vulnerable groups will not be marginalized with the growth and progress. She had expressed her full confidence consultation meeting will develop an effective responsive and inclusive action plan and wish all a fruitful discussion.

**H.E. Ngy Chanphal**, on behalf of the RGC extends the welcome remarks to the participants by emphasize important aspects in gathering regional experts, scientists and professionals in the SP field contributing to achieve milestone for the ASEAN declaration. Take action in including the recommendation for the draft of the Plan of Action, also based on the experiences of the countries. The declaration is the result of the consultation and adoption in 2013- the document was first presented in 2012 and the meeting on regional advocacy on SP was developed. During the ASEAN official meeting in Hanoi, the decision was made by member states on the development of the declaration in developing a social protection floor. Thanks to all of you from different sectorial bodies, we are able to move on from the concept note to develop the declaration in 2013. Now it is time to develop the plan of action for 2015. Growth has lifted millions out of poverty, but not all of them. Many are still poor and vulnerable to factors such as climate change. There is the position to secure food security and nutrition in the country. Achieved reduction of hunger but still malnutrition is still present with implicit costs if not addressed. SP needs to be established for efficiency and equitable growth in the region.

In the **Session 1**, Thematic Presentations “The ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection and the process of developing the Plan of Action”, **Ms Celine Peyron Bista**, ILO Regional office in Bangkok, had presented possible definitions of SP and the second part discussed key challenges across ASEAN countries identified as common issues. Social protection is a human right, not anymore a luxury but a right that should be internationally treated such as the Universal declaration. When talking about SP it refers to a support needed in different moment of life-lifecycle approach. Protection is provided by the society and each member of the society- social solidarity. Two different types of transfers- 1- financial support 2- access to services such as education, trainings and all kind services to enabled the capacity of the people. UN agency introduced the concept in 2009, with a high level of protection for the formal sector. To address the situation it was decided to address SP as a minimum to be guaranteed to the whole situation. Once SPF is guaranteed, higher levels of SP and benefits can be built. SP is an investment in human resources emphasizing the impact on the first 1000 days in life for children, access to health, education and trainings ensuring school attendance. Investing in SP means supporting protection when facing negative coping strategy such as taking children out of school. Therefore, investment in SP has high return and long term benefit.

**Mr Scott Stadbley**, UNDP, had presented Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for after 2015, which had been launched in July with proposal of including 17 goals and 169 targets followed in august in the release of intent to implement the agenda. Despite the progress in many areas, the SDGs still has gaps especially the need to address inequalities. Domestic finance will drive implementation but global partnership will be required. The role of SP is crucial in strengthening the system and gather efforts toward Post-2015. Importance of data and accountability is important including improving coordination. At this stage there is still work in progress. MDGs do not specifically address SP to allow flexibility to countries to choose their instruments. Now there is a global growing recognition for SP to be essential in reducing poverty and inequality.

**Session 2** comprised of the presentation on the Recommendations of the Tripartite Seminar on Strengthening Social Protection in ASEAN, 17-18 November 2014, Bangkok, Thailand, by Mr. Chinchai Checharoen, Technical Advisor on Social Development, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security of Thailand and the presentation on The ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection, proposed ASEAN Social Protection Framework, and Relevant initiatives of sectoral bodies H.E. Alicia dela Rosa-Bala, Deputy Secretary-General for ASCC, the ASEAN Secretariat. The workshop in Thailand was aiming at formulating the recommendation for the SP by divided into main three areas: 1. Progressively extend SP coverage, 2. Facilitate research, assessment and development of a monitoring framework, and 3. Ensure good governance, coordination and consultation with social partners. Furthermore, ASEAN Charter one of the main goal is to enhance livelihood of people with equitable access to opportunity and human development. There are other relevant declarations such as the ASEAN HR Declaration. Also CEDAW, CRS, CRPD and other related instruments.

The region should have a common understanding of social protection so the ASEAN secretariat is proposing a definition of SP as a public intervention that consists of policies and programmes designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by assessing the poor, at risk and vulnerable grouped such as but not limited to women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, migrant workers, older people, families and communities to enhance their capacities to better manage risks and enhance equal access to essential services and opportunities on a right based/ needs approach. Inspired by the declaration, DPs but expanded. There is a need to address the vulnerabilities and risks people are facing: 1. Life-cycle risks (from birth to death), 2. Social risks (trafficking, marginalization), and 3. Environment and natural disasters (Climate change is already with us. Some countries are

supposed to have their sunshine weather, but instead there are rain and flooding which are unusual for the geographic location and season). This also effects gas emissions. In 2015 another global conference will come with a second round on climate change. We are affected by the global development, example the crisis of 2008-2009 also because of the exports ASEAN members states are engaged into. Components of social protection included: 1. Social insurance, 2. Social assistance and, 3. Labour market interventions. It has been suggested that Social welfare and social assistance can be categorized under one cluster, Social insurance can either be contributory or not, and Labour market intervention and human resources development can go in line with each other. Key strategies included 1. Resource mobilization, 2. Capacity building, 3. Multi-sectoral approach, 4. Greater communication that SP is for all but there should be different levels of coverage. The communication strategy should be very clear on coverage and timeline, and 5. M&E, indicators to see the progress made. Generic indicators across the region that could be translated at a national level with a common framework to measure efforts on SP. ASEAN attempted to come with an inventory with measures in different sectors with no label of SP per se that could be covered under SP to use as reference at the bottom of the mind to have a common understanding of SP. In regard to the post 2015, ASEAN has a timeframe of 10 years. As mentioned in the declaration, countries will still have the lead in implementing the SP schemes. There is the need for benchmarking.

In the **Session 3** on Group Discussion “Identifying common priorities in Plan of Action for the implementation of ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection”, the participant were divided to address 3 main questions: 1. The remaining social protection gaps (policy framework, intervention, coverage, financing), 2. Mapping institutions involved in implementing social protection policies in each Member States, and 3. Consideration on the priorities of social protection interventions at national levels.

In **Session 4** on Group Discussion (three inter-sectoral groups), the participants were divided into 4 groups to identify common priorities in Plan of Action for the implementation of ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection. The groups were to address the questions on 1. Reviewing the zero-draft ASEAN Social Protection Framework, 2. Reviewing the zero-draft ASEAN Plan of Action, and 3. Identifying the priorities of social protection interventions at regional levels from the perspectives of different sectors. Refers to the ASEAN Declaration’s Strategies and Mechanisms.

In the **final Group discussion session** (the same inter-sectoral groups), the discussion focused on Towards a Plan of Action for the implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection with 3 main questions: 1. Actors, coordination mechanisms (central and local levels) and support (coordination with and among UN agencies, South-South cooperation) needed to implement the concrete actions, 2. Identifying possible synergies, mechanisms for coordination and cooperation opportunities among Member States, between the sectoral bodies and with social partners, as well as with international organizations, 3. Timeframe for the realization of these concrete actions and commitment and, 4. Potential resources to implement the actions.

As **The Next Step**, the final consolidated version of the Draft will be sent, for final comments, to Sectoral Bodies involved and hence to SOMSWD for cross-sector consultation. Within 2 months, the final version will be sent to ASEAN Secretariat for further endorsement from all Sectoral Bodies. The final document will be submitted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Summit in Malaysia next year.

The **Final session of the Inter-Sectoral Consultation** were moderated by Moderator: H.E. Dr. Vathana Sann, Deputy Secretary General, Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD), and H.E. Alicia dela Rosa-Bala, Deputy Secretary-General for ASCC, the ASEAN

Secretariat to finally review and comments on the ASEAN Framework and Plan of Actions for the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection and to discuss the next steps towards adoption of the ASEAN Framework and Plan of Actions for the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection. The plenary session reviewed the following component of the Draft ASEAN Framework and Plan of Actions for the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection:

- Vision, Goal, Objectives, Principles and Definition of Social Protection
- The Regional Social Protection Framework (vision, goal, objectives, risks addressed, core programmes, coverage, and key strategies)
- Policy and programmes
  - o Strengthen the implementation of SP program
  - o Advocate strategies that promote coverage, availability, comprehensiveness, quality, equality, affordability, and sustainability of various SP interventions
  - o Advocacy on social protection, study the portability of social insurance specifically the feasibility of its transferability across ASEAN Member States, and establish minimum standard and training needs for certain professions (health, welfare workers)
  - o Enhance the National Policy/Legislation for Universal Health Coverage in ASEAN Member States
- Capacity building
  - o Develop capacity for service providers
  - o Facilitate learning from each other's experience and best practices
  - o Ensure availability of technical assistance and expertise that strongly consider and are sensitive to the needs of vulnerable groups
- Monitoring and evaluation (at incremental approach from baseline to compiling the indicators, and develop the regional indicators)
  - o Develop a regional baseline information and assessment of social protection policies, programmes, and strategies
  - o Compile relevant global and national indicators on social protection to facilitate the development of ASEAN statistical indicators on social protection
  - o Develop ASEAN statistical indicators on social protection, and regularly update the database
- Institutionalization and sustainability
  - o Allocate adequate financial resources for social protection in line with national targets and subject to the capacity of each Government
  - o Ensure the active participation of other relevant sectors

In the **Closing Session**, Mr. Douangsy Thammavong, Director, Planning and Cooperation Department, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of Lao PDR (representing the SOMSWD Chair) mentioned the requirement for further discussion to enhance equal access of people at risks for better opportunities. The Inter-Sectoral Consultation had brought about the platform for sharing best practices and lessons learnt from one another. Dr. Hiroyuki Konuma, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific had mentioned that social protection not only helps individuals and families to cope with risks and reduce inequalities, it represents an investment to the society by the society. Individuals, especially children, through income security and access to goods and social services, are enabled to develop to their full potential. This would allow them to make meaningful contribution to their communities and countries through their life cycles. I would like to thank all participants for actively engaging over these two days and discussing the development of an ASEAN Plan of Action, in striving to adhere to the principles as stated on ASEAN Declaration. Specifically, I would like to express my

gratitude to the Royal Government of Cambodia and to the ASEAN Secretariat for hosting this important event. Specifically, evidence shows that social protection can have a promotional and transformative role in contributing to long-term inclusive and sustainable growth.

- Firstly, social protection helps with the accumulation of human capital over the life cycle.
- Social protection encourages innovation that will bring about higher income, for instance, farmers shifting from conservative methods to newer, more rewarding practices.
- Social protection can help the management of individual and social risks over the life-cycle on the basis of social solidarity and social justice.
- And lastly, social protection can reduce inequality through inclusive and pro-poor growth measures.

These four linkages are changing the perception of social protection from a short term palliative intervention to an investment for more inclusive and sustainable growth.

H.E Dr. Yim Chhay Ly, Deputy Prime Minister, Chairman of Council for Agricultural and Rural Development had delivered the closing remarks by addressing the following points for consideration:

- The mutual linkage between rural and urban areas, and among countries in the regions in the development through rural economy improvement and employment, especially for youth.
- The enhancement of political agenda to empower the rural community for livelihood development through the building of social dialogues, the access to necessary resources, and the participation in decision-making, where all of these components must be at the center of Post-2015 Development Agenda “Leave no one behind”.
- Developing resilience and tolerance of poor household to crises that push them under the poverty line and prevent them from benefiting the development impact.
- Transforming poor people in rural areas and small-scale farmers into the engine of ensuring food security and nutrition at local and national level through the institutional reform on policy framework and evidence-based decision making.
- Creating interconnected systems that cross sectors, generations and geographies. It means scaling up local solutions to solve global challenges – and adapting them in new contexts. It means shaping new markets and spurring the private sector to design for development. It means creating solutions together with communities.

In his own believe, as today's children are the citizens of tomorrow's world, their survival, protection and development is the prerequisite for the future development of humanity. Empowerment of the younger generation with knowledge and resources to meet their basic human needs and to grow to their full potential should be a primary goal of national development. As their individual development and social contribution will shape the future of the world, investment in children's health, nutrition and education is the foundation for national development. These investments in social protection, especially protection of children, young people, girls and women are essential to sustain development in the long run. If we do not invest in our young people now, the cost of dealing with the consequences of lack of social investment will be enormous.