

GLOBAL COOPERATION NEWSLETTER

June 2008

In this edition:

Social Protection in the Asian Region
Understanding Global Social Policy – New Book
Aid and Accountability
Trends in Sustainable Development 2008-2009
UN Guides in French
Latest Nasty Email Fraud
ICSW 33rd Global Conference

Social Protection in the Asian Region

The South East Asia and Pacific Region of ICSW has released a draft discussion paper on social protection. The paper is entitled *Social Protection in ASEAN: Issues and Challenges for ASEAN and its Member Countries*. It is in top news on our website www.icsw.org

The paper was released by ICSW at the ASEAN Government - NGO Forum held in Vietnam recently. The paper was prepared for ICSW by Paguman Singh.

"Governments must develop and implement policies to ensure that all people have adequate economic and social protection during unemployment, ill health, maternity, child rearing, widowhood, disability and old age"

The World Summit on Social Development, Copenhagen 1995.

Economic and social pressures in ASEAN

ASEAN countries, while developing economically and recovering from the financial institutions crisis of the late 1990's, are nevertheless generally facing the pressures of globalization and ageing. It is generally accepted that globalization has made social protection safety nets more essential for at least four reasons.

- cushioning the burden of restructuring;
- increasing the legitimacy and acceptability of economic reforms;
- enabling risk taking by individuals and firms through providing a floor level income in the case of losses; and
- countering the effects of workforce mobility, urbanisation and migration of labour which tend to break down traditional, family and community based social protection systems.

In addition, ageing populations also put pressure on traditional social protection systems as more people in the younger generation are increasingly less able to provide for the greater number of older family and community members.

Developing social security protection systems

In the face of these pressures, developing countries need to carefully examine the design of social security protection systems so as to move, even if slowly over a number of decades, in the right direction.

After examining social protection needs for the next millennium, primarily to ensure the long term sustainability and viability of existing pension and provident funds, the International Labour Organization (1994) recommended the implementation of a multi pillar system of social protection.

ILO and World Bank three pillar approach

The first and most important **social assistance** pillar is the “safety net” pillar which comprises universal rights based programs which are **non-contributory** being financed from tax revenues. These payments are **means tested** against income and assets so they are targeted to the most vulnerable and needy. They are **publicly managed** or administered by the government or its agencies.

The second pillar is the **social insurance** or saving pillar where individuals contribute a portion of their income into individual or personal accounts for future income protection. There is usually an employer contribution to these accounts as well – especially for public sector employees. The programs provide for income replacement and benefits in kind for the contingencies of unemployment, sickness, maternity, employment injury and pensions for the long term contingencies of old age, invalidity and survivorship.

The third pillar is the individual **voluntary, private insurance** pillar designed to provide additional coverage to those who can afford the premiums.

Developing social protection systems is urgent because of long lead times

As ASEAN countries have increasingly embraced globalization, it is not surprising that social protection has become an important public policy issue in recent years. However, priority has been given to stability and economic growth and social policies, to address the social consequences, languish a distant second.

These challenges and the problems they create have to be addressed through structural changes and the provision of formal social protection and social security systems. Such systems have a long lead-time before they can provide adequate retirement income support in a sustainable manner and address the short term protection for sickness, maternity and survivorship needs. Hence, there is considerable urgency in initiating the reform process. The traditional view that social security payments are handouts that are inconsistent with the values of Asian society and threaten the family and its support system has to be challenged as it is founded on a lack in the understanding of social security concepts.

Public sector, but not private sector, second pillar protection

Most ASEAN countries, with the exception of Cambodia, have relatively developed, second pillar schemes covering public sector employees. Governments, being the largest employer, have created relatively generous retirement schemes for their public employees and have generally provided them and their families with medical treatment coverage as well. However, the general public does not enjoy similar coverage.

In the main, ASEAN countries do not have first pillar, universal coverage, safety net provisions for the general population despite the fact that all countries have made commitments to extending social protection. However, policies for extending social

protection in most ASEAN countries are either weak or vague and lack an integrated view of old age income protection, health and other needs.

Conclusion

The social protection that is in place throughout ASEAN countries is very limited and is characterised by:

- fragmented administration with various ministries, departments and organizations providing the protection;
- coverage limited to a small proportion of the formal sector; and
- focused mainly on old age protection.

There are several issues and challenges that emerge from the analysis of social security systems in ASEAN. In each country the local contexts, political, demographic and other conditions differ and hence the challenges and issues also differ. However, there are enough similarities in the prevailing economic and social challenges for ASEAN to take a more determined interest, and perhaps it is the Ministers for Social Welfare and Social Development (or their equivalent) who should lead this process.

ASEAN countries and their governments need to review their present systems and consider what policy changes are necessary to implement better social security protection provisions in each ASEAN country.

Each country will first need to address the limitations of their respective system

Understanding Global Social Policy – New Book

Edited by Nicola Yeates

As a field of study, global social policy has grown in strength and remit over the last decade and offers a fresh set of perspectives on contemporary debates within social policy. This book is the first student-aimed textbook that comprehensively engages with this field of study, examining the key theoretical and policy debates and issues.

Written by an international team of leading social policy analysts, it examines the impact of the prefix 'global' on the ways in which social policy as a field of study is constructed and explores how the globalising strategies of state and non-state actors intersect with social policy concerns, evaluating their impacts upon social welfare.

https://www.policypress.org.uk/catalog/product_info.php?cPath=&products_id=1334 or <http://www.policypress.org.uk>

Turning the tables: aid and accountability under the Paris framework

European Network on Debt and Development (EURODAD), April 2008. The report is based on analysis of aid effectiveness as the result of research in seven countries, conducted by southern and northern civil society organizations and coordinated by the European Network on Debt and Development (Eurodad). The report focuses on progress against two principles of the Paris Declaration – ownership and accountability.

Trends in Sustainable Development 2008-2009

The report "*Trends in Sustainable Development 2008-2009*" finds that efforts to reduce poverty and improve food security in developing countries are hampered by declining support for strong agricultural growth, long considered a hallmark of successful poverty reduction strategies. Strong agricultural growth is four times more effective than growth in other sectors in benefiting the poorest half of the population. You can download the report for free at:

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/publications/trends2008/>

UN Guides in French

The UN Non Government Liaison Service (NGLS) has produced two of its flagship publications in French. *International Decision-making and Negotiations at the United Nations: A Guide* and *UN System Engagement with NGOs, Civil Society, the Private Sector and Other Actors: A Compendium* are now both available in French. For more information in English

http://www.un-ngls.org/site/article.php3?id_article=6 in Spanish

http://www.un-ngls.org/site/article.php3?id_article=139 and French

http://www.un-ngls.org/site/article_fr.php3?id_article=516 [click here](#)

Latest Nasty Email Fraud

I thought I should draw your attention to the latest practice of the nasty people who play on our good nature. The perpetrators somehow steal a real email address and contents and then write to people in the contacts. The subject line is something like "An Emergency....Please I Need Your Help". The message is very personal. They come from the address of some one you know. Your colleague says he or she is stranded and needs money to pay the hotel bill. They perpetrators give the name, address, email and phone of a hotel. Don't reply.

2008 ICSW 33rd Global Conference on Social Welfare – 80th Anniversary

Only days now to the opening on the 30th June. You will find the latest on speakers and the programme at <http://www.icsw2008.org/>

Dates: 30th June to 4th July 2008 **Venue:** Tours, France **Contact Information:** globalconference@cnas-icsw.org The theme of the conference is Social Work, Social Protection and Social Development: Where have we been? Where are we going?

The content of this Global Newsletter may be freely reproduced or cited provided the source is acknowledged. Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily the policy of ICSW.

Newsletter Editor: Denys Correll – Executive Director. ICSW C/- MOVISIE
Netherlands Centre for Social Development
PO Box 19129
3501 DC Utrecht
Netherlands

Website www.icsw.org Email: icsw@icsw.org