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"ASEAN member states agree to the importance of caring for the elderly"

This was the headline in the Brunei Times after the seventh ASEAN Ministerial Meeting for Social Welfare and Development, November 2010. Member states agreed that the welfare of senior citizens continued to be one of the main issues and concerns needing to be addressed.

The declaration followed the proposal from the Government – Non Government Organisations (GO-NGO Forum that prepared the draft for the consideration of the ASEAN Ministerial meeting. This was the 5th GO-NGO Forum organised by ICSW and the ASEAN Secretariat. ICSW brought together national member councils of ICSW and representatives of expert organisations including HelpAge International.



Delegates to the ASEAN GO-NGO preparatory meeting

The Brunei Times further reported - In a significant move, the "Brunei Darussalam Declaration on Strengthening the Family Institutions: Caring for the Elderly People" was adopted by both the Seventh Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Ministerial meeting for Social Welfare and Development (7th AMMSWD) and third AMMSWD + 3 (Japan, Korea and China) member countries.

The states agreed to concerted effort to promote the quality of life and well-being of the elderly, as well as reducing the social risks faced by a generation of people who have helped develop the region. They recognised the ageing population was a growing trend in the South East Asian region and exchanged views on strengthening the family institution to provide care for the elderly.

Ministers from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Japan and Korea unanimously acknowledged it was the responsibility of governments to look after the elderly population by introducing financial and

medical assistance schemes. Brunei's Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, Pehin Orang Kaya Pekerma Laila Diraja Dato Paduka Hj Hazair Hj Abdullah highlighted the growth of the ageing population in member countries and the world and said the declaration's issuance was "very concrete and significant for the enhancement of the social development as well as welfare".

Some of the items adopted in the declaration include: promotion of quality health care, support and social protection for the elderly, preventive and rehabilitative health care, secure, active and healthy ageing by reducing the incidence of poverty among the elderly and promoting the awareness and ability of the younger generation to live a healthy lifestyle.

The countries were requested to begin measures to implement their commitment to elderly people, including providing more resources and annual reviews. They will also look into developing a social support system and encourage the development of education programs that enhance the ability of families and to care for the elderly while providing appropriate care and support.

The declaration will see countries promoting quality of life for the elderly by creating conditions that will enhance their self-reliance and ability to remain economically active and achieve secure, active and healthy ageing by reducing the incidence of poverty among the elderly.

To further enhance their quality of life in terms of health, each ASEAN member government will continue to promote quality health care, support and social protection for the elderly including preventive and rehabilitative health care and providing support for capacity building for primary health providers, social workers, caregivers and volunteers in delivering care for the elderly.

Also recognised were the social impacts of ageing populations. Life expectancies are rising steadily which increase the challenges of providing adequate care and support for the elderly.

"The care of the elderly is an ongoing thing, and there will be no final stage in overcoming the problem, as there are always new things that need to be introduced. Through these meetings we can share all the best practices and experiences of other countries in how we can further enhance and improve the standard of care for the elderly in our respective countries," said Pehin Dato Hj Hazair.



Braema Mathiapparanam ICSW Regional President leading discussions on caring for the elderly

At the conclusion of the GO-NGO Forum Braema Mathiapparanam said, "This was a most satisfactory conclusion to the 5th GO-NGO Forum. ICSW is pleased with the steps taken by member governments of ASEAN to improve the care provisions for older people."

Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin – new executive director UNFPA



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently announced the appointment of Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin (Kenya) as the new Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). He will succeed Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, and will assume office on 1 January 2011 for a term of four years. For more information on the challenges Dr Osotimehin will encounter read Rachel Nugent (Center for Global Development) at http://blogs.cgdev.org/globaldevelopment/2010/11/can-new-leader-get-respect-for-un-population-agency.php?utm_source=nl_weekly&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=nl_weekly_11302010

India's Microcredit Meltdown



The high-flying Indian microcredit industry is in the midst of its version of the U.S. subprime lending crisis. Just back from the epicentre in Andhra Pradesh, David Roodman Senior Fellow at the Center for Global Development untangles a tale of greed, political machinations, and good intentions gone awry. David Roodman has written extensively on microcredit – details and more on this story at http://blogs.cgdev.org/open_book/2010/11/understanding-india%E2%80%99s-microcredit-crisis.php?utm_source=nl_weekly&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=nl_weekly_11302010

Factors in the development of people with disabilities in Ghana

Recently ICSW Vice President Charles Abbey was in Finland to undertake a course in human rights at the Institute for Human Rights, Abo Akademi University. Charles was interviewed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs newsletter during his stay in Finland. Charles said "People with disabilities should be seen as actors, not objects of charity. There are more than 600 million disabled people, of whom two thirds live in developing countries. People with disabilities need to participate in the development of society just like everybody else,"



Charles aims to acquire funding and to establish a Ghana NGO Forum to plan a strategy for implementation of the rights of people with disabilities and their participation in society. "We could hold, say, television and radio debates, which would involve people with disabilities. There is a need for training and awareness-raising. People should be told that even if they are disabled, it does not mean that they do not have the power to do things.

Of the world's population about ten percent of people have disabilities. Ghana is estimated to be the same, and that means more than two million people have one or more disabilities.

People with disabilities face practical problems of finding employment. Buildings and buses are not accessible to people with disabilities.

Ghana has sought in recent years to improve the status of people with disabilities. In 2006 the Parliament adopted the Disability Act which aims to improve the status of disabled people through promoting training and employment opportunities.

<http://global.finland.fi/Public/default.aspx?contentid=206951&contentlan=1&culture=fi-FI>

Yaounde Tripartite Declaration on the implementation of the Social Protection Floor

Tripartite delegates from 47 African member states of the International Labour Organisation attended the Second African Decent Work Symposium "Building a Social Protection Floor with the

Global Jobs Pact” The symposium was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon in October 2010. Having reviewed the conclusions on the outcomes of a number of historical milestones in the development of social protection policy during the past decades and having discussed the strategic options available for the extension of social security, the delegates adopted the Yaounde Tripartite Declaration on the implementation of the Social Protection Floor “in full recognition of the urgent need for all African Member States and Social Partners to start the effective and rapid implementation of a Social Protection Floor for all Africans.” The Declaration can be found at: <http://www.ilo.org/gimi/gess/RessShowRessource.do?ressourceId=19140>

New Gateway on Social Protection is launched

The South-South Learning Gateway on Social Protection <http://south-south.ipc-undp.org/> was launched during a workshop in South-Africa. The website is an initiative of the UNDP International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) <http://www.ipc-undp.org/>

The idea of the website has its roots in the Africa-Brazil Cooperation Programme on Social Protection, which started in 2008 to support the development and implementation of effective social protection policies and foster South-South learning with partner African countries.

The website has been set up as a “virtual bookcase” with a searchable database of social protection materials from across the world. The collection includes tools, case studies, policy papers and research. Besides the library, there is a section featuring a social protection mapping of developing countries. “We are aiming to expand the knowledge base and capacities of developing countries to design and implement nationally-owned poverty reduction strategies, bridging the gaps between theory, policy and practice with accessible and diverse social protection information, as well as providing a space where practitioners can share ideas, experiences and resources”, explained Melissa Andrade, coordinator of the IPC-IG’s South-South Learning cluster.

All policy makers, institutions, research centres as well as civil society organisations interested on social protection policy dialogue are welcome to join this network.

Rethinking social protection using a gender lens

ODI Working Papers 320, October 2010. Authors: Rebecca Holmes and Nicola Jones



This paper synthesises findings from a multi-country research project examining the extent to which existing social protection programming approaches are reinforcing women’s traditional roles and responsibilities, or harnessing the potential for social protection to transform gender relations in economic and social spheres. 58 pages ISBN: 978 1 907288 31 9 <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/5099.pdf>

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