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A World Organisation Promoting Social Development

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6th ASEAN GO NGO Forum moves on Social Protection

Representatives of ASEAN member countries met with civil society representatives at the 6th ASEAN GO NGO Forum held in Bangkok, Thailand on 20th September to establish a regional approach to a social protection floor.

Before the GO-NGO Forum, ICSW ran a two day intensive preparatory civil society workshop with inputs from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The recommendations from the workshop form the basis for attaining Social Protection Floor Initiatives (SPFI) in each ASEAN Member State.

The following are the official recommendations of the sixth ASEAN GO-NGO Forum for Social Welfare and Development on the "*Establishment of the Social Protection Floor on Social Welfare and Development within ASEAN*".

"We, the participants of the 6th ASEAN GO-NGO Forum for Social Welfare and Development held on 20 September 2011 in Bangkok, Thailand, from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam;
Acknowledged that everyone, as a member of society, is entitled to have equal access to social protection covering essential services including social security schemes; healthcare services;

nutrition; care and education for children; as well as social assistance transfers (cash or in-kind) for the poor and vulnerable groups;

Acknowledged that social protection plays an important role in reducing vulnerabilities of the disadvantaged groups in the society including the older persons, people with disabilities, children, women, people living in poverty, and those working in the informal sector who may not be comprehensively covered by the existing social protection schemes;

Further acknowledged that the existing social safety nets in ASEAN Member States may not be adequate in protecting the people from the risk of falling through the nets and, thus, there is a need to set up or strengthen the social protection floor;

Mindful that while many of ASEAN Member States have already relatively comprehensive social protection systems for the formal sector, there is a need to expand the coverage and delivery systems to cover all citizens;

Agreed on the need to strengthen cooperation amongst ASEAN Member States towards universal coverage of social protection to the peoples of ASEAN through the following actions:

1. Ensure participatory and rights-based approach in designing, implementing and monitoring social protection schemes in ASEAN Member States;
2. Promote the mainstreaming of the concerns of everybody in the society, especially the vulnerable groups such as older persons, people with disabilities, children and women, and their participation in the development, implementation and monitoring of social protection legislations, policies and programmes in ASEAN Member States;
3. Enhance the support systems and commitment to improve social protection for all, especially the vulnerable groups of society, to enable them to live in dignity as well as to have equal opportunities to employment enabling them to be self-reliant by setting up minimum standards of social protection in ASEAN;
4. Encourage study on the existing legislations, policies and programmes and their impacts to the human development in ASEAN Member States with the intention of exploring the possibilities and challenges of expanding social insurance schemes to cover informal sector comprehensively;
5. Convene a platform to enhance the knowledge among government officials, NGOs, and social workers on the social protection floor initiative (SPFI) and their capacity to implement social protection schemes progressively;
6. Continue information sharing and exchange of views among government officials, NGOs, international organisations, and other stakeholders in ASEAN Member States on social protection with the objective of learning from the best practices and experiences of each other in improving the social protection coverage and delivery service;
7. Mobilise resources and promote CSR role of the private sector in the region to ensure that adequate financial and human resources are secured for sustainable social protection that is widely accessible to all peoples especially the vulnerable groups;
8. Develop regional statistical indicators in ASEAN to measure the development of vulnerable groups as the result of social protection implementation in ASEAN Member States;
9. Establish an inter-sectorial consultative mechanism in ASEAN and its Member States to promote information sharing, regional cooperation and evaluate the implementation of social protection initiatives;
10. Encourage all ASEAN Member States to ratify the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) and foster its implementation at community level;
11. Recommend the Senior Officials on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD) to issue an ASEAN Declaration that expresses the commitment of ASEAN Member States at a higher level to strengthen the social protection floor initiative (SPFI) implementation.

The participants of the 6th ASEAN GO-NGO Forum on Social Welfare and Development expressed their high appreciation to the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security of Thailand for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangement of the Forum. The participants also expressed appreciation for the information sharing by the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Disabled Peoples' International Asia Pacific (DPI-AP) in the Forum."

(ICSW acknowledges with gratitude the contribution of the staff of the Social Welfare, Women, Labour and Migrant Workers Division of the ASEAN Secretariat to the success of the Forum. ICSW thanks the President and staff of The National Council on Social Welfare of Thailand for their hospitality and managing the logistics. UNESCAP and ILO made valuable inputs which we appreciate. The workshop and the civil society contribution to the GO-NGO Forum were made possible through the leadership of ICSW Regional President Braema Mathiaparanam and Programme Officer Dilpreet Kaur.)

UN High-level Meeting on Noncommunicable Disease Prevention and Control

Anne Herdt formally ICSW representative in Geneva, now in the USA, attended the September UN meeting on noncommunicable diseases (NCD). The following is an extract from her full report.

The Basics: "Left unchecked, NCDs...can break the bank." Margaret Chan, Director General WHO. NCDs are responsible for the deaths of around 36 million people every year, that is, about 10,000 people every day and there is a great deal of disability, pain and suffering as well as increasing the health care burden individually and socially.

NCDs - cardiovascular, chronic respiratory, cancer and diabetes have attributes that are common to all: unhealthy diet, smoking, lack of physical activity and excess alcohol. They can also be genetically caused.

As with poverty, NCDs are a vicious circle that hinders development. Four out of five of NCD deaths occur in the poorest countries. Prevention is the first priority as it can be inexpensive whereas the cure can lead to bankruptcy.

Governments, largely through laws and increased taxation, are enjoined to encourage healthy diets, provide space for physical activity, drastically restrict the opportunities to smoke and drink to excess.

NCDs endanger the achievement of MDGs, especially 4 and 5, women and children.

The Plenary

The High-level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases which took place at the UN Headquarters on 19-20 September, 2011 is only the second high-level meeting on health ever convened by the General Assembly. (The first was a high-level meeting on the HIV and Aids pandemic).

The opening Plenary Session consisted of almost 90 speeches by presidents and ministers of health. The basics were there, if national public commitments lead to in-country activities, the goals of this high-level meeting will have been served. The Report of the UN Secretary General on the prevention and control of NCDs is worth reading -

<http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/65/issues/ncdiseases.shtml>

The meeting accepted by consensus the Political Declaration to combat these deadly diseases. They did request the Secretary General, in cooperation with Director General of WHO to present to the General Assembly 67th session a report on strengthening multi-sectorial preventive actions and in the 68th session on progress and achievement toward the MDGs. In 2014 there will be a comprehensive review of the status of the implementation of the Declaration.

A 48 page "meetings coverage" by the Department of Public Information highlights the various presentations: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/ga11138.doc.htm>

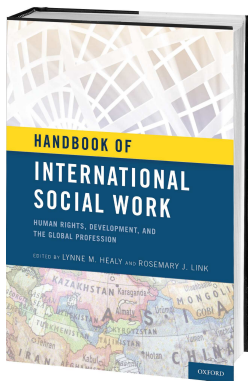
The most penetrating talk was delivered by WHO Director-General Margaret Chan. She was

unusually blunt in this diplomatic arena, but she made her points well: these are 'lifestyle diseases and that it is not a failure of individual willpower, but a failure of policy at the highest level; when you see widespread obesity, it is a telltale sign of problems; a watershed event that replaces ignorance and inertia with awareness and right actions immediately; according to a study by Harvard University, over the next 20 years NCDs would cost the global economy 30 trillion dollars; she deplored the despicable efforts of the tobacco industry and urged higher taxes on tobacco products. "You have the power to stop and reverse the NCDs disaster...we must act now" she urged.

Rethinking Socio-Economic Policy for a Recovery for All

UNICEF is calling for papers on "Rethinking Socio-Economic Policy for a Recovery for All." UNICEF encourages you to submit your latest research and thinking on the topic – send an abstract. In principle UNICEF prefers papers in English, but if some excellent summary of data country evidence has been done French and Spanish, it could be translated. Interested authors are invited to submit papers on any of the sub-themes to iortiz@unicef.org, jchai@unicef.org and mcummins@unicef.org No later than **20 October 2011**. Each paper should include an abstract, JEL classification and the sub-theme for which it is being submitted.

Handbook of International Social Work Human Rights, Development, and the Global Profession



Edited by Lynne M. Healy and Rosemary J. Link. This handbook is the first major reference text to provide a solid foundation of knowledge for students and researchers alike. The extensive collection of 73 chapters confirms the integral and necessary nature of international social work knowledge to all areas of practice, policy, and research. Chapters systematically map the key issues, organizations, (including ICSW), competencies, training and research needs, and ethical guidelines central to international social work practice today, emphasizing the linkages among social work, development, and human rights practice. To order - Phone: 800-451-7556 Fax: 919-677-1303 Web: www.oup.com/us Mail: Oxford University Press, Order Dept. 2001 Evans Road, Cary, NC 27513 2012 560 pp. 9780195333619 hardcover \$89.95 or \$71.95 with promo code 30152 for 20% discount

Call for abstracts - 2012 Joint World Conference of Social Work and Social Development: Action and Impact

The organisers have made the first call for abstracts. **Deadline – 30th November 2011. Over 40 received already**

Visit the conference website to obtain information about the conference and the call for abstracts. Information is available in English, French, Spanish and Swedish: www.swsd-stockholm-2012.org For questions regarding registration, hotel booking, social events, abstract handling, exhibition management and general information please contact Congrex at socialwork2012@congrex.com Regarding the scientific programme you are welcome to contact the Conference Secretariat that opened on 15th August. The conference administrator is Jöran Lindeberg jlindeberg@icsw.org

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