

Talking Points for Mr. Chantum Chea,
Chair of the Fifth Session of the Committee on Social Development
29 May 2019, 75th ESCAP Commission Session

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen. In November, I had the honour to be elected Chair of the fifth Session of the Committee on Social Development. In this capacity, I am delivering a brief oral statement on the main outcomes and recommendations of the Committee. The full report is also available in document ESCAP/CSD/2018/4.

The main objective of the fifth Session of the Committee on Social Development was to review and discuss strategies for leaving no one behind; and strategies for strengthening social protection in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. The Committee was also asked to take note of the outcomes of the Midterm Review of the Asian and the Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development as well as the Regional Framework for Action on HIV and AIDS beyond 2015. Finally, the Committee was invited to consider the future programme focus of the subprogramme on social development for the period 2018-2019.

Social protection was especially recognized by the Committee as a key tool to ensuring inclusion of all vulnerable groups, while contributing to poverty eradication, reduced inequality and economic growth.

The Committee expressed support for strengthening regional cooperation on social protection. Reference was made to the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation No.202 and to the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection, indicating that it was timely for the Asia-Pacific region to embark on similar initiatives.

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Considering the above, I would like to conclude this brief summary of the deliberations of the fifth Session of the Committee on Social Development by highlighting its two recommendations:

Recommendation 1: The Committee requested the secretariat to continue and strengthen support to member States through analysis, knowledge-sharing and technical assistance on the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, in particular in relation to social protection, women's empowerment, population dynamics and disability inclusion.

Recommendation 2: The Committee recommended strengthening regional cooperation on social protection, and encourages the secretariat, in coordination with relevant United Nations agencies, to explore and develop a modality for regional cooperation to support member States in this regard.

I understand that the ESCAP secretariat has already followed up to the second recommendation by requesting member States to nominate social protection experts to a Group of Experts that will develop an appropriate regional cooperation modality on social protection. I am pleased that my own country, Cambodia, is also represented in that Group of Experts. The first meeting of the Group will be held here in Bangkok next month.

It is my sincere conviction that the deliberations and final recommendations of the Group of Experts will be instrumental for broadening coverage of social protection in Asia and the Pacific, and as such, effectively contribute to achieving several of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation for your active participation during the Committee on Social Development and also thank the ESCAP team who supported me and the Bureau and made it a successful event. Finally, please allow me to thank you again for the trust bestowed upon me to serve as Chair of the Committee for Social Development at its fifth session and to submit its conclusion for your consideration here today.

Thank you very much.

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