



**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
THE KOREA INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

Regional Consultation on the Analysis of Income Support Schemes in Asia and the Pacific

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**REPORT ON THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON THE ANALYSIS
OF INCOME SUPPORT SCHEMES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

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I. RECOMMENDATIONS ON ANALYSIS OF INCOME SUPPORT SCHEMES

1. The Regional Consultation on the Analysis of Income Support Schemes in Asia and the Pacific recommended the following, focusing in particular on refining the research framework and the programme survey template:

- a. To further define the terms 'social protection' and 'income support scheme' by:
 - Using key parameters such as benefits, beneficiaries, financing, delivery system and historical developments; and
 - Taking into account the necessity and importance of including diverse schemes in the research project regardless of time period, scope and target focus.
- a. To analyze the particular social, economic, cultural and political context in the reports (countries, sub-regions and the entire region) on social protection focusing on income support schemes, including complexity in social policy formulation, planning and implementation.
- b. To address the particular situation and important role of informal social protection in the Asia-Pacific region.
- c. To further develop the programme survey template to establish a common understanding among partners. In particular, the template should include the following:
 - An annotated glossary and definitions of key terms and concepts;
 - Indication of the poverty line used for the analysis, if necessary, in cases where there is no poverty line as well as when there are many;
 - Noting any poverty graduation strategies in income support schemes in the survey and analysis;
 - Provide guidance on how to assess in-kind benefits;
 - Ensure an adequate emphasis on gender such as accessibility to programmes and the impact of conditions related to targeting; and
 - Provide information on the nature of monitoring and evaluation systems.
- d. To acknowledge that micro-level impacts may be just as important as macro-level change. A particular scheme may have a strong impact at the local level or for specific social groups but it may have a limited impact at the macro level in the overall reduction of poverty and inequality. Such programmes should still be considered as significant.
- e. To consider, as a potential follow-up activity of this project, sharing policy options identified from the developing countries identified through this research, in addition to advocacy among Asian-Pacific countries on income support schemes and social protection.

II. PROCEEDINGS

A. Opening Session

2. In his welcoming statement, Mr. Yong Ha Kim, President, KIHASA, highlighted the role of social protection systems in keeping people out of poverty and empowering the marginalized to become capable partners in social and economic life. Endeavour to strengthen social protection, he emphasized, is to help foster a condition where benefits from economic growth be trickled all the way down to the bottom and the Republic of Korea have sought to develop and improve social protection arrangements in this way. Through the project, he stated, social protection in Asia and the Pacific should be further strengthened and, in doing so, KIHASA as government think-tank in social protection area could contribute a lot if its experience and ideas be fully shared.

3. Mr. Donovan Storey, Chief, Social Policy and Population Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP, in his opening statement, emphasized the importance of social protection, particularly income support schemes, as an essential basis for inclusive social and economic development in Asia and the Pacific. He indicated that there was greater recognition of the need for the establishment of comprehensive social protection systems. The move towards universal entitlements could be made via the social protection staircase. He emphasized the value of the project in strengthening social protection systems in the region by providing a better set of data and information on policies for policymakers.

B. Social Protection and Income Support Schemes

4. Mr. Suk Myung Yun, KIHASA, presented on the definitions and parameters of social protection and income support schemes. In his presentation, Mr. Yun focused on the following: 1) developing a conceptual and operational definition of social protection; 2) the dividends of social protection; 3) social protection floors and staircases; 4) conceptual and operational definitions of income support schemes; and 5) the dividends of income support schemes. Mr. Yun further gave an overview on the development and analysis of data for the project, which would entail three steps: 1) country reports with completed programme survey template; 2) cross-country comparisons; and 3) the Asia-Pacific regional report.

5. Mr. Deuk Yung Ko, SDD, ESCAP, gave a presentation on the purpose and scope of the research project. He indicated that the key beneficiaries of the project would be policymakers, thus the project would aim to help policymakers find the most appropriate options to address the needs of people through strengthening social protection programmes. With regards to the scope of the project, Mr. Ko stated that as there are a number of income support schemes in Asia and the Pacific, there should be a decision on whether the project should focus on a broad and inclusive term or whether it should have a narrower focus.

6. The designated discussant, Mr. Joon Yong Jo, commented on the definitions of social protection and income support schemes before the floor was opened up for discussion.

7. Participants noted that both the conceptual and operational definitions of social protection and income support schemes should be debated more vigorously and further defined. Particularly important parameters and issues included: 1) benefits (what is provided and over what period of time); 2) beneficiaries (identification of eligibility standards and selection mechanism); 3) financing (how to finance and by whom); 4) delivery system; and 5) scaling up over time (changes and developments over time).

8. It was noted that income support schemes are part of the social protection floor and this project can play a key role in building both the social protection floor and staircase towards universal provision using a rights-based approach.

9. The need to take into consideration the specific context and circumstances of the Asia-Pacific region when conducting the research was stressed by many participants. The following key points were made:

- a. Developed countries that have greatly influenced the research and development of good practices on social protection in this region did so through trial and error. More recently developing countries provided good policy options. In this sense, the project should provide a platform for data and knowledge sharing among Asia-Pacific countries but also between developed and developing countries;
- b. In Asia and the Pacific, culture has played an important role and has influenced the provision of social protection. The cultural dimension should therefore be considered in the research; and
- c. There are significant inequalities within societies. The informal provision of social protection plays an important role in many of the countries in the region.

10. Regardless of the importance of informal social protection and its prevalence in the region, it was agreed that this research should focus on social protection and income support schemes formally provided by the state due to the limited data and information available on informal schemes and given the limited scope of the project. However, to reflect this, the situation and the role of informal social protection in the region should be described in the country reports.

11. It was argued that the dividends of social protection should be substantiated by evidence so that policy makers, the key beneficiaries of the project, can easily see the benefits and can further advocate for the establishment of comprehensive social protection and income support schemes.

C. Review of the Research Framework

12. Mr. Suk Myung Yun, KIHASA, presented the research framework for compiling and analyzing income support schemes. The research will cover the five ESCAP sub-regions including 1) the Pacific; 2) East and North-East Asia; 3) North and Central Asia; 4) South and South-West Asia; and 5) South-East Asia. The programme survey template will be the principal data collection tool and will be complemented by conducting literature review on each country and/or sub-region.

13. Mr. Yun presented the various categories and types of data that will be compiled and analyzed through the programme survey template. The template will be divided into two sections. The first is the basic description and the second is the in-depth analysis. In the basic description, the following would be included: 1) programme title; 2) starting date; 3) purpose of the programme introduction; 4) definition of income support and/or social protection by the programme objectives; 5) coverage; 6) eligibility criteria; 7) targeting mechanism; 8) benefits; 9) entry; 10) benefit duration; 11) graduation; 12) cost; 13) financing; 14) delivery mechanism; 15) governance of the programme; 16) legal framework; and 17) link with other income support programmes. The in-depth analysis would cover: 1) benefit adequacy; 2) policy impact (on

poverty reduction, on livelihood, and inequality reduction); 3) efficiency (targeting performance and administration cost); 4) changes and development in terms of time series; 5) monitoring system; 6) evaluation system; and 7) programme position in broader social protection.

14. Ms. Eun Kyong Ko, OECD-Korea Policy Centre, gave a presentation on the Social Expenditure Database and OECD Social Indicators, Society at a Glance. She indicated that OECD has made efforts to expand its social indicators and database and, that the OECD database and social indicators could be used in this research.

15. Participants agreed that the programme survey template should be flexible and take into consideration the local context. The following suggestions were made to refine the programme survey template:

- a. Each country and sub-region has unique social, economic, cultural and political conditions which have influenced the development and implementation of income support schemes. These should therefore be taken into consideration in the research.
- b. Some countries in the Asia-Pacific region do not identify and/or acknowledge the level of poverty, and other categories may need to be used;
- c. Sub-regional experts could utilize different national understanding of the terms used in the programme survey template. To avoid any misunderstanding and improve implementation, a glossary of key terms and concepts should be developed and included in the template;
- d. If in-depth analysis is to measure policy impacts by comparing several indicators over a period of time, solely looking at income support schemes would not be enough to explain impact as there could be a number of other variables affecting change. Therefore, additional surveys may be necessary to strengthen the analysis; and
- e. There could be income support schemes which have a great impact at the local level, but may not have a significant impact at the national level. Simple comparisons of poverty the macro level may not be sufficient to note the impact of those schemes. Further work is required to capture the impact of those income support schemes.

D. Discussions on the Programme Survey Template

16. Under this agenda item, one sub-regional expert from each ESCAP sub-region (the Pacific, East and North-East Asia, North and Central Asia, South and South-West Asia, and South-East Asia) presented on income support schemes utilizing draft the programme survey template. These presentations were followed by discussions on the examples as well as the draft programme survey template.

17. Mr. Edi Suharto presented an overview of two income support schemes in Indonesia as examples for South-East Asia: 1) Cash Transfer (BLT) and 2) Conditional Cash Transfer (PKH/Family Hope Programme). He described the policy impact as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each scheme. He mentioned that the ASEAN region has diverse social protection schemes depending on a country's economic, social and cultural context. They did, however, face common challenges in some areas of social protection including the heavy reliance on family-based social protection systems and poor administrative infrastructure.

18. Ms. Dono Abdurazakova presented a case from Uzbekistan for the North and Central Asian region where income support schemes play a significant role in the social protection system. The policies to cushion the effects of economic reforms, initially oriented towards all population, now focus on most vulnerable groups. She outlined the strengths and weaknesses of the various social protection programmes noting that the size of allowances is too small to affect significantly the living standards of target groups, due to the limited financing of the social protection system as a whole; and income support schemes for the unemployed have not received enough support and coverage.

19. Ms. Soo Jeong Cho presented an example from the Republic of Korea for the East and North-East Asian region, namely the National Basic Livelihood Security System (BLSS). She explained the programme's background, coverage, eligibility criteria, targeting mechanism, benefits, graduation, cost, financing, delivery mechanism, governance, legal framework and links with other income support programmes. Further Ms. Cho presented an in-depth analysis of benefit adequacy, policy impact, efficiency, historical development and the monitoring and evaluation system. She pointed out that BLSS must be a principal tool tackling poverty and protecting the poor and vulnerable in Korea. She added that BLSS is regarded as an anti-poverty policy that has changed the paradigm from individual to social responsibility in addressing persistent poverty.

20. Mr. Manoranjan Mohanty presented a Fijian example for the Pacific region. He provided a brief overview of the country's profile and social challenges, and then analyzed Fiji's key income support schemes: 1) the Family Assistance Scheme, 2) Food vouchers, 3) Care and Protection Fund for Children, 4) Fiji Servicemen's After-care Fund, and 5) Scheme of Bus Fare Concession to Children. He pointed out that there is a need for strengthening formal social protection schemes while supporting traditional and informal safety nets. Income support schemes in Fiji should provide more benefits and expand their coverage and there should be an integration of income support schemes to improve their effectiveness. Further he stated that the service delivery mechanism of social protection policies should be strengthened and better financed. Finally, he pointed out the need for the Government, civil organizations and private sector to improve coordination in the delivery of programmes.

21. Ms. Azra Cader presented an example from Sri Lanka for the South and South-West Asian region. She analyzed Sri Lanka's Public Assistance Allowance (Pin Padi) using the programme survey template. She also provided information on other income support schemes in Sri Lanka including the Samurdhi Poverty Alleviation Programme, Access to health care, Access to education, Basic service provision, Thripasha Programme, State sector pension scheme, Farmer and fisherman pension scheme, Pension and Social Security Benefit Scheme for Self-Employed Persons, and Sensatha Mirgrant pension scheme. In addition, she provided an overview of some key income support schemes in other South Asian countries including India (Social health protection-Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana, Cooked mid-day meal programme, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana Health Scheme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan 2001 and Integrated Child Protection Scheme), Nepal (Old age Allowance Programme), Bangladesh (School stipend programme, BRAC programme, and Employment Generation Programme) and Pakistan (CGAP-Ford Foundation graduation pilot).

22. Following the presentations, the following main points were made by participants on the examples presented as well as on the programme survey template itself;

- a. The programme survey template should address whether income support schemes include a strategy to support graduation from poverty as the sub-regional samples aim to tackle inter-generational transmission of poverty as well as poverty within a generation.

- b. Sub-regional samples point out that there are ranges of coverage in income support schemes. While some income support schemes aim at universal coverage, others focus on a targeted group. The programme survey template or definition of the income support scheme should include information on its coverage.
- c. There are different types of benefits in income support schemes. Cash-transfer is one of the most common, but there are also in-kind transfer and public works. Experts pointed out that there needs to be further discussion on how to assess in-kind benefits in income support schemes.
- d. In describing the governance of income support schemes, there needs to be a distinction between monitoring and evaluation.
- e. The programme survey template should reflect the policy development of income support schemes. The samples show that some income support schemes have been developed so dynamically that characteristics of the programme have changed over time to reflect changes in the local context.
- f. Some examples focus on major income support schemes while others describe different types of schemes. There should be further discussion on whether the survey should focus on a major income support scheme or review all schemes available in a given country.
- g. The examples show that one country could have multiple poverty lines used for different programmes. This could lead to confusion or difficulty in comparing different programmes. One suggestion to address this problem is that subregional experts should use the most recognized poverty line in a particular country.
- h. The selection of income support schemes could be biased due to the tendency to focus on the programmes with stronger impact. This may not reflect the diversity of income support schemes in the region. In particular, there could be an immature scheme that could be developed in the future as a good practice for poverty reduction but that may be excluded in this project due to its nascent nature or small scale.

E. Tentative Workplan

23. Mr. Deuk Yung Ko emphasized the importance of collaboration among the subregional experts and partner institutions as well as ESCAP in order to achieve the objectives of the project.

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