

Annex B.B

Notes on the Open Forum on after the various updates and presentations on Social Protection

Following are the points raised during the open forum:

1. The powerpoint presented by SILAKA which says that insurance policy is very costly. The statement made by Senator Guingona points out that prevention is cheaper than resolving or recovering from disaster. This is a matter of perspective therefore SW must be very careful in presenting its position and must be clear in its analysis on these issues.
2. On Thailand social protection program, all the pensioners receive 500 Baht. This benefit is for people over 60 years old.
3. The Pakistani government provided support for women without income. The program reached 5000 women and it became quite popular. However, there is still a need to review and expand the program, to include, for example, the honor killing where the people would kill their wives, sisters and women in the name of honor. To date, the government has not legislated anything to address this problem, though there are others who provide legal services to the victims of this situation. The rights of the indigenous people's should also be included in the social protection program of the government. While the government is now taking some initiatives, it remains beset with problems of corruption and issues of transparency and accountability.
4. There were several social safety net programs introduced in Bangladesh. Among them were: disability allowances from public



support; freedom fighter allowance (the people who fought in Vietnam); allowances for the poor; widows allowance; farmer allowances; assistance for pregnant women in health services, marginalized workers and agricultural services. The Central Bank also introduced the 10 dollar bank account for farmers through which farmers can receive support from the government. However, beneficiaries of these programs are still very few. Groups are advocating for more beneficiaries and stressed that these programs are important because of the wide income discrepancy all over the country. They are conducting researches on the impact of these programs to the marginalized sectors and are hoping that through their initiative they would be able to present to their government the real situation on the ground and give inputs on necessary reforms that would make the program more pro-poor.

6. Education is the link to poverty eradication program and to addressing health issues as well. In social protection, there is a need to include education advocacy. In the presentation, it is clear that Southeast Asian countries have fallen short in terms of education for all. There is a need to push the government and international institutions to deliver on their commitment made way back in 2000.

In the Philippines, she shared that the government has just recently launched a conditional cash transfer program that is a bridge program and only covers health and education needs of the marginalized people for 5 years. The big question is the sustainability of the program after 5 years. Social Watch has already made its position on this. The social protection program should target the poorest and the most marginalized sector and should also look at the gender, indigenous peoples and youth. ASPBAE, as a regional network on EFA, that can help in the advocacy.

Additional Input from India

On social protection through public distribution system (PDS) in providing food grains at the subsidized prices: There is a need to think about the role of the public or the government in the distribution of food.

In India, 56 crores are being spent on INR 7000 per family per year. But the role of the government is not effective and needs overall reforms. In fact, the issue of food security in India is not only connected with food production and food availability but is very much connected with the distribution system and mechanism for



households which are living below the poverty line (BPL households)

India also has social security providing support as pension to different sectors such as widows, single women, physically challenged, and elderly persons. State government as well as the national government has very important role in this. However, he shared that the state government is not capable of providing its counterpart for the grants given to them from the different social security schemes. He added that India still has to enact a law to address social security for children.

The Social security which provides employment in India as implemented in NREGA (National Rural Employment Guarantee A) was a scheme used since February of 2006. The scheme provides food support in the household level. It has been reported by everyone that NREGA is good but the implementation status is poor due to the lack of perspective plan at the gramshabha and panchayat (local) level. The overall feeling, according to him, was that the social security scheme is not beneficial to the beneficiaries.

