

February 24, 2011

DPI/NGO Briefing
"Achieving Social Protection for All"
(In Observance of the World Day of Social Justice - February 20)

Thursday, February 17, 2011, 10:a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

1. Background Information:

In November 2007, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution 62/10 proclaiming February 20 as the World Day of Social Justice. The resolution calls on Member States to devote the day to the promotion of concrete activities in accordance with the objectives and goals of the World Summit for Social Development which was held in Copenhagen in 1995.

The pursuit of social justice for all is at the heart of the United Nations' mission to promote development and human dignity. It is based on the principles of fairness, equality, respect for diversity, access to social protection and the application of human rights in all spheres of life. For a large portion of the world's people, however, social justice remains, as United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has noted, an "elusive dream".

Presently, 80% of the global population does not enjoy a set of social guarantees that allow them to deal with life's risks. Ensuring basic social protection for these people, many of whom are struggling just to survive, is a necessity. The notion of a Social Protection Floor is very clear. No one should live below a certain income level and everyone should be able to access at least basic health services, primary education, housing, water and sanitation and other essential services.

The United Nations Social Protection Floor Initiative was launched in 2009 as a mechanism to accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and also as an important factor in combating poverty, reducing inequalities and building social inclusion.

2. Moderator; Mr. Maher Nasser, Director, Outreach Division. DPI.

3. Opening Statements:

United Nations Secretary-General, Message for the Day.

H.E. Mr. Ibragim Djunusov is the Deputy Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Ms. Michelle Bachelet is the first Under-Secretary- General and Executive Director Of United Nations women

4. Panel Speakers:

Dr. Michael Cichon is the Director of the Department of Social Security for International Labor (ILO).

Mr. Richard Morgan is the director of Policy and Practice at UNICEF.

Mr. Donald Clarke is the is the current Chief of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Section in the Social Development Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

Mr. Gary Koenig is Director of Economic Security in the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Public Policy Institute.

5. The moderator, Mr. Nassar welcomed everybody and introduced the speakers with their backgrounds.

Mr. Nasser indicated that this briefing, which was organized by NGO Relations, and DPI in partnership with the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Permanent Mission of Kyrgyzstan to the United Nations, will examine the concept of the Social Protection Floor and other key social protection mechanisms as well as the extent to which their main objectives are being implemented.

6. The message of the day was provided by Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP via video. The full report of his presentation is included with this report.

7. The first speaker, H.E. Mr. Ibragim Djunosov prior to this appointment was a member of Parliament in the Kyrgyz Republic and also served as Minister of Culture. A native of the Osh Province in the Kyrgyz Republic, he began his career as an instructor at Jalal-Abad Community College and joined the faculty of Osh State University in 1986 as a lecturer and assistant head of the Pedagogical Department. In 2005, he became Vice President of Osh University. In 2005, he became Vice President of Osh University. His many accomplishments included being named the People's Artist of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2006. Mr. Djunosov holds a PhD in Pedagogical Sciences.

7. The second speaker Ms. Michelle Bachelet, under her leadership, United Nations Women will lead, support and coordinate the United Nations' work on gender equality and the empowerment of women at the global, regional and country level. A long-time champion of women's rights, she has been an advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment throughout her career.

Ms. Bachelet served as President of Chile from 2006 to 2010. One of her major successes as President was her decision despite a financial crisis in her country to save billions of dollars in revenues to spend on issues such as pension reform, social protection programs for women and children and research and development. Ms. Bachelet has also held ministerial portfolios as Minister of Defense and Minister of Health in the Chilean Government.

8. The first panel speaker, Dr. Michael Cichon, is a member of the German Actuarial Association (DAV). Mr. Cichon has worked in the Planning Department of the German Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in Bonn as an actuary for eight years, before joining the Social Security Department of the ILO in 1986 as a senior actuary and health economist.

Between 1992 and 1995 Mr. Cichon served as a social security specialist on the ILO advisory team for Central and Eastern Europe based in Budapest and provided social protection policy advice to governments and social partners in that region. Between 1995 and 2005 he was the Chief of the ILO's International Financial and Actuarial Service. In 2005 Mr. Cichon was appointed Director of the ILO's Social Security Department.

Mr. Cichon writes on policy, financial, economic and governance issues related to social security and the global financing of social protection. He also teaches in the joint ILO/University of Maastricht Masters Program in Social Security. Mr. Cichon holds a Masters degree in Pure and Applied Mathematics from Technical University in Aachen, Germany and a Masters degree in Public Administration from Harvard University and a Ph.D. in Economics with a specialization in Health Economics from the University of Göttingen in Germany. He has undertaken and supervised technical cooperation assignments in social protection in over 30 ILO member countries worldwide.

9. The second panel speaker, Mr. Richard Morgan leads UNICEF's work on children's rights, gender equity, social and economic policy analysis and social statistics. This includes UNICEF's work to support child-sensitive social protection. Mr. Morgan has worked for UNICEF for 25 years, including in field positions in several African countries and in the Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa.

10. The third panel speaker, Mr. Donald Clark, has previously served in the Government of New Zealand in a range of senior positions, most notably as the Director of the Global Programs of NZAID. This the agency responsible for New Zealand's Official Development Assistance. He has also served as the Deputy Director of the Commonwealth Foundation based in London. Mr. Clarke holds a masters degree in International Relations from Victoria University in New Zealand.

11. The last panel speaker, Mr. Gary Koenig's Economic Security Group analyzes and develops policies related to the important issues affecting the financial security of the populations age 50 and older within the United States, particularly as it relates to retirement. Key areas of research of the Economic Security Group include Social Security, workplace retirement and pension plans, individual retirement savings, the well-being of older Americans, and older workforce issues.

Mr. Koenig began working in the Public Policy Institute in September 2008 as a Senior Strategic Policy Advisor. He is the institute's lead economist on issues related to Social Security and individual tax-preferred retirement savings plans. Prior to joining AARP, he was an economist for the Joint Committee on Taxation of the United States Congress, where he specialized in employer-provided pensions and retirement plans. Mr. Koenig has written on spoken on issues regarding Social Security and tax incentives for retirement savings. He completed his graduate work in economics at Duke University

12. A video was shown about the conditions of poverty in Argentina and their response. Women and children there became cardboard scavengers to try to find food for themselves. In the video the secretary for employment for Argentina spoke of the problems the women and children there faced and Argentina's financial problems. The Minister of Labor also spoke and presented their problems. The same problems are faced in Argentina, Central America, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, India, China, Europe and in parts of the United States.

13. Briefing Summary: This Briefing, held in observance of the International Day of Social Justice examined the concept of the Social Protection Floor (SPF) Initiative and other key social protection mechanisms in assisting people worldwide especially the poor and marginalized to enjoy basic social rights and services.

Expressing their views on the issue of social protection, panelists agreed that social protection has the potential to transform societies by helping them to become more just and equitable. The panelists were also of one mind that no one should live below a certain income level and that social protection was important to "putting people back into the heart of development" as one speaker noted in her contribution. The speaker discussed the impact of SPF on countries that have implemented the initiative in their national policies. The Republic of Korea, India and Thailand are a few countries among many others that have implemented the SPF initiative.

Two speakers stressed that the SPF Initiative should not be seen as a form of charity, but rather as an opportunity to create new fiscal space to generate innovative ways to invest people without creating dependency. Others put forward the view that social and economic vulnerability go hand-in-hand and social protections are needed to address both by including access to social services and tackling social exclusion.

Overall panelists stressed the need for immediate action to expand social protection coverage for all and to empower people meaningfully through ensuring that they are fully informed of their rights. One speaker also emphasized the importance of paying attention to the voices of children in designing social protection systems to meet their needs. All speakers made clear that there is a role for NGOs in building a powerful global coalition around the issues of achieving social protection for all,

14. Questions/Answers:

14.1 Ms. Michelle Bachelet; It is important that you help people who earn less than \$1.25 a day. We need to have guarantees for everyone both young, old and poorer. Women should not be grounded.

- How you apply the system very important
- Must protect all people
- You must apply this help to the smallest unit in a country
- Primary care is essential
- Counseling very important

14.2 Dr. Michael Cichon; One of the major problems are that some countries are not compliant.

14.3 Ms. Michelle Bachelet;

- Must have more women in government to address poverty and provide help to the needy
- We need more actions by individuals

14.4 Ms. Michelle Bachelet; Talking about political will is important.

- How to build a better neighborhood. Her organization helped greatly
- Women are important to participate at both national and local levels
- It is important that governments provide their people with their rights

14.5 H.E. Mr. Ibragim Djunusov; In his country, Kyrgyz, 30 percent of the people in government are women.

- The chairman is also a woman
- There are 200 NGOs in his country, 70 percent are women

14.6 Mr. Richard Morgan; By using demonstration activities it is possible to create support by women and children. The power of demonstration results in strengthening families and children.

14.7 Dr. Michael Cichon; The program cannot be done outside a country. It must be done inside the country. The start of a program must first answer questions when approaching a country. What are the countries? What have the countries done and what was the cost?

14.8 Dr. Michael Cichon;

- When some countries say they have a problem review the problem first.

14.9 Mr. Richard Morgan; There is evidence that some countries spend a lot more on military budgets and this determines how they have left to spend on essential help budgets.

14.10 Dr. Michael Cichon; Social budgets tend to grow with a country's growth. This does not happen with defense budgets.

14.11 H.E. Mr. Ibragim Djunusov; The difficult problem is how do we reach both the poor and the rich with this problem. It is very difficult.

- We must look to the children of both the rich and poor.

14.1 (Cont'd)

- Children of the rich set separately from the poor children in their schools.
- Rich children's clothes are fancier
- We need to have common uniform clothes for both the rich and poor in school so that they reach equilibrium

15. Closing Comments by the Panel:

15.1 Mr. Richard Morgan; We need to make public what was discussed here.

15.2 Dr. Michael Cichon; We need to get this social protection out of the board room and into the hands of our people and country leaders.

PDC George Weinstein
National UN Chairman



Social Protection in the Asia-Pacific region: Towards achieving social protection for all

by

Dr. Noeleen Heyzer

**Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and
Executive Secretary of ESCAP**

HIGH-LEVEL PANEL DISCUSSION

**AS PART OF THE UN'S COMMEMORATION OF THE
WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE**

17 FEBRUARY 2011

[Insert Distinguished Participants]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is both a privilege and pleasure for me to join you here today at this important panel discussion to commemorate the World Day of Justice.

I would like to congratulate the organizers of the event for their vision in selecting such a significant and befitting topic - "Achieving Social Protection for All"- to mark the World Day of Social Justice.

I have been asked by the organizers to provide you with an Asian-Pacific perspective on social protection. The issue is central to the work of ESCAP. In fact, I am pleased to inform you that the 62 member States of ESCAP adopted social protection as the theme topic for ESCAP's annual session to be held in May this year reflecting the region's growing attention to the issue.

The ESCAP secretariat is working closely with member States assuming both an advocacy and supporting role in social protection policies and programmes. In particular, I have made it my mission to strongly advocate the importance of universal principles, and the

Today the Republic of Korea has in place social protection programmes in the form of income support, universal pensions, social health insurance and unemployment insurance. More recently the Government has focused on strengthening social services and social pensions including for older persons and persons with disabilities.

The progression from discrete programmes toward universal and comprehensive systems offers the potential to both broaden and deepen development gains made in recent decades. Social protection should thus be seen as an investment in the economic and social capacity of each and every individual in the region.

Social protection should also be seen as a cornerstone of a rights-based approach to development, enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and most recently reaffirmed in the ILO's pioneering work on the 'Social Protection Floor'.

Social protection can fulfil not only the targets of the MDGs, but its underlying principles and core values - of equality, rights, dignity and opportunity. The realisation of universal social protection offers a transformative future agenda, not only reducing poverty and exclusion, but also in eliminating the structures that place people in situations of vulnerability in the first place

Social protection can then have an empowering impact on the poor. People can become agents in their own development, no longer dependent on others.

One of the Asia-Pacific region's most impressive large-scale social protection programmes is India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, which offers 100 days of guaranteed work per family in rural areas at the minimum wage for agriculture. The scheme provides jobs for 34 million households at a cost of only 0.3 percent of GDP.

More than half of beneficiaries are agricultural and unskilled workers. In some districts, female-headed households account for over half of beneficiaries. More than half of beneficiary households purchase livestock with their higher income, and participating families spend more on both food and non-food items.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the past, most governments have considered social protection primarily as a cost - requiring regular or intermittent payments to sustain the poorest. More recently, however, governments have been adopting a longer-term perspective, seeing such expenditure less as a cost and more as an investment - and one which in the end can bring rich dividends: social, economic and political.

Indeed ESCAP's own data, based on 24 developing countries across the Asia-Pacific region, has found that the total cost of a basic social protection package, inclusive of universal access to essential health care, child allowance and old age pension, falls within the range of 1 to 3 percent of gross national income for most countries, which is certainly within reach. The ILO, in its studies, has also demonstrated the affordability of social protection in reaching the poorest and most marginalized in society.

In Thailand, the Government in recent months has embarked on a process of extending social protection programmes to informal sector workers, who comprise 70 per cent of the working population. In this new scheme, the Government matches voluntary contributions from workers themselves, in partnership. It is hoped that this will encourage the 24 million