

Record Notes

of the workshop on

Platform for GO-NGO Collaboration in Social Security Programmes under National Social Security Strategy (NSSS)



16 June 2019

Conference Room, Cabinet Division,
Transport Pool Building, Secretariat Link Road, Dhaka-1000

Organized by

Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme
Cabinet Division and General Economics Division (GED) of Planning Commission
of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Workshop

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BACKGROUND

The Government of Bangladesh has formulated the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) which is under process of implementation with a view to establishing a lifecycle based social security system in country. The NSSS has recognized the role of NGOs and Civils Society Organizations (CSOs) in supporting the envisioned social protection system.

The importance of collaboration between GO and NGO has been underscored in different meetings and documents under social protection. Though a certain degree of collaboration is already in place, there is growing demands for setting up a formal platform for this purpose, so that the collaboration between GO and NGOs including the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) can be a meaningful and sustainable one.

Government formulated the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) in June 2015 as one of the major milestones towards establishing a comprehensive social protection system in Bangladesh. The NSSS Action Plan has been already launched. Simultaneously, a fair was organized to showcase the

achievement of different ministries and NGOs in social security. The conference emphasized that there are ample scopes of aligning the social protection activities of the NGOs and Civil Societies with the vision and overall goals of the NSSS.

Moreover, Bangladesh has experienced establishment of numerous world-class NGOs in delivering a range of social services including in social security. Graduation approaches pioneered by NGOs in Bangladesh are now being adopted and widely referenced in many other countries.

The Government has also been very positive in partnering with the NGO community. This partnership has yielded significant results in poverty reduction and human development. As result a formal platform for GO-NGO collaboration has been established to explore how the GO-NGO platform can better complement the social protection objectives of the government under the leadership of the Cabinet Division.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The workshop was organized on the coordination of the social protection initiatives of the NGOs and Civil Societies on 16 June 2019 at the conference room of the Cabinet Division. The objective of the workshop was to explore the modalities of aligning the social security activities of the NGOs and Civil Societies with the vision and overall goals of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) of Bangladesh by establishing a more effective platform for GO-NGO collaboration.

Participants of the meeting included officials from Cabinet Division, Local Government Division, Finance Division, Ministry of Food, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, representative from NGO Affairs Bureau. Participants also included representatives from the following NGOs and Civil Societies: Action Aid Bangladesh, ASA, BRAC, CARE Bangladesh, Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GSK), HelpAge International Bangladesh, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), MRDI, HelpAge International Bangladesh, Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), RDRS Bangladesh, Wave Foundation, World

Vision Bangladesh. Mr. Md. Faizul Islam, National Project Director, SSPS; Mr. Aminul Arifeen, National Project Manager, SSPS and officials from SSPS Programme also attended the workshop.

The sessions of the workshop were presided over by Dr. Md. Shamsul Arefin, Senior Secretary, Coordination & Reforms, Cabinet Division. The agenda of the workshop included: finalization of formation of the committee for social protection on GO-NGO collaboration, discussion on action plan for social protection implementation of NGOs and other miscellaneous issues with valuable recommendations and decision on the national platform on the GO NGO collaboration.

It was decided that GO-NGO coordination committee meeting will be held bimonthly and the NGOs will take responsibilities by rotation for one year. It was also unanimously decided that the BRAC will take the turn in the beginning. Moreover, BRAC took responsibility for organizing the workshop to develop the Work Plan for the committee.

OPENING REMARK

Mr. Dr. Md. Shamsul Arefin

Senior Secretary (Coordination and Reforms)
Cabinet Division

Hon'ble Senior Secretary (Coordination and Reforms) Cabinet Division and the chair of the workshop stated that NGOs should play vital role for identifying real and deserving beneficiary to reduce duplication and minimize the leakages in social security programmes. He discussed different aspects of establishing a formal platform for Universal Pension. He added that this collaboration with NGOs would support the government in Service Delivery, Grievance Redress System (GRS) and Monitoring and Evaluation systems to establish a thriving and successful social security system in Bangladesh. The collaboration between GO and NGOs would play a significant role in the effective implementation of social security in the country.



PRESENTATION (APPENDIX 1)

Mr. Mohammad Khaled Hasan, Social Protection Specialist (Deputy Secretary) of the SSPS programme briefly shared a presentation on the importance and future scopes of the GO-NGO collaboration in social security in the light of the NSSS. He said that the government has been very positive in partnering with the NGO community. This partnership has yielded significant results in poverty reduction and human development. To enhance better governance in social protection service delivery system including identification of the genuine beneficiaries this platform will play an important role indeed. He shared that objective of the proposed GO-NGO collaboration platforms is to implement a lifecycle based inclusive social security system in Bangladesh as envisaged in NSSS; to enhance better governance in social protection service delivery system including identification of the genuine beneficiaries; and to establish a tracking system for reducing probable duplication and double dipping problems in social security. He stated that as envisaged in the NSSS, the possible areas of collaboration would include programme consolidation, enhanced support in



selection of beneficiaries, strengthening of the GRS and citizen charters and support in delivery of social protection programmes of the government by NGOs.

OPEN DISCUSSION

MR. KAM MORESHED

Director, Advocacy for Social Change Technology Partnership Strengthening Unit, BRAC

Mr. Morshed shared that as Bangladesh government is thinking about the Universal Pension, it would be a great example for other countries and guideline for all; if government can establish the mechanism of universal pension successfully in our country. He added that it is possible to establish the Universal Pension mechanism easily as the government has already expending huge finance in social security. He shared that Service Delivery, Grievance Redress System (GRS) and Monitoring and Evaluation systems these three areas are the things where NGOs can collaborate with government to enhance effective implementation of the social security programmes. He accepted the welcomed the offer to arrange a workshop on the formulation of the Workplan for the GO-NGO collaboration platform in BRAC. He mentioned that BRAC has an enormous learning and experiences of good success stories in targeting/beneficiary selection which is internationally recognized that BRAC can share with other NGOs and the government.



MR. MD. AYNUL KABIR

Additional Secretary

Ministry of Woman Affairs and Children Affairs

Mr. Kabir said that Social Protection programmes should consider disaster victims and peoples who has fallen into poverty due to long term illness or diseases. He also praised the existing beneficiary selection category for social protection. He emphasized that Means Test (MT) may be an appropriate methodology for beneficiary selection where NGOs can play associate role to identify/verify beneficiary's eligibility at community level especially in the hard to reach and pockets areas. He said that beneficiary selection error should not be more than 5% if we want to ensure social protection to the real and deserving peoples.



MS. JESMIN PRVIN

Deputy Secretary

Rural Development and Cooperatives Division

Ms. Parvin said that Self-Declared/Application methodology may be one of the best approaches for beneficiary selection for the social security. Government can educate peoples in this regard that if they submit a statement of their assets/properties or means and economic conditions of their own then they will get benefits according to their socio-economic conditions and eligibility. Government need to sensitize community peoples through advertising by popular medias like: Television, Radio, Social Sites etc. for mass communications on the process of getting benefits of social protection with the technical assistance of Upazila line ministries at root level. If peoples get aware and educated then the beneficiary selection process will be the easier, effective and meaningful that will reduce both inclusion and exclusion error in beneficiary selection.



MS. KAMRUN NAHAR

Programme Manger

Gonoshashthya Kendra

Health Insurance is an effective instrument to ensure healthcare benefits for the disadvantaged and vulnerable peoples. It can be implemented in a pilot basis to identify the challenges and to replicate the good practices, learning for future policy making in this regard. Gonoshashthya Kendra is implementing a project on the Health Insurance for the RMG workers with the support of Donor organizations where already 26000 RMG workers are now under coverage, educated and engaged in Health Insurance. We are ready to share our good practices and learning to other organizations.



MR. FAIZUL ISLAM

National Project Director
Social Protection Policy Support (SSPS) Programme

The GO-NGO Collaboration committee can play a significant role in implementing the social security programmes of the country. This platform may act as a forum for coordination and collaboration between government and non-government organizations having activities in social security programmes for implementing a lifecycle based inclusive social security system in Bangladesh as envisaged in NSSS. The possible areas of collaboration between GO and NGOs would include programme consolidation, support in selection of beneficiaries, strengthening the GRS and Citizen Charters, and support in delivery of social protection programmes of the Government by the NGOs.



MS. DR. SHAHNAZ AREFIN (NDC)

Joint Secretary
Cabinet Division

Targeting represents one of the most challenging elements of social protection design and implementation in social protection. The most serious concern is the transfers of benefits to the right people. It is a common challenge faced by developing countries, in particular, when using poverty-based selection processes. One of the reasons is that the poverty condition of people is constantly changing. Collaboration with the NGOs is very important to assess the actual scenario of social protection. As the NSSS suggests that the NGOs would have some specific roles to play in implementation of the NSSS. To facilitate them to provide supports there should be some formal mechanism.



MR ABDUR RAHMAN
Head of the Programme
RDRS Bangladesh

The NGOs and CSOs have been recommended to be involved in grievance mechanism and play role in stopping leakages and exclusion and inclusion errors. As the NSSS suggests that the government will establish an effective Grievance Redress System (GRS) so that all citizens have recourse to appeal decisions on selection and can notify the competent authorities about instances of misconduct and failures in the delivery of the promised benefits. The Cabinet Division has been given the responsibility of managing a central GRS while the local government institutes have also been given some role for GRS implementation. NGOs like us will help the Cabinet Division to establish an effective and user-friendly grievance system.



MR. AMINUL ARIFEEN
National Project Manager
Social Protection Policy Support (SSPS) Programme

Mr. Arifeen said that according to the NSSS we must consider Inclusiveness, Multidimensionality and Consolidation in social security programming. He also shared that, a common challenge faced by developing countries, in particular, when using poverty-based selection processes. One of the reasons is that the poverty condition of people is constantly changing. It is difficult to keep track of people when they are entering into the threshold of eligibility or when they are going out. Moreover, in absence of clear and unambiguous targeting guidelines the process of beneficiary selection becomes often arbitrary and often influenced by political intervention and nepotism.



MR. A K MOHIUDDIN

Additional Secretary (Coordination)
Cabinet Division

NGOs should coordinate among themselves to avoid duplication and other errors in beneficiary selection. They can share their good practices and learning with other NGOs and government so that a uniform beneficiary selection method can be established. In view of the limitations of the PMT approach a combination of PMT, support from local government and support from NGOs will be employed to identify the poor and vulnerable population. More specifically, PMT score card should be used only in conjunction with vetting by local communities including elected representatives and NGOs.



RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS

Participants of the workshop provided valuable feedback on the formation of GO-NGO platform that led to make some significant decisions towards sketching the next pathway of the GO-NGO collaboration platform. The decisions were as follows:

- a) The Chief Executive of the NGOs and Civil Society Organizations as enlisted in the proposal will be the members of the committee. In absence of the chief Executive, the deputy chief of the organization or any appropriate representative nominated by the chief of the organization will participate in the committee meetings.
- b) Local Government and Cooperatives Division will be included as members in the committee along with the existing ministries and divisions as mentioned in the proposed committee.
- c) The NGOs will take responsibilities by rotation for one year of support to the committee. It was also unanimously decided that the BRAC will take the turn first.
- d) A workshop will be organized by BRAC to develop the Work Plan for the Committee in collaboration with other member NGOs of the committee and ministries/division of the government.
- e) Coordination committee meeting will be held bimonthly and the date will be fixed on the last Thursday of every alternate month.