

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Cabinet Division

Social Protection Branch

www.cabinet.gov.bd

Record Notes of the meeting on the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS), Action Plan and SDGs.

Chairperson: Mohammad Shafiul Alam, Cabinet Secretary.

Date and Time: 23 May 2019, 01.30-03.30 PM.

Venue: Room No-1201, Building No-06, Cabinet Division, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.

Participants: Appendix 'A'.

1. The chairperson inaugurated the workshop with a note of heartiest welcome to the participants followed by a brief speech. He said that the main objectives of today's orientation meeting are to discuss the salient features of National Social Security Strategy (NSSS), social protection action plans of different ministries, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) with special reference to social protection. Bangladesh has glorious achievements in most of the socio-economic dimensions and Bangladesh is ahead of most of south Asian countries in this regard. The present system of social security contributed a lot in poverty reduction. Social security could have yielded still more benefits if it were more comprehensive and well encompassing every lifecycle of the citizens. Therefore, the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) has been formulated to provide a framework of lifecycle based social protection. It is formulated to accelerate the process of social transformation. He then requested the presence to proceed by the agenda and to share the presentations of the programme.
2. Presentations - Appendix 'B'.

3.1 Summary of the Presentation: Genesis of National Social Security Strategy of Bangladesh: (Meeting Vulnerabilities, Reducing Poverty and Inequality by Dr. Shamsul Alam, respected Senior Secretary and Member of General Economics Division (GED) of Planning Commission.

Dr. Shamsul Alam, respected Senior Secretary and the Member of General Economics Division (GED) of Planning Commission made a brief presentation. He said National Social Security is necessitated in the constitution of Bangladesh as it says.... 'it shall be a fundamental responsibility of the State to attain, through planned economic growth, a constant increase of productive forces and a steady improvement in the material and cultural standard of living of the people, with a view to securing to its citizens –' (d) the right to social security, that is to say, to public assistance in cases of undeserved want arising from unemployment, illness or disablement, or suffered by widows or orphans or in old age, or in other such cases.

To describe background of the NSSS he stated that with a view to exploring the evidence, GED prepared 9 background research papers along with a framework paper for preparing the National Social Security Strategy of Bangladesh. He reminded that social security system in Bangladesh before the NSSS was a complex system with multitude of programmes (145), most of which are very small both in terms of resources they provide and the number of beneficiaries they cover. A fragmented arrangement managed by many Ministries/ Divisions (23) with no formal mechanism for sharing information among them called for better coordination and efficiency. When the poorest 10 percent of the population was targeted, the minimum exclusion error was 55 percent (Theoretical Exclusion Errors for the Bangladesh Proxy Means Test), an analysis of the HIES 2010 showed as shown in the NSSS Background Paper.

He also mentioned some lessons from the international experiences such as social security systems are shaped by the need to address the causes of poverty and are designed to address the risks and challenges associated with different stages of the lifecycle. As countries build their social security systems, they need to decide the relative balance between public expenditure-financed and social insurance schemes. Proper administrative arrangements involving a coordinating agency, strong implementing agencies, professional staff, a sound MIS, a payment system based on financial institutions, a proper M&E and an appeals system to resolve beneficiary grievances are all elements of a sound Social Security delivery system.

He then made an overview on the vision & goal, priority areas, lifecycle approach, core lifecycle programmes, special programmes and institutional reforms of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) accordingly.

3.2 Summary of the Presentation: Role of Ministries and Divisions in implementing Action Plan of National Social Security by Dr. Md. Shamsul Arefin, Senior Secretary Reforms and Coordination of Cabinet Division.

Dr. Md. Shamsul Arefin, Senior Secretary Reforms and Coordination of Cabinet Division made a brief discussion and presentation on the NSSS action plan and Role of the Ministries/Divisions. He stated that the objective of the NSSS implementation action plan is to formulate a detailed inventory of activities to be executed by line ministries over the five years. The NSSS itself has provided a sketchy outline of major actions to be accomplished by different ministries. The present action plan has built upon those outlines to expand and spell out the time bound activities of different ministries, divisions and thematic clusters to achieve the mission of the NSSS. He added, the action plan has been prepared mainly in three parts, the first part being the national plan mainly drawn from reviewing the NSSS itself. Then the ministry specific action plans have been prepared. Finally, the cluster level action plans have been formulated. The action plan provides indicators that will be used to track the implementation progress of the action plan.

He mentioned that the constitutional provision of the right to social security and the people-centric socio-political commitment of the Government, coupled with Bangladesh's rapid progress towards Middle Income Country status, paved the way for formulation of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) of Bangladesh. The

strategy was approved by the Cabinet on 1st June 2015 after more than two years of collaborative efforts of the General Economics Division (GED) of the Planning Commission, the Cabinet Division, line ministries and other stakeholders. Implementation of the NSSS involves multiple issues relating to policy reforms, enactment of laws and administrative decisions. Therefore, the implementation of NSSS requires a time bound action plan, for which ministries have worked together to produce the present set of action plans.

He stated that the Action Plan on National Social Security is based upon the NSSS and the NSSS Action Plan for 2016 – 2021 is approved by CMC in 2017 which is aligned with the Constitution, 7th Five Year Plan, SDGs, APA, NIS GRS and RTI. The NSSS action Plan has reflected the global commitment for social protection as Universal Declaration of Human Rights, SDGs. The activities of different ministries, private sectors and NGOs on social security have been planned for harmonization.

3.3 Summary of the Presentation: Social protection and SDGs by Md Abul Kalam Azad, the Principal Secretary to Hon'ble Prime Minister, Prime Minister's Office.

The Guest of Honor Md Abul Kalam Azad, the Principal Secretary to Hon'ble Prime Minister, Prime Minister's Office said, the formulation of the National Social Security Strategy in 2015 was a great milestone in our journey to establish a meaningful welfare nation under the gifted leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. With the launching of the NSSS Action Plan we have created another milestone towards a comprehensive social protection system. He said social protection plays vital roles to bring people out of poverty and prevent them from falling back into poverty. It is revealed from a study that social protection programmes are presently worldwide preventing 150 million people from falling into poverty. Such an important instrument as social protection was not included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which was concluded in 2015. Influenced by the social protection floors initiatives, the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs) has put emphasis on social protection to achieve some of the goals and the associated targets.

He remarked that the Hon'ble Prime Minister clearly mentions that *“Coverage of the safety net programmes has improved and this has been a major factor in reducing the poverty rate. The aim of our programmes is to provide support to more than half of the country's population who are in need of aid and thus facilitate their transformation towards middle income status.”*

He also added that there are some Goals which clearly mention the social protection as either targets or tools of SDGs. But it is found that most of the SDG targets are somehow linked to social protection and poverty reduction. The most relevant goal of SDG which is related with social protection is Goal 1: “End poverty in all its forms everywhere”. More specifically the Target 1.3 is about improvement of social protection. This target is “Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable”. The SDG does not impose upon the Government any external format of social protection. Rather it emphasizes that we should implement social protection according to our own system and capacity. What

is most important is that we should ensure substantial coverage of the poor by 2030. The NSSS provides a roadmap of creating a strong system of social protection with substantial coverage.

3. Guest of Honor Respected Principal Secretary to the Hon'ble Prime Minister Md. Nojibur Rahman then made a brief discussion on Social Protection and SDGs. He said that the elimination of the extreme poor is highly prioritized by the Government of Bangladesh in all its development initiatives. The NSSS Action Plan has been designed in such a way that it will support the poor and eliminate extreme poverty and vulnerability. In Bangladesh social safety net programmes are fragmented across more than 25 ministries. There are more or less 114 programmes. This was the phenomenon of most of the countries with similar range of GDP. Programmes are usually taken to respond to new crisis. Number of programmes go on increasing, multiplying the number of programmes. Such ad hoc basis segmented programmes are very costly compared to their return. On the other hand, a well-planned and a comprehensive social protection system are very efficient and effective, though in the initial stage it appears to be expensive. This is an investment for human development and economic growth. But, the NSSS does not suggest introducing a completely new a new system. Rather we will modify the existing social safety net programmes to fit into life cycle based social security system.
4. He also mentioned that the SDG has clear provision of social protection specially in Goal 1. Bangladesh has put utmost importance to implementing the SDGs and thereby the social protection goals. Therefore, He emphasized the importance of understanding the features of the NSSS and SDG and the dimension of their mutual relationship. Its need to reflect these in the objectives of our respective ministries.
5. There being no other agenda for discussion, the chair concluded the sessions of the workshop with thanks to all the participants.