



Proceedings of the Workshop  
on  
**Formulation of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) Action Plan Phase 2**



Organized by

**Cabinet Division**

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Proceedings of the workshop  
on  
**Formulation of the National Social Security Strategy NSSS  
Action Plan Phase 2**

**20 – 24 and 27 - 28 December 2020**

**Chief Guest:** Md Kamal Hossain, Secretary (Coordination and Reforms), Cabinet Division  
**Chairperson:** Mr. Shamsul Arefin, Additional Secretary, (Coordination), Cabinet Division  
**Venue:** Conference Room, Cabinet Division, Transport Pool Building, Dhaka- 1000

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**Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme**  
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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



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## **Introduction**

The constitution of Bangladesh provides for fundamental responsibility of the state to achieve the right to social security for deserving people (Article 15-D) which may be seen as a moral obligation for ministries and division to endeavor for strengthening social security system of the country. Therefore, they need to keep abreast of latest policies and programmes of the government on social security. In this regard the most relevant document of the government is the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) Bangladesh and Its Action Plan has been prepared by the Cabinet Division.

Formulation of the NSSS plan involves multiple issues relating to policy reforms, enactment of laws and administrative decisions requiring a time bound action plan. Ministries and Divisions have to work together to produce the NSSS Action Plan (2021-26). Over the next five years till 2026 the reform initiatives will be continued before making transition to a full-fledged lifecycle-centric social security system. The focus of the NSSS plan is to consolidate social security programmes along a lifecycle framework and improve the overall delivery system. The action plan will accumulate a detailed inventory of activities to be carried out by the ministries/divisions.

This report mainly contains the proceedings of the seven day long which is a series of workshop summarizing important points and recommendations as made by the Social security Focal Point members. The orientation workshop was held in the Conference Room of Cabinet Division. Hon'ble Secretary (Coordination and Reforms) Md Kamal Hossain was present as the Chief Guest at the workshop. Mr. Abdul Barik, Additional Secretary, Cabinet Division and Dr. Shahnaj Arefin NDC, Additional Secretary, Cabinet Division were present as special guest. Mr. Md Shamsul Arefin, Additional Secretary (Coordination), Cabinet Division chaired the workshop.

The workshop began with a welcome speech from the Secretary, Mr. Md Shamsul Arefin, Additional Secretary (Coordination), Cabinet Division, who also elucidated the main objectives of the workshop. Mr. Md Kamal Hossain, Secretary (Coordination and Reforms), Cabinet Division then delivered his speech as chief guest and formally inaugurated the proceedings of the workshop. The working sessions of the workshop started with a presentation on the Formulation of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) Action Plan Phase 2 by Mr. Mohammad Khaled Hasan, Joint Secretary, Cabinet Division. Mr. Aminul Arifeen, National Project Manager, SSPS Programme, Cabinet Division, Ms. Suraiya Begum, Deputy Secretary, Cabinet Division and Ms. Murshida Sharmin, Cabinet Division and Mr. Shahidul Islam Deputy Secretary, Cabinet Division and representatives from different ministries and divisions were present there.

## **Inauguration**

### **Remarks of the Chair**

#### **Md Shamsul Arefin, Additional Secretary (Coordination), Cabinet Division**

The chair Mr. Md Shamsul Arefin, Additional Secretary, Cabinet Division, inaugurated the workshop with a note of heartiest welcome to the participants followed by a brief speech. He briefly explained the relationship among the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) Action Plan, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with special reference to social security programmes and role of the ministries and division and Cabinet Division as coordinative body. He said that it was dream of our father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to ensure equal social security for all citizen, which is now being implemented by the government under the leadership of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The government is emphasizing on social security to build the country free of hunger and poverty and to be a developed and happy nation.

## **Remarks of the Chief Guest**

**Mr. Kamal Hossain, Secretary (Coordination and Reforms), Cabinet Division**

The Chief Guest Mr. Kamal Hossain, Secretary (Coordination and Reforms) then briefly discussed on the main objective of workshop and importance of the formulation of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) action plan and role of focal point of different ministries in social security programme. He said that under the leadership of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, we are trying to build the Sonar Bangla as envisioned by our father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The government has been trying to develop the rural life through creating opportunities in the villages and decentralization of the development focuses. Social security was introduced as the key instrument for poverty alleviation and social empowerment of the woman by our Prime Minister in 1996 for the very first time in Bangladesh.

He added a well-structured and robust social security system is very important in Bangladesh as we are moving forward to be a developed country. The NSSS and the first phase of the NSSS Action Plan was designed in such a way that it would support elimination of extreme poverty and vulnerability. This is an investment for human development and economic growth. He also mentioned that the SDG has clear provision of social security specially in Goal 1. Bangladesh has put utmost importance to implementing the SDGs and thereby the social security goals. Therefore, He emphasized on the formulation of 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the NSSS action plan and its importance. He urged all representative to provide highly planned and prospective input so that this action plan can contribute as an instrument for becoming a developed country as envisioned in the NSSS.

## **Presentation**

**Mr. Mohammad Khaled Hassan, Joint Secretary, Cabinet Division**

Mr. Mohammad Khaled Hassan, Joint Secretary, Cabinet Division then briefly presented the background and rationales of formulating the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the National Social Security Action plan in his presentation. He said that the government is working relentlessly to be a developed country by 2041 as envisaged by the Prime Minister which is strongly grounded with social security. Bangladesh has glorious achievements in most of the socio-economic sectors and ahead of most of south Asian countries in social security. The present programmes of social security contributed a lot in poverty reduction. it could have resulted still more benefits if it were more comprehensive and well surrounding every lifecycle of the citizens. Therefore, the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) action plan has been formulated to provide a framework of lifecycle based social security. Now we are approaching to develop NSSS action plan phase 2 will be formulated to accelerate the process of social transformation. He then requested the presence for their sincere participation in the discussion to clarify the mandates of the formulation of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) action plan phase 2 as it's the key guideline for implementation of the social security programmes.

**(Presentation - Annex 1)**

## Open Discussion

Day 1

### Mr. A K M Shamim Akhter

Joint Secretary, Ministry of Children and Woman Affairs

Mr. AKM Shamim Akhter, Joint Secretary said that Ministries and Divisions should emphasize on logistics supports and capacity development of the human resources at all level especially in the fields. We already have several acts, laws and policies in place, just need to implement these instruments to the right points. We need to develop a central MIS and authentic beneficiary database for reducing inclusion errors for the best use of our limited resource to this huge population. He added that maternity allowance and lactating mother allowance programmes are running for the poor women countrywide. So far, more than one million beneficiaries are covered under this scheme. A diagnostic study was conducted to identify the gaps in current programme for pregnant and lactating mother. Ministry of Children and Woman Affairs along with WFP piloted an improved Management Information System integrated with (G2P) payment system under an improved model of existing two programme in 8 Upazila successfully with the support of Ministry of Finance.

### Ms. Khadiza Nazneen

Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare

Ms. Khadiza Nazneen, Deputy Secretary emphasized on the scaling up disability benefits for the children and other schemes for working age group. She added, the NSSS has emphasized to develop a Law/Policy for the abandoned children so the policy development process needs to be speeded up on the rights and protection of the abandoned children. Lack of consolidation in social security programme often creates a negative impression on our capacity so, social security programme consolidation should be high priority tasks in the NSSS action plan

phase 2. As we all know that demographic dividend lasts for a certain period normally for 20 to 30 years. So, need to put more importance on life cycle approach especially for the youth group for the best use of the demographic dividend.

### Mr. Aminul Arifeen

National Project Manager, SSPS Programme, Cabinet Division

Mr. Aminul Arifeen, National Project Manager, SSPS Cabinet Division said that the NSSS action plan (2021-2026) will be much more focused on the reforms, consolidation, upscaling and ensuring good governance in the existing social protection mechanism which is linked with the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS). He added that the NSSS was intensively overseen by the Honorable Prime Minister since she committed to make Bangladesh a welfare state which is envisaged in the vision 2041. To accomplish this vision, we need to put all of our efforts in this NSSS action plan phase 2. We also need to keep align our action plans with SDGs. He added that we really need to enhance capacity development for our human resources. We have to increase logistics, ICT support and financial capacity for effective implementation our social protection programme.

### Mr. Md Iqbal Hossain

Joint Secretary, Ministry of Liberation War Affairs

Freedom fighter's benefits are special programmes which is related to the government's commitment to support the freedom fighters and their families. These programmes for freedom fighters will be maintained and consolidated under one scheme called the freedom fighters' benefit programme within very short time. He said that freedom fighters' benefit programme is going on through four programmes. He added, Grievance redress system regarding this programme is currently recorded and coordinated centrally by the ministry and also in the district level in online or written forms. Ministry of Liberation War Affairs

will incorporate updated information and feedback in the coming NSSS action plan phase 2 as per the decision.

## Day 2

### **Mr. Md Mukhelsur Rahman Sarker**

Joint Secretary, Local Government Division

Mr. Md Mukhelsur Rahman Sarker, Joint Secretary said that consolidation of smaller programmes is a challenging task and it is under progress in many ministries and divisions. Our ministry is coordinating within our inter-ministerial agencies so that all the possible programmes can be delivered in a consolidated way. He also added that widow allowance and stipends for the students are very insignificant in terms of amount which should be increased horizontally and vertically. In many areas, it is found that many of vulnerable women cannot access to their deserving social security programmes. We need a strong and practical household database to include eligible people in social security programmes.

### **Mr. Md Nabirul Islam**

Joint Secretary, Technical and Madrasah Education Division

Md Nabirul Islam, Joint Secretary said that the NSSS stated that the secondary education stipend should cover 50 per cent of the secondary school students and the stipend rate will be raised. The coverage of secondary education has been increased recently by the government. The Honorable Minister of Education Dr. Dipu Moni inaugurated stipend payments to the students of Madrasah under the Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board through the G2P Payment System using an online platform on the 27th June 2020. The stipend of the Bangladesh Technical Education Board was also inaugurated at the same event. Initially, scholarship stipends were transferred to the bank accounts of 16,570 students of Ebtedayee and JDC 2019 through G2P Payment System. The stipend has been accruing in the respective bank

accounts of the scholarship recipients since the 29th June 2020.

### **Ms. Shahnaj Samad**

Joint Secretary, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education

Ms. Samad said that primary stipend programme has been increased and made universal for 12 million students. We have rolled out school meal programme and planned to extend the programme to all primary schools both rural and urban areas in a phased manner. She added that this programme may be implemented through public private partnership and with a participation from the community for making this programme sustainable. She said, as per the NSSS a family will receive stipends up to 4 children. Already this programme has covered all rural students along with a portion of the urban students.

## Day 3

### **Dr Shahnaj Arefin NDC**

Additional Secretary (Reforms), Cabinet Division

Dr Shahnaj Arefin NDC, Additional Secretary, (Reforms), Cabinet Division said that second phase of the NSSS action plan should highly emphasize on child focused social protection. We need to emphasis on youth group since we are living a demographic privileged time and it's also important in terms of life cycle approach. Adaptive social protection is also very important in terms of social risk, natural risk and unknown risks like Covid 19 pandemic. She added that the NSSS action plan also should be aligned with other strategies of the perspective plan for mainstreaming with other strategies and policies. He added that Social protection cluster functions and it's membership criteria should be rethink as there are lot of challenges specially for inter-agency coordination and communication. We also need to put some specific actions to diminish corruption in all level of social protection system she added.

**Mr. Md Mokhlesur Rahman**

Joint secretary, Post and Telecommunication Division

Md Mokhlesur Rahman, Joint secretary, Post and Telecommunication Division said that we have a big database in the BTCL. This database includes a huge information of students and youth groups that may be used for beneficiary selection and programme designing for youth groups. This database also can help to develop a central MIS as well as can act as an information hub for the youth social protection programmes. He also added that we are providing a huge number of free SIM cards for students that should be counted as a social protection programme.

**Ms. Sakeun Nahar Begum NDC**

Additional Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment

Ms. Sakeun Nahar Begum NDC said that the Ministry of Labour and Employment has some consolidated initiatives to provide social insurance support to the private and public sector employees though it is yet to take up any comprehensive plan for a complete employee insurance. She added that only 12% of our manpower are working in the formal sectors and rest of them are directly or indirectly involved in informal sectors. So, If we run a pilot or small scale social insurance programme for the formal and informal sector employees, it could be further scaled up and used as a best practice in country.

**Mr. Kamrul Haque Maruf**

Deputy Secretary, Financial Institution Division

Mr. Maruf added that the health/medical insurance is crucial for establishing an effective health care system in our country. It is revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic that how important the health insurance is for us. FID was working for conceptualizing a medical insurance as a pilot initiative for government employees, but this program has been transferred under the

Ministry of health since this is very closed matched task with their ministry. He said that currently, we are working for piloting two insurance programme one for the non-resident's workers which is under process and another one is to be developed for education which is namely Bangabandhu Education Insurance.

Day 4

**Mr. Md Tahmidul Islam**

Additional Secretary, Ministry of Food

Mr. Islam said that Open Market Sales (OMS) is one of the biggest programmes of our ministry which is available in all upazilas in urban areas. Our ministry sincerely working to convert food-based workfare programmes to cash. It was decided that some of the programmes will be kept as food based as these are linked with food stock management and procurement of crops from farmers. He recommended that a digital database is very important to identify actual beneficiaries of the social protection. If we had a central MIS we could easily provide social security supports to our farmer, labour, women and other deserving people directly through G2P.

**Mr. AKM Maruf Hasan**

Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief

Mr. Hasan shared some of the progress of current action plan progress of his ministry. He informed that the supply food grain for food-based disaster relief programmes and budget for cash based programme are carried out by the ministry when it is required. Horizontal and vertical expansion of social protection programmes of the ministry depends on crisis or disaster situation like nationwide Covid-19 response or any response programme after cyclone or flood. He added, we need to reduce leakages in social protection at zero level to include more people in social protection coverage and to expand the service to the



deserving people. If we can save some money from leakages that is a social protection fund for other group of people in needs.

**Mr. Md Zahurul Islam**

Director, Prime Minister Office

Mr. Zahurul Islam, Director, Prime Minister Office said that Maximum ministries have social protection projects or programmes in different formats. We need to work together with strong communication and coordination to reduce our social protection wastages and for effective implementation of social protection programmes. The PMO can assist to coordinate with other ministries and divisions for this great purpose of an effective and inclusive social protection. Already, we have been supporting our ministries/divisions through a number of innovative solutions to the them. We are providing ICT and other need based technical support to a many ministries/divisions and field level offices to deliver services at very root level with full efficiency. Since, social protection is very crucial for getting rid of poverty and to contribute in national economic development, we'll eagerly welcome to accept any offer and chances to collaborate with social protection mechanism.

Day 5

**Mr. Md Akhlakuzzaman**

Joint Secretary, ICT Division

Child social protection is very common social programme in many countries. If we fail to provide enough nutrition and healthier food to a child in its first 1000 days, a child will be living with a vulnerable intellectual capacity for whole life. So, we should concentrate to increase more child focused social protection in our country. We already have a number of social protection programmes for women and children but we cannot provide to the right persons due to the corruption. Political interference in social protection beneficiary selection is a huge

problem in our country. Even, sometimes it is found that ineligible persons are receiving social protection service. It should be controlled with strict hands.

**Mr Mohammad Salauddin**

Joint Secretary, Ministry of Industries

Mr Salaudding said that Many ministries/divisions have social security programme for the rural poor but these programmes need replication in the urban areas too. We need to expand social security programmes for the urban poor with a different strategic plan for the urban areas. Increasingly, the number of industries and EPZs are now growing up in many rural parts of our country. This industrialization has many positive and negative impacts on the society and environment that requires for social protection programmes. The Injury insurance for labor is most important among them. Besides, there are many environmental and socioeconomic hazards induced from industrialization that requires for social protection for day labors, farmers, women and small entrepreneurs.

Day 6

**Mr. Rashidul Islam**

Additional Secretary, Rural Development and Cooperative Division

The Rural Development and Cooperatives Division has been contributing to poverty reduction in many ways among them the 'My House - My Farm' is one of the prioritized initiatives of the Honourable Prime Minister. There are a number of measures are underway to increase the number of beneficiaries of different social security programmes of our ministry. We have a number of capacity development programmes that helping the rural population in poverty reduction and to contribute in economic growth. He said that graduation approach is a very effective way to bring people out from the poverty cycle. But in

many ways, the poor become poorer because of the debt and unplanned loan taken from different sources especially, from the NGOs with high interest rate. Government should monitor and supervised these issues with some policy regulations.

**Ms. Shahina Ferdousi**

Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment

Ms Shahina Ferdousi shared some updates of Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment. She said that MOEWOE has taken many initiatives to modernize existing training system in accordance with the demand of the international labor market. Our ministry is working as a co-partner with STEP & SEIP. Under this program two MOUs were signed regarding training of the trainers and accreditation with Guangzhou Industry & Trade Technical College, China and Nanyang Polytechnic international, Singapore. So far, we are working according to the action plan and hope to contribute meaningfully in next NSSS action plan phase 2.

Day 7

**Mr. Pradip Kumar Das**

Additional Secretary, Ministry of Land

Social protection programmes consolidation and reforms actions are really important for effective implementation of social protection programmes in country. He said that any reform activities or tasks got gear up when we receive an order or circular from the Cabinet Division, it really helps as it become a legal binding for us then. He added, there is no proper documentation or communication methodology in our ministries by how we can be updated from last activities done by the previous officer. So, we should develop a mechanism to transfer knowledge from officer to officer or intermetatarsal agencies. He also requested to provide necessary training to the respective officers on modern MIS and database systems so that they can contribute to develop a centrally

controlled MIS for social protection system from the periphery.

**Mr. SM Ferdous Alam**

Joint Secretary, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock

He said, Seasonal unemployment is faced by fishermen communities due to the seasonal variation in the availability of fish, bad weather, and a 2-month ban on the catching of young Hilsha fish. During this period, they need special food security programmes. The Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock has been creating a database of all deserving fishermen. An estimated 2 million fishermen will be brought under registration. These initiatives will help to identify actual beneficiaries and provide necessary social security support deserving people.

**Ms. Sajia Zaman**

Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture

The Ministry of Agriculture has some projects and programmes for creating informal jobs for people in the agricultural sector. We need to expand our agricultural livelihoods, as increased labour productivity in the agricultural sector is a principal requirement for our economic growth. Government is providing several stimulus packages for farmers to tackle the aftershock of Covid-19 pandemic. We need to ensure that actual and deserving farmers are getting these social security programmes and benefit packages. Though we have a huge dependency on agriculture unfortunately, we don't have any database of our farmers and control over the agriculture market management. So, in many ways our farmers are getting exploited and deprived from financial benefits provided by government and other private organizations. Not only social protection but we need a healthier agriculture market system for our farmers so that they can contribute our economy with their own benefits.

## Recommendation

1. The NSSS action phase 2 should be designed focusing on the demographic dividend, adaptive social protection, Covid-19 effects and on the reduction of leakages in social protection programmes;
2. Existing Social protection cluster structure and its functions and membership criteria should be rethink as there are a lot of challenges specially in inter-agency coordination and communication;
3. Policy development process needs to be speeded up on the rights and protection of the abandoned children, as the NSSS has emphasized to develop a Law/Policy for the abandoned children so
4. Social security programme consolidation should be high priority tasks of the government; Lack of consolidation in social security programme often creates a negative impression so

## Decision

- a) Some of the social protection implementing ministries and divisions didn't have any action or activities in current NSSS action plan (2016-2021), So they will prepare an articulated and concrete action plan according to their ministry/division mandates as per NSSS guideline;
- b) Ministries/divisions are requested to take necessary measures for the formulation of the forthcoming NSSS action plan (2021-2026) phase 2 as the NSSS Action Plan will be drafted by each concerned ministry/division by their own.

## Conclusion

The workshop was a well-attended and proactively participatory event with a view to discuss the formulation of the NSSS action plan phase 2. Participants of the workshop from different ministries and divisions shared their issues like; latest update of different policy formulation, budget mobilization, ongoing research, institutional reforms, establishment and other ongoing interventions. The workshop successfully made some important decisions and recommendations on the NSSS action plan. This workshop is an important step to the successful formulation of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) action Plan phase 2 in Bangladesh.