

Record Notes

Meeting of the Human Development and Social Empowerment Cluster

Social Security Branch
Cabinet Division

Chairperson: Mr. Shamsul Arefin, Secretary, Coordination & Reforms
Special Guest: Mr. Rahat Anwar, Additional Secretary, Coordination, Cabinet Division.
Discussant: Mr. Mohammad Khaled Hasan, Joint Secretary, Civil Registration and Social Security Branch, Cabinet Division
Time and Date: 29 June 2022, 10.00 am – 11:30 pm
Venue: SSPS Conference Room, Cabinet Division, Transport Pool Building, Dhaka.

Participants: Annexure 1

The Chairperson Mr. Shamsul Arefin, Secretary (Coordination and Reforms) briefly discussed the main objective of meeting and importance of the thematic cluster which is consist 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.

The special guest Mr. Rahat Anwar, Additional Secretary, Coordination then briefly discussed on the main objective of meeting 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 the NSSS proposes forming five thematic clusters according to the nature of the programmes. In line with the NSSS, the Cabinet Division issued a circular to formulate committees with representatives of ministries/divisions which have programmes with thematic resemblances. However, the thematic cluster has been often erroneously interpreted by some as the grouping of ministries/divisions. Incidentally, the concept of clustering of ministries was another hot topic for governancereforms in Bangladesh, further adding to the confusion.

Mr. Mohammad Khaled Hassan, Joint Secretary, Cabinet Division then briefly presented the background and rationales of formulating the thematic cluster and role of the Human Development and Social Empowerment Cluster. 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 briefly shared each draft action plan of respective ministries/divisions accordingly.

Open Discussion

Additional Secretary Technical and Madrasah Education Division

Additional Secretary, Technical and Madrasah Education Division 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 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.

Deputy Secretary
Ministry of Primary and Mass Education

Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education informed that the main objective of social protection is not only to protect against poverty, but it also seeks to ensure people's human rights and social respect. Therefore, the programmes for tackling poverty and inequality are not enough for people's social security. Some special types of programmes are needed for protecting people from social exclusion and different types of deprivations. This type of programmes falls within the human development and social empowerment cluster, which is within the functional category of transformative social protection. Ministry of Primary and Mass Education is given the responsibility of coordinating the programmes under this cluster.

Deputy Secretary
Ministry of Youth and Sports

Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Youth and Sports explained that social empowerment is a process, which develops people's self-confidence and liberty leading them to act individually and collectively to change broader social attitudes and norms, which hold them back to poverty or and marginalized. Social security increases access to public services and investment in human capital, particularly health and education, helping to raise productivity and supporting the participation of the poor in labour markets. For example, school assistance packages improve school attendance and eventually boost education. Social security directly improves people's health status, which in turn contributes to promoting human development and social empowerment.

Decision:

1. Members of the thematic cluster will emphasis on the broader human development and social empowerment of the marginalized community including person with disabilities and ethnic minorities;
2. Each ministry and division will evaluate their social protection programmes following the CODI format mentioned the NSSS Action Plan.

Then, the Chair of the workshop responded to the questions and observations of the participants on their respective projects. Afterwards, there being no other issues for discussion, the chair concluded the meeting with thanks to the participants.

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