

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme
Cabinet Division
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Minutes of the Project Implementation Committee (PIC) Meeting of Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme

Chair	Md Kamal Hossain, Secretary, Coordination and Reforms, Cabinet Division
Co-chair	Md Kawser Ahmed, Member (Secretary), General Economics Division (GED)
Date & Time	23 January 2022, 03.00 pm in Zoom Platform.
Attendance	Annexure-A

The Chair commenced the meeting with a warm note of welcome to all the participants followed by a brief round of self-introduction. At the very outset he highlighted the importance of regular meetings of the Project Implementation Committee (PIC) in effective implementation of the Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) programme agenda. The chair categorically mentioned that the SSPS Programme is one of the flagship projects of the Government of Bangladesh in rolling out reforms of social security system of Bangladesh as stipulated in the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS). Then the Chair requested Mr. Mohammad Khaled Hasan, Joint Secretary (CR and Social Security) of Cabinet Division to brief the meeting on the background and main activities of the SSPS Programme in lieu of the National Project Director (NPD).

2. Mr. Mohammad Khaled Hasan, Joint Secretary (CR and Social Security) of Cabinet Division then shared a power point presentation on the Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme. He said that the project is being implemented jointly by the Cabinet Division and the GED of Planning Commission. He further mentioned that the project commenced in 2014 and continued up to June 2020 (in 1st phase) with the technical assistance from FCDO, DFAT, and UNDP. The project was revised and extended for the period from July 2020 to June 2023 with funding from DFAT. It has the objective of enhancing the overall governance of the social protection programmes and strengthening the delivery system.

3. Mr. Hasan then pointed out that the goal of the project is to build an inclusive social security system for all deserving Bangladeshis to strengthen the social contract, enhance stability, and build resilience. The expected outcome of the project is that the poor people are less vulnerable to external shocks through greater access to financial and insurance services, and

social security with clear graduation strategies. He also shared that component one of the project is better governance of social protection by strengthened coordination, M&E and reporting functions, more substantial research and analysis, and capacity building for a more effective evidence-base for policy development. And the component two is modern social protection infrastructure developed with capability of supporting a nationally integrated delivery system for reliable, transparent, and developmental social transfers while preventing leakages, and ensuring effective coordination.

4. He explained that the SSPS project revision has been built based on the progress made by the project during 2017 to 2019 in consideration of critical lessons from the project and mid-term review of National Social Security Strategy (NSSS). The revision also has considered the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, discussion inputs from former Member of GED (now honourable State Minister for Planning), SDGs Coordinator, Member, SEID and Secretary, Coordination and Reforms of Cabinet Division. The project has reflected the lessons learned from the study tours in Turkey, Indonesia, India and Thailand, and recommendations from Bangladesh Social Security Conferences held in 2018 and 2019.

5. Furthermore, the revision also renewed the commitment of the reform agenda outlined both in NSSS and the 8th Five-year Plan (2020-2025). The revision is significantly informed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), UNSDGs, and the Development Partner's (UN Agencies, EU, ADB, WB, DFAT, FCDO, others) Common Narrative on Bangladesh Social Protection Reform and response to climate and COVID-19 inducive shocks. He then mentioned that the project already has a number of achieved milestones which include Pilots on G2P, GRS on social protection, Capacity Building of the government personnel, Orientation and Engagement, Policy Dialogues, Governance (institutionalization and coordination, Social Protection System Strengthening, Strengthening G2P and GRS, COVID-19 Response, Communication and Visibility, Bangladesh Social Security Conference etc.

6. Mr. Hasan then explained that assigned by the Central Management Committee (CMC) on National Social Security Programmes, the NSSS Action Plan Sub-committee, led by the Secretary, Coordination and Reforms of the Cabinet Division, has formulated the NSSS Action Plan, Phase – II (2021-2026) successfully. The sub-committee conducted a series of consultative dialogues, meetings, and workshops with the concerned stakeholders and finalized the draft NSSS Action Plan. Then the first draft of the Action Plan was placed before the CMC in its 15th meeting on 27 June 2021. As per decision, the draft was sent to the concerned 39 ministries/divisions for their further review and feedback. Following the review comments and input of the ministries/divisions the final draft of the NSSS Action Plan 2021-2026 was thoroughly reviewed by the Action Plan preparation and monitoring Sub-committee and then placed before the CMC. In the 16th meeting held on December 23, 2021, the CMC finally approved the NSSS Action Plan, Phase – II (2021-26). The Action Plan has also been vetted by the Honourable Prime Minister and advised to be published accordingly.

7. Mr. Aminul Arifeen, Project Manager, SSPS Programme explained that a lot of works to be done with in very short time along with the challenges induced from the pandemic that is very crucial for the project. He said that the project management is very hopeful to deliver all the activities in time in cooperation with the Cabinet Division and the GED of Planning Commission. He said that we have already started our consultation, dialogues with the ministries/divisions particularly with the Cabinet Division and GED. Last week we visited the Department of Social Services and the Institute of Social Welfares of the University of Dhaka regarding the designing and piloting of the Old Age Allowance and Disability Allowance, and we have found that they have very good resources, expertise and good relation among them that will be very helpful for designing and piloting the planned programmes in piloting. He also complemented to the statement of the chair of the meeting that SSPS programme will organize PIC meeting regularly and also support to organize other regular meetings and dialogues with other stakeholders particularly with the Local Consultative Group (LCG) on social protection.

8. Ms. Khadija Nazneen, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare said that Ministry of Social Welfare is currently implementing seventeen social protection programmes. Among them old age allowances, widow allowances, allowances for persons with disabilities, grants and aid to acid burnt victims programmes are already been applauded as highly successful initiative of the government. She mentioned that the ministry is also thinking about multidimensional and intensive programmes for the welfare of the by-passed, disadvantaged segment, unemployed, landless, and helpless patients, children at risk, of both rural and urban areas of the country. In line with the NSSS, all the programmes of this ministry are related to achieving the targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Management of Social Transformation (MoST), Vision 2021 and the Eighth Five-Year Plan.

9. Ms. Kate Sangster, First Secretary - Development Cooperation, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian High Commission, Bangladesh said that we are strongly committed to this project and understand that the progress of the project is challenging because of the pandemic situation. She added that we need to pay specific attention particularly on the elderly people and persons with disabilities as they are a great part of the broader community who suffered a lot from the pandemic. She also assured that DFAT is always with the SSPS project to provide technical support for implementing a better governed social protection system in Bangladesh.

10. The Secretary, Coordination and Reforms and chair of the meeting further opined that the project needs to organize the PIC meeting frequently so that we can hear and share our experience among the implementing ministries/divisions, development partners and other stakeholders. He commented that we have 38 ministries and divisions who are responsible for implementing the NSSS Action Plan of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) So, we need frequent meeting and consultations among us so that we can track our progress to achieve the ultimate goal of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS). He also emphasized on the research,

publications and disseminations of other visibility materials to highlight the achievements, success stories and best examples of the government on social protection.

11. Mr. Dr. Kaswer Ahmed, Member (Secretary), General Economics Division (GED) mentioned that it's really great to see that the SSPS project has made an impressive progress with excellent achievements amid the huge challenges induced from the pandemic. He then explained that the Integrated Single Registry MIS is very crucial for our social protection system, and I am very happy to see that the SSPS project has a huge endeavour on it. He added that we need to wait for the coming HEIS data for the Integrated Single Registry MIS in place, as we are expecting that by February 2023 HEIS data will be available. He then thanked the meeting for being a part of the Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme which is one of the flagship projects of the Government of Bangladesh in rolling out the NSSS guided reforms initiatives in the social protection system of Bangladesh.

12. **Decesion:**

After deliberate discussion the meeting decided to recommend the following:

- a) The SSPS programme should generate more research, publications and visibility materials highlighting the achievements, success stories and best examples of the government on social protection.
- b) The meeting of the Project Implementing Committee (PIC) should be organized more frequently, preferably twice in a year.
- c) The project will regularly organize meetings, workshops, dialogues and consultations to track the progress of the NSSS action plan and to share experience of NSSS implementation within ministries and divisions.

13. The meeting concluded with the vote of thanks from the Chair.

Md Kamal Hossain
Secretary, Coordination and Reforms
Cabinet Division