

Record Notes

Meeting of the Social Allowance 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: 27 June 2022, 10.00 am – 11:30 pm
Venue: SSPS Conference Room, Cabinet Division, Transport Pool Building, Dhaka.

Participants: Annexure 1

The chair Mr. Mr. Shamsul Arefin, Secretary, Coordination & Reforms, Cabinet Division, inaugurated the meeting 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 Social Allowance types of programmes constitute most important social protection programmes in covering huge number of vulnerable people. This cluster is coordinated by Ministry of Social Welfare. This cluster is focused on coordination of social allowance types of programmes with a view to overcoming the probable overlapping and duplication.

The special guest Mr. Rahat Anwar, Additional Secretary, Coordination then briefly discussed on the main objective of workshop and importance of the Social Allowance Cluster plan and role of focal point of different ministries in social security programme. He said that the mission of the cluster is to regularly coordinate with member-ministries to implement social allowance types of programmes in a more efficient and effective way, and to identify probable overlapping and duplication of similar programmes with a view to consolidating them within one umbrella; additionally, overseeing how the lifecycle programmes combined can work as an integrated system.

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 Allowance Cluster. He said that The NSSS objective for the cluster is to ensure social security of the different vulnerable section of population, especially children, vulnerable women, old age and people with disability by means of social allowance. In addition, this cluster will oversee how the various life cycle programmes can work as an integrated system, allowing vulnerable people access to benefits across the lifecycle. The cluster will have a dialogue with other clusters, for instance Human Development on referring social allowance recipients to skills training and Labour/Livelihoods for subsequent employment.

Open Discussion

Deputy Secretary Ministry of Social Welfare

Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare said that In many countries of the world, social allowance dominated the main part of social protection. However, it was found that many poor and distressed

people failed to enroll in the social insurance programmes because of their ignorance, social backwardness or simply their financial constraints to pay for the insurance premium. Mostly, the poor workers in the informal sectors fell within this category. That was the limitation of contributory social protection programmes which lead to introduction of social allowance programmes. This is very useful for the poorest of the people.

**Additional Secretary
Ministry of Women and Children Affairs**

Additional Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs explained that in our country contributory social protection programmes have very little share in the overall social security portfolio of the country. In fact, most of the people working in the informal sectors and having very limited income were dependent on the relief operations and workfare programmes. This is how social allowance programme became the mainstream social protection. But we cannot classify all the non-contributory social security programmes as that of social allowance because of the differences in objective and functions of the programmes. For example, the school stipend is usually a non-contributory cash transfer to the student or their parents. However, this programme has the predominant objective of developing human resources, rather than protecting them from poverty.

**Joint Secretary
Health Services Division**

Joint Secretary, Health Services Division explained that Bangladesh has an adolescent population of approximately 36 million which is more than one-fifth of the total population of Bangladesh is those between the ages of 10 and 19 years (BBS, 2015). This large cohort presents significant potential for the social and economic development of the country if we make the necessary investments to make them healthy and productive. The Government has taken the Maternal, Child, Reproductive, and Adolescent Health Programme to improve the overall quality of life of this huge population especially, for person with disabilities.

Decisions:

1. An orientation on the Core Diagnostic Instrument (CODI) may be organized to orient thematic cluster focal point officers of the respective ministries and divisions;
2. SSPS Programme, Cabinet Division is requested to provide technical and logistic support to organize the orientation on CODI.

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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