



REGIONAL COOPERATION NEWSLETTER – SOUTH ASIA
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In this edition

**ASIA TO ADDRESS MULTI GENERATIONAL CHALLENGES AND RISKS
TO SUSTAIN PRESENT GROWTH MOMENTUM**

INDIA COMMITTED TO SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES

MENTAL HEALTH INCLUDED IN NON COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

MEMBER COUNTRY BRIEFS

MALDIVES - Maldives NGO Federation

KYRGYZSTAN – Ban on Child adoption

NEPAL – Training of Trainers (TOT) on Social Protection

UKRANE – Proposal to host Global Grain Reserve

PAKISTAN, BANGALADESH - Promotion of Gender Equality.

2012 WORLD CONFERENCE OF ICSW, IASSW AND IFSW

**ASIA TO ADDRESS MULTI GENERATIONAL CHALLENGES AND
RISKS TO SUSTAIN PRESENT GROWTH MOMENTUM**

“Asia 2050” at its annual meeting held in Hanoi in May 2011, addressed bottlenecks that are impeding the growth-momentum of Asian Countries. The meeting noted Asia GDP will soar \$148 trillion by 2050 and three billion Asians will enjoy higher living standards. But about one billion people live below the poverty line and face chronic under-nourishment. The members observed careful steering is required to realise the goal of a prosperous Asia to make lives of Asians better and auger well for world economic growth.

Strengthening cross-border infrastructure linkages in transport, communication and energy sectors will help to address bottle-necks that are impeding growth. To reach the level of an affluent region achieving broad base inclusive and sustained growth is a paramount necessity. Asian countries have to aim to transform their economies into knowledge and skill based economies over the next 40 years to ensure high sustained growth. All countries have to work together to improve governance, transforming their institutions into high quality modern institutions applying transparency and accountability filters to domestic policy making and implementation.

INDIA COMMITTED TO SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES

In the World Social Security summit organised by the International Social Security Association in Cape Town, South Africa in December 2010, a high level delegation from India was represented under the leadership of Union Minister for Labour and Employment.

At the conference the Indian delegation pointed out that India was committed to social security programmes and had introduced forward-looking legislation such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, housing programmes for those below the poverty line, Old age Pension Schemes, The RSBY (Rashtreeya Swasthaya Bhima Yojana), the Right to Education Act and the Mid-Day Meal schemes.

The major challenge India is facing on the social security front is the unorganised labour sector where around 450 million workers are employed. This segment is very crucial to India's continuing growth in the post crisis recovery period. India has addressed the social security issues in the unorganised sector. The employees in the unorganised sector continue with low paid insecure jobs, have little access to institutionalised social security and are vulnerable to the negative impact of economic slowdown in terms of job loss and wage cuts. The Indian Government has introduced health insurance, general insurance and pension schemes for those serving in the unorganised sector.

India is on the path to making a rapid economic inclusive growth by addressing the challenges to bring the unorganised labour sector into the main stream and ensuring that the social security benefits reach the poorest of the poor with a strong political will and financial support from Government.

MENTAL HEALTH INCLUDED IN NON COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The first Ministerial Conference of World Health Organisation held in April 2011 in Moscow decided to include mental health in the list of non-communicable diseases (NCD'S). The principle non-communicable diseases are cardio vascular diseases, diabetes, cancer and chronic respiratory diseases which cause preventable morbidity and disability and lead to over 60% of global deaths, 80% of which occur in developing countries. By 2030 the NCD's are estimated to contribute 75% of global deaths.

Global disorders will now form part of a global agenda and will be discussed at various world health programmes. India is also moving towards framing a mental health policy based on international accepted guidelines.

MEMBER COUNTRY BRIEFS

MALDIVES - Maldives NGO Federation

Maldives NGO Federation (MNF) was formed recently and is an umbrella organisation of NGO's. MNF is represented on the UNDP steering committee of the civic engagement project by the Ministry of Home Affairs to build civil society. Its main objective is to interact frequently with NGO's/CSO's to understand their welfare activities and to assist them in implementing national welfare schemes. It has collaborated with 40 other NGO's to run a media campaign to advocate the Domestic Violence Bill.

KYRGYZSTAN – Ban on Child adoption

There is a moratorium on inter country adoption of children in Kyrgyzstan since end of 2009. April this year the Kyrgyz Parliament had approved amendments to the family code relating to domestic and inter country adoption, which are aimed at lifting the moratorium on adoptions. For this, the Kyrgyz government is planning the forthcoming ratification of the 1993 Hague Convention and it is now working on the finalisation of its legal procedures. For more details- refer

<http://www.referl.org/content/kyrgyzpresidentsignlawallowingforiegnadoptions\24093888.html>

NEPAL – Training of Trainers (TOT) on Social Protection for Mid-Level Government Officials

Nepal School of Social Work and Suthra Centre for Development Education and Research organised a seven day (15 – 21 August 2011) TOT training programme on social protection. All together 22 officers from five mid-western districts completed the programme. Out of 22 participants eight were women officers who actively participated and have taken the role of coordinating similar training programmes in their respective districts. The training was designed and delivered to provide the participants with an insight into the basic social protection concepts and TOT skills to deliver similar training to NGO representatives and other partners in the respective districts. As per the post-training assessment of the participants, the training has proved to be an excellent opportunity to understand various aspects of social protection, leadership, business models, poverty mapping, focus group discussions, project cycle management and counselling skills.

Extracts of report from by Dr Bala Raju Nikku, School of Social Work at the Kadimbari College.

SRI LANKA- Resettlement of Internally Displaced persons

The New Government in Sri Lanka has already resettled about 290,000 Internally Displaced Persons and only around 10,000 remain in the camps waiting to be resettled.

The Indian government is assisting the Sri Lankan Government in their efforts to resettle the remaining Internally Displaced Persons of Northern part of Sri Lanka where most of Tamils are settled.

What is required now is for the Sri Lankan Government to speed up their process of early withdrawal of emergency regulations, investigation into allegation of human rights violation, restoring normalcy in the affected areas and redress the humanitarian concerns of affected families.

UKRAINE – Proposal to host Global Grain Reserve

Ukraine has proposed to the United Nation that it can host a Global Grain Reserve to avoid price fluctuations. Ukrainian agricultural Minister has said that increasing growth of food grain of high quality by about 60% by farmers in the agrarian sector will make it possible for Ukraine to position itself as a leader on the global grain market.

According to a forecast, cereals and grain legumes will be harvested in an area of 12.3 million hectares including 6,773,000 hectares of wheat, 3,772,000 hectares of barley, 283,000 tons of ragi 292,000 tons of oats, 270,000 tons of peas and 858,000 tons of oil seed rapes. The Ukrainian grain harvest in 2011 is expected to reach 42 million tons.

PAKISTAN, BANGALADESH - Promotion of Gender Equality.

Despite major progress on legal frameworks in developing countries, millions of women are experiencing violence in their lifetimes usually at the hands of intimate partners and do not have voting rights or good representation in legislative assemblies. The UN agency “UN women” in its first report titled “Progress of the World’s Women:- in Pursuit of Justice” has called on Member States to make more efforts to ensure that women’s legal entitlements are not on paper only, but get translated into equality and justice. Its recommendation include extending support to women’s legal organizations, implementing the gender sensitive law reform, putting women on the front line of law enforcement and increasing their access to courts and commissions during and after conflict.

Pakistan and Bangladesh have made immense strides in promoting gender equality and women’s rights.



What is required now is to stop brutal sexual violence against women, well informed and unbiased judicial decisions ensuring that women who go to court will get justice.

2012 WORLD CONFERENCE OF ICSW, IASSW AND IFSW

Next joint conference on Social Work and Social Development: - Action and Impact will be held at Stockholm, Sweden between 8th and 12 July 2012. Organisers have called for abstract of papers. Main themes of the conference are –

- Human rights and Social Equality
- Environmental Change and Sustainable Social Development and
- Global Transformation and Social Action

The last date for first call of abstract papers is 30th November 2011. For more details visit website: <http://www.swsd-stockholm-2012.org/> and

For abstract submission contact: socialwork2012.abstract@congrex.com

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