



REGIONAL COOPERATION NEWSLETTER
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Letter from the Regional President

Greetings to one and all,

I hope this newsletter finds you well. Some of us have just returned from a successful meeting at the 6th ASEAN GO-NGO Forum held in Bangkok, Thailand this year. The theme: "Establishing a Social Protection Floor (SPF) within ASEAN" is appropriate and timely especially with the deadline on the Millennium Development Goals closing in on us. We, at ICSW, would like to thank the National Council on Social Welfare of Thailand (NCSWT) for their dedicated support and collaborative efforts in the smooth running of the ICSW Preparatory Workshops prior to the 6th ASEAN GO NGO Meeting on the 20th of September.

Most of our Southeast Asian members joined us for the two day intensive ICSW Preparatory Workshops held on the 18th and 19th of September. We had representatives from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam who shared national developments in various SPF related policies. We also invited Mr Donovan Storey from United Nations Economic and Social Commission of Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP) and Ms Celine Julia Felix and Ms Diane Taieb from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to share social developments within the UN and ILO respectively. The participants gained further opportunities to hear from the experts from the ILO again as well as the UNICEF, the Disabled People's International (Asia Pacific) and ICSW's Executive Director, Mr Denys Correll who summarized the recommendations of the participants.

This edition of the ICSW SEAP newsletter focuses on the Social Protection Floor Initiative and covers the 6th ASEAN GO NGO Forum. I hope it will be useful to all as this is an important area of the work that we all do. Once again I thank all our members who participated and all the experts, who took out time from their busy schedules to be at the workshops and meeting.

I would also like to welcome our newest members onboard – the Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE) from the Philippines, Malaysian Council for Rehabilitation (MCR) and the Vietnamese Association for Protection of Children's Rights (VAPCR).

In conclusion, please feel free to send us any articles or latest development in social welfare for our next edition of the newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you.

*Braema Mathi
Regional President (SEAP)*

6th ASEAN GO NGO FORUM, 20th September, Bangkok



The 6th ASEAN GO NGO Forum held in Bangkok, Thailand on the 20th of September had nine participating ASEAN member countries discussing about establishing the Social Protection Floor within ASEAN. Before that, there was a two day intensive preparatory workshop organised by the ICSW to deepen the knowledge on Social Protection Floor Initiative and to also prepare for the GO-NGO. There were guest speakers from UNESCAP and the ILO. The recommendations resulting from this meeting were meaningful and conclusive towards progressively attaining the Social Protection Floor Initiative (SPFI) within each member state's policy making arena.

The SPFI is an initiative aimed towards ensuring services and transfers to promote social protection as a tool for development and poverty eradication. States present acknowledged that everyone, as a member of the society, is entitled to equal access to social protection such as healthcare services among many others. It is an emphasis on a rights-based approach to providing for the people. It was further agreed upon that social protection is necessary to reduce the vulnerabilities of the disadvantaged groups in our societies.

In conclusion, there was consensus on the need to set up or strengthen existing social safety nets to protect people from falling through the nets via establishing a social protection floor. Some implementation procedures recommended included working towards ratifying the [Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (CRPD); setting up consultative councils within each member state and ASEAN and working towards an ASEAN level declaration on establishing the SPFI within ASEAN.

The International Council on Social Welfare, a longstanding partner of the ASEAN GO NGO Forum, together with the ASEAN Secretariat and host country (Thailand), received feedback on a successful meeting and witnessed encouraging efforts by all parties towards establishing the SPFI.

What is the ASEAN GO NGO FORUM?

The ASEAN GO-NGO Forum was an initiative of a few players where Thailand played a significant role in making it happen. The GO-NGO forum has been pertinent in providing opportunities for dialogue on key regional social welfare and development issues. It has also strengthened and improved the collaboration between ICSW Members, Civil Society Organisations and the Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD). It has enabled the development of recommendations that



have increased ASEAN's capacity to respond to social policy and practice in the region. The expertise of our members working on the ground is much needed for this to be successful. This year was all the more meaningful as the GO-NGO was hosted by Thailand where it began.

The ICSW Preparatory Meetings, 18th-19th September 2011 Bangkok



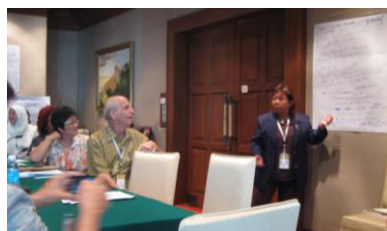
The ICSW Preparatory Meetings were well attended and we were honoured to have amongst our midst Colonel Khunying Asanee Saovapap (above with Denys Correll), President of the NCSWT, who took some time out of her busy schedule to be part of the discussions on the 18th of September.



Day one of the Preparatory Meetings started off with an overview of the recommendations from the 5th ASEAN GO NGO Forum on "Strengthening Family Institution: Caring for the Elderly". Participants gave country updates to facilitator, Braema, (on the left) with regard to policies related to the elderly. Thailand for example provides free access to healthcare for all people whilst Malaysia has started "1Malaysia Clinics" everywhere (even in the rural areas) where medical attention is given for just one Malaysian Ringgit (\$0.32 US dollar). Braema also gave an overview on ASEAN, updating participants on the push for human rights and the Social Cultural Blueprint. Denys, ICSW's executive director, presented on the need for SPF, referring to *Articles 22, 25, 26 and 27* of the

[Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#).

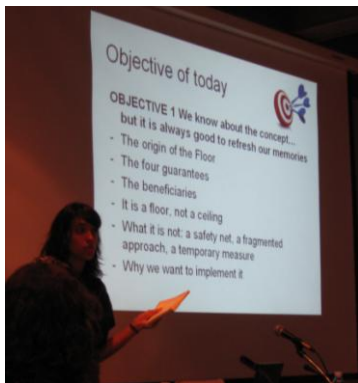
Subsequently, Mr Donovan Storey (on the right), Chief Social Policy and Population Section from UNESCAP, shared the joint initiatives between [UNESCAP](#) and civil society organisations. These include joint advocacy programmes to promote legal frameworks and human rights instruments to protect the rights of marginalised and vulnerable groups; and capacity-building support to CSOs in the planning and delivery of social services. More information, please visit the UNESCAP [website](#).



The day culminated in group discussions to identify the recommendations for the 6th ASEAN GO NGO Forum. On the left, we have Ms Saadiah from Brunei Council of Social Welfare presenting recommendations pertaining to the elderly. But it was not all work and no play. All the participants enjoyed scrumptious dinners hosted by the ICSW and NCSWT respectively on the 18th and 19th of



September 2011. On the right, we have our Thai hosts who contributed significantly to the smooth execution of the meetings.



Day two of the Preparatory Meetings focussed on an analysis on "Buidling Social Protection Floors in ASEAN: Where Are We At?". This was jointly presented by Ms Celine Julia Felix and Ms Diane Taieb from the ILO, who introduced concepts related to the SPF via a fun and interactive manner through games called "Jeopardy" and "Do you agree". They also covered challenges in terms of implementation gaps and design gaps to equip participants with awareness on how the recommendations should be drafted.

Additional resource: The [GESS](#) or Global Extension of Social Security was highly recommended as a resource base. This platform is developed and run by the ILO Social Security

Department, which provides an international inter-disciplinary knowledge sharing environment and technical assistance services for the extension on social security.

The 7th ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (7th SOMSWD)

The [recommendations](#) from the 6th ASEAN GO NGO Forum (refer to **Annex A**) was read out by Dr Vajiraya, Vice President of the NCSWT and co-chair of the 6th GO NGO Forum. It was well received by the Senior Officials who were receptive to discussing these issues. Various strategies like cross-sectoral approaches were devised. For more information on the topics discussed at the 7th SOMSWD, please refer to this [link](#).

Our new members – An Introduction

(1) Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE)

The Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE) was founded in 1989. Its main objective is to create community based organizations of poor older people wherein older people themselves care for each other in terms of health care, income generation, home care, advocacy and a social life with each other. Secondly, the organization attempts to develop awareness of the importance of older people for the survival of society. Since 1989, COSE has organised more than 70 community based programmes where the elderly organise themselves with the Community organiser (CO) as facilitator. If health care is the most pressing need, the CO asks if the elderly would like to become health workers.

Contact details:

Coalition of Services of the Elderly
Address: 717 Aurora Blvd. Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines
Website: www.cosephil.org

(2) Malaysian Council for Rehabilitation (MCR)

The Malaysian Council for Rehabilitation (MCR) was established and launched by the Ministry of Welfare Services (now known as Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development) under the chairmanship of the Honourable Minister for Welfare Services on 17th November 1973. The vision of MCR is a society wherein there is "Full Participation and Equal Opportunities" for the persons with disabilities (PWD) as they live and work side by side with the general population and have access to all amenities and facilities in the community. MCR's mission is to provide support and collaborative effort in fostering the implementation of services for the disabled which will equip them with appropriate skills through rehabilitation, education and vocational training programmes. This year itself, MCR has executed activities such as the 4th National Abilympics Competition, coined from the phrase "Olympics of Abilities."

Contact details:

Malaysian Council for Rehabilitation

Bilik 3, Tingkat 4, Bangunan Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah
No. 16, Lorong Utara A
46200 Petaling Jaya
Selangor, Malaysia
Website: <http://rehabmalaysia.org>

(3) Vietnamese Association for Protection of Children's Rights (VAPCR)

The VAPCR was recently established in 2008. Its mission is to promote and protect children's rights nationwide. According to its Statute, "VAPCR is a social organisation which aims to assemble and unite Vietnamese individuals and organisations...for the purpose of entitling children to their basic rights, and to participate in the prevention of acts of violation against children's rights as regulated by the national law as well as the United Nations Conventions. VAPCR's Vision is to develop VAPCR into a professional social organization for protection of children's rights, operating effectively nationwide, contributing to promoting the realization of children's rights, creating conditions to enable children to lead their life in a healthy and safe environment, and to enjoy harmonious development of themselves and their protection against offences of children's rights."

Contact details:

VIET NAM ASSOCIATION FOR PROTECTION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS (VAPCR)
35 TRAN PHU, BA DINH, HANOI, VIETNAM
Website: <http://baovequyentrem.vn>

Publications on the region

Enhancing social protection in Asia and the Pacific: the proceedings of the Regional Workshop is a book published by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 2010. It provides concise chapters on various challenges and strategies in implementing the SPF within the region.

Social security for social justice and a fair globalization is a summary report produced in light of the standard-setting item on the agenda of the 101st Session (2012) of the International Labour Conference (ILC) on social protection (social security). It provides information on the law and practice concerning the establishment of a social protection floor or elements thereof at national level, including an overview of the main developments and emerging trends worldwide. (Available in English, French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic).

World Social Security Report 2010; Providing coverage in the times of crisis and beyond (Geneva, International Labour Office, 2010) presents the results of the regular statistical monitoring of social security around the world, including the scope, extent, levels and quality of coverage by various social security branches; the scale of countries' investments in social security measured by size and structure of social security expenditure and sources of its financing; and the effectiveness and efficiency of social security systems in reaching various national social policy objectives as well as other impacts of the policies which may be of special interest.

Extending social security to all: A guide through challenges and options (Geneva, International Labour Office, 2010). This document sets out the development of a paradigm for the extension of social protection on the basis of an analysis of existing needs, existing coverage patterns and the internationally recognized right to social security. The second part provides the evidence and information base for the paradigm, including a statistical analysis of the existing global coverage gap, a wide range of recent country experience with alternative methods to close the global coverage gap and the impact of social transfers in selected countries.

Following are some powerpoint slides on the SPF in the region.

(a) Social Protection Floor: An ASIAN Perspective

This presentation was given by Ms Schmitt from the ILO during a Pre-conference workshop on June 10 2010 at the 2010 Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development. It covers Asian countries' recognition of SPF; national responses to SPF; Concept of SPF; UN Joint Works for SPF in Asia and the roles of Civil society in promotion of SPF.

(b) UNICEF and Social Protection: An equity lens

This presentation argues the importance of the SPF, especially in achieving the MDG. This was presented by Mr Gordon Alexander, Director, UNICEF Office of Research at the International Labour Conference in June 2011.

Upcoming conferences

(1) High-level Consultation on the G20 Cannes Summit: Perspectives from Asia-Pacific

High-level government officials, policymakers and experts from around thirty countries in Asia-Pacific will gather at the United Nations Conference Centre on October 11-12, to discuss non-G20 perspectives and coordinate the region's voice ahead of the G20 Summit to be held in November in Cannes, France. This high-level consultation is expected to highlight the priorities of ESCAP member countries in relation to the G20 agenda like critical issues of growth, development, financial stability, volatility of commodity prices and the reform of the international monetary system. For more information, visit the [website](#).

(2) Social Work and Social Development 2012 – Action and Impact, Stockholm Sweden

Invitation to send in [abstracts](#) to secure a spot in presenting at this international conference is now open. There are various themes to present on. We would like to invite you to participate in this conference which will take place next year in Stockholm from the 8th to 12th of July. This conference will bring together researchers, educators, social policy makers, social work practitioners, service users, social activists and other actors within the field of social work and social policy. It is aimed at exchanging experience and developments in social work practice, social research and education as well as social policy towards developing a sustainable welfare system in the future.

Criteria of abstracts: as long as content is relevant, innovative, clear and contributes to the existing knowledge.

Submission Deadline: November 30, 2011

Abstract Length: max 2,500 words

Enter your abstract submission [here](#).

(3) Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development (Second Session)

To be held in Bangkok, from the 7th to 9th of December this year at the Conference Room 3, United Nations Conference Center. This meeting will discuss policy challenges in sustaining the dynamism of Asia-Pacific economies as well as challenges of poverty reduction and inclusive development amidst high inflation and food prices in Asia and the Pacific amongst other agenda topics. For more information, click [here](#).

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As always, we are keen to hear from our readers and welcome contributions. Best wishes, Braema Mathiaparanam, President, South East Asia & Pacific Region and Dilpreet Kaur, [dkaur@icsw.org](mailto:dkaur@icsw.org), Programme Officer, South East Asia & Pacific. Website: [www.icsw.org](http://www.icsw.org)

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Please distribute this newsletter as widely as possible.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**  
**THE SIXTH ASEAN GO-NGO FORUM FOR SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT**  
*“Establishment of the Social Protection Floor on Social Welfare and Development  
Within ASEAN”*  
**20 September 2011, Bangkok, Thailand**

We, the participants of the 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN GO-NGO Forum for Social Welfare and Development held on 20 September 2011 in Bangkok, Thailand, from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam;

Acknowledged that everyone, as a member of society, is entitled to have equal access to social protection covering essential services including social security schemes; healthcare services; nutrition, care and education for children; as well as social assistance transfers (cash or in-kind) for the poor and vulnerable groups;

Acknowledged that social protection plays an important role in reducing vulnerabilities of the disadvantaged groups in the society including the older persons, people with disabilities, children, women, people living in poverty, and those working in the informal sector who may not be comprehensively covered by the existing social protection schemes;

Further acknowledged that the existing social safety nets in ASEAN Member States may not be adequate in protecting the people from the risk of falling through the nets and, thus, there is a need to set up or strengthen the social protection floor;

Mindful that while many of ASEAN Member States have already relatively comprehensive social protection systems for the formal sector, there is a need to expand the coverage and delivery systems to cover all citizens;

Agreed on the need to strengthen cooperation amongst ASEAN Member States towards universal coverage of social protection to the peoples of ASEAN through the following actions:

1. Ensure participatory and rights-based approach in designing, implementing and monitoring social protection schemes in ASEAN Member States;
2. Promote the mainstreaming of the concerns of everybody in the society, especially the vulnerable groups such as older persons, people with disabilities, children and women, and their participation in the development, implementation and monitoring of social protection legislations, policies and programmes in ASEAN Member States;
3. Enhance the support systems and commitment to improve social protection for all, especially the vulnerable groups of society, to enable them to live in dignity as well as to



have equal opportunities to employment enabling them to be self reliant by setting up minimum standards of social protection in ASEAN;

4. Encourage study on the existing legislations, policies and programmes and their impacts to the human development in ASEAN Member States with the intention of exploring the possibilities and challenges of expanding social insurance schemes to cover informal sector comprehensively;
5. Convene a platform to enhance the knowledge among government officials, NGOs, and social workers on the social protection floor initiative (SPFI) and their capacity to implement social protection schemes progressively;
6. Continue information sharing and exchange of views among government officials, NGOs, international organisations, and other stakeholders in ASEAN Member States on social protection with the objective of learning from the best practices and experiences of each other in improving the social protection coverage and delivery service;
7. Mobilise resources and promote CSR role of the private sector in the region to ensure that adequate financial and human resources are secured for sustainable social protection that is widely accessible to all peoples especially the vulnerable groups;
8. Develop regional statistical indicators in ASEAN to measure the development of vulnerable groups as the result of social protection implementation in ASEAN Member States;
9. Establish an inter-sectoral consultative mechanism in ASEAN and its Member States to promote information sharing, regional cooperation and evaluate the implementation of social protection initiatives;
10. Encourage all ASEAN Member States to ratify the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) and foster its implementation at community level;
11. Recommend the Senior Officials on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSVD) to issue an ASEAN Declaration that expresses the commitment of ASEAN Member States at a higher level to strengthen the social protection floor initiative (SPFI) implementation.

The participants of the 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN GO-NGO Forum on Social Welfare and Development expressed their high appreciation to the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security of Thailand for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangement of the Forum. The participants also expressed appreciation for the information sharing by the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Disabled Peoples' International Asia Pacific (DPI-AP) in the Forum.