

Council for Agricultural and Rural Development
National Social Protection Strategy for the Poor and Vulnerable (NSPS)

Progress Report

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Secretary of State, MOI and Vice Chair - CARD

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Monday, 18 October 2010 at CDC, Phnom Penh

**Your Excellency Chairman
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

Introduction

1. On behalf of HE. Dr. Yim Chhay Ly, Chair of CARD, I have the honor and privilege to present to you the progress status of the development and implementation of the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) since the first introduction of the final draft during the CDCF 3 in 3 June 2010. May I take this opportunity to express our utmost sincerely thanks and gratitude to all our distinguished colleagues from the Royal Government of Cambodia and our development partners and some members of the civil society organization, for their participation, support and contributions to the preparation and development through broader, inclusive and intense consultative process of this comprehensive NSPS.

Background

2. At the outset, I wish to re-emphasize that the social protection reform agenda is also being promoted within the context of the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs), achieved through the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP-Update), where social protection is recognized as a critical policy area. The RGC's NSDP Update 2009-2013 places significant emphasis on expanding social protection to the poor and vulnerable and proposes a vision for "developing and implementing a comprehensive and sustainable social safety net system aimed at protecting the livelihoods of the poor and most vulnerable segments of the population" (RGC, 2009). The C-MDG – 2010 Update Report, also outlined the importance of broadening the scope of social protection and safety net programmes to shield the vulnerable and poor from the effects of economic shocks, while using fiscal and monetary instruments to stimulate a sluggish economy (RGC-MOP, Final Draft 19 September 2010).

3. As a background of this meeting, may I briefly present the storyline for the development initiative of this NSPS. Recognizing the lack of a comprehensive, integrated and effective strategy for social safety net, at the second CDCF held in December 2008, The Royal Government of Cambodia mandated the Food Security and Nutrition Technical Working Group (FSN- TWG), co-led by CARD/MOP and WFP, to review existing social protection interventions and prepare a strategy for social protection development. Given the limited scope of existing public safety net interventions, which mostly were donor-driven and donor-implemented, such a mandate signaled increased Government recognition of the need for safety nets and represented a major step forward towards the development of Government-implemented safety net interventions (as opposed to donor-implemented) tailored to fit within the Cambodian context.

4. At the Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum (CDCF-3) on June 2-3, 2010 CARD presented the draft NSPS and received high level backing for its implementation from line ministries, DPs and civil society. In the session on social protection, an outline of the NSPS was provided, showing how the strategy will contribute to the reduction of chronic poverty, help the poor to cope with shocks, promote human capital, improve productivity and promote sustainable economic growth. Implementation of the strategy will require scaling-up of existing interventions, design of institutional arrangements and the introduction of new programmes to cover existing gaps. The Joint Statement of the CDCF-3 called for CARD to establish an Interim Coordination Unit which will examine ways to establish well-resourced institutional capacities and systems. The NSDP's resourcing profile has identified the strategy as a priority programme of the RGC. Over the next six months, CARD will produce an action plan toward strengthening institutions and capacities, and will also prepare a preliminary costing of the NSPS.

Progress

5. Since then, progress has been made but challenge is still ahead. CARD with the cooperation of the Interim Working group, composed of representative of relevant lines ministries and development partners, have initiated many activities and achieved some results as follows:

6. **Establishment of CARD-Social Protection Coordination Unit (SP-CU)** – As identified in the strategy that the implementation of the NSPS requires a unit to coordinate social protection interventions, in line with the overarching priority actions for the next 12 to 18 months. At the conclusion of CDCF-3 in June 2010, the RGC announced through the Joint Statement that CARD would assume the role of coordinating the implementation of the NSPS, initially on an interim basis. The Social Protection Coordination Unit (SPCU) in CARD was created under the Decision No. 257/CARD in 12 July 2010. Fundamentally, the SPCU could lead on social protection policy oversight, costing the NSPS implementation, partnership and dialogue, communication, monitoring and evaluation, and information management. The exact roles and responsibilities are yet to be defined.

7. **The NSPS approval process is undergoing.** The final version of the draft NSPS was officially submitted in late August 2010 to the Council of Ministers for the process of legal reviewing and approval. The first technical meeting was convened on the 13th of October 2010 under the Chairmanship of the RGC's General Secretariat and the Economic, Social and Cultural Committee (ECOSOC) and Council of Juristic. Following this meeting an inter-ministerial meeting will be scheduled and the Council of Ministers is expected to formally approve the NSPS shortly.

8. **Enabling the Environment for Coordination on NSPS** - Pending for the official approval, CARD proceeded to formulate a work plan for the next six month of 2010. During the second half of 2010, CARD plans to prepare for implementation of the NSPS with dissemination activities at national and sub-national levels and targeted capacity building and technical work. All of these proposed activities are called *“Enabling the Environment for Coordination on NSPS”*. Specifically, the next stage in preparing for the implementation of the strategy is to identify and define in more detail the practical next steps in the short term, in order to maintain the momentum achieved over the last year in advancing the social protection agenda. Development partners previously involved, as well as others that would like to join the effort from now on, have expressed their commitment to further supporting the NSPS, which highlights the importance of identifying how to align these efforts in subsequent steps.

9. **Roadmap for the NSPS Implementation is been prepared** - By the end of September 2010, with the support of the AusAid's Trust Fund managed by the World Bank, CARD coordinated series of workshops and meetings to establish a shared roadmap for the next stages of implementation of the NSPS, based on the draft outline work plan produced by CARD in August 2010. The **purpose** of the exercise was to ensure coordination of the design and implementation of NSPS inputs and activities in ways that are complementary and that re-enforce a shared and common orientation among RGC and DPs. The following are some of the activities included in the roadmap for mid 2010 to mid 2012, to be conducted providing that technical and financial assistance is available:

1. Roadmap for 2010

- Dialogue with line ministries starts
- Start capacity / needs assessment
- Start M&E Capacity, e.g. Logframe, M&E training
- Define 'alignment', DPs start aligning
- Agree procedure for costing with MEF

2. Roadmap for 2011

- (Update) Inventory of SP Instruments
- Logframe Workshop
- Indicative costing
- Links to line ministries formalised
- Line ministries and SPCU share monitoring data
- Baseline established
- Monitoring starts
- Capacity assessments for scaling up and pilots
- Design Pilots
- Costing for scaling up and pilots

3. Roadmap for 2012

- Capacity Building / training in line ministries
- Capacity Building / training at sub-national level
- Implement Pilots
- Scale-up existing programmes

4. Immediate actions are:

- M&E capacity building for SPCU and line ministries
- Logframe workshop in near future in consultation with line ministries
- Update and upgrade inventory of current SP activities – we need to be clearer on the extent of coverage for planning
- Evaluation and improvement of IDPoor: As the IDPoor is the key tool to support RGC,NGOs and sector programme and projects of Communes Councils in TARGETING provision of services and assistance to the poor, the IDPoor will also be an important component of a social safety net system in Cambodia. We need to re-examine the IDPoor in order to start the process of scaling up existing social protection programmes. It is important to have an improved targeting tool that can be tailored to the needs of programmes. Effective targeting will ensure an efficient use of resources allocated for social protection programmes.
- Identify SPCU functions that enable e.g. joint planning, coordination etc

10. **Re-alignment and Harmonization:** Implementation of the specific social protection programmes will be the responsibility of line ministries and decentralised government

institutions based on a set of commonly shared guiding principles. Moreover, for successful implementation, the involvement of decentralised structures of government (provincial, district, commune councils) is essential. The RGC will ensure effective coordination of social protection activities among implementing departments of ministries and civil society organisations at provincial and district level. The commune council (including the Consultative Committee for Women and Children (CCWC)) will oversee targeting and implementation of social protection activities at local level. Within this context, CARD is coordinating with development partners in order to achieve harmonization and policy cohesion between DPs and the RGC in preparing their respective country assistance programmes for the next 5 years and beyond.

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Conclusion

11. At the 65th UN General Assembly of High-level Plenary Meeting at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 20 to 22 September 2010, Heads of State and Government reaffirmed to work together for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples. The General Assembly adopted a Resolution as an action agenda for achieving the MDG by 2015 entitled *Keeping the Promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals*¹. I wish to highlight few points of the Way Forward here as part of an action agenda to be taken for achieving the MDGs by 2015, among many others, it called: (para 36) **to promote and strengthen national ownership and leadership of development** as a key determinant of progress in achieving the MDGs. In para 41 it call for increased efforts at all levels to **enhance policy coherence for development**. And (para51) consider that **promoting universal access to social services and providing social protection floors** can make an important contribution to consolidating and achieving further development gains.

12. This **National Social Protection Strategy for the Poor and Vulnerable** (NSPS) is being promoted within the context of the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (C-MDGs), achieved through the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP-Update), is also the result of the commitment of the Royal Government of Cambodia and supported by development partners, in order to achieve inclusive economic growth and sustainable development.

13. In order to move forward the social protection agenda, it is important for RGC to optimize DP support. Joint financing of technical experts could be a way of supporting capacity building activities, while specific technical and financial responsibilities could be more efficient for specific program design based on comparative advantage. However, collaboration and feedback among the broader DP group should take place on a regular basis in the context of a permanent working group. Financing should evolve to consolidated models like program-based or sector-wide approaches, which will prevent fragmentation and facilitate coordination of SP interventions. Your continuing support is very much appreciated.

¹ Draft UN General Assembly Resolution (Sixty Fifth Session) – 17 September 2010 - A/65/L.1.

Thank you very much for your attention.