

Keynote Address

by

Her Excellency Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra

Prime Minister of Thailand

Social Protection Assessment Based Dialogue : Towards

a Nationally Defined

Social Protection Floor in Thailand

On 10 May 2013

Santimaitri Building, House of Royal Government

Mr. Santi Prompat , Minister of Ministry of Social
Development and Human Security,

Mr. Padermchai Sasomsap, Minister of Ministry of
Labour,

Mr. Yoshiteru Uramoto, Regional Director, ILO Regional
Office for Asia and Pacific,

Mr. Luc Stevens, UN Resident Coordinator,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is indeed my great pleasure and honor to be here to deliver the keynote address in the launching event on **“Social Protection Assessment Based Dialogue : Towards a Nationally Defined Social Protection Floor in Thailand”**. The event is jointly organized by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and the Royal Thai Government (RTG).

I would like to express my appreciation to the joint team on social security to formulate the report on **“Social Protection Assessment Based Dialogue : Towards a Nationally Defined Social Protection Floor in Thailand”**, which is the great benefit for improving quality of life of all Thai citizen.

Throughout the past year, the government has been focusing on enhancing and strengthening the existing social security system so that all people in the Thai society have equal access to high quality social services leading to dignity and better quality of life.

The Policy Statement of the Council of Ministers to the National Assembly on 23 August 2011, the Government has pledged to consolidate the further development of the health insurance system in order for all citizens to have access to quality, convenient, timely, and equitable health care, particularly in case of medical emergency. The result of evaluation on Universal Health Care Coverage Scheme in the first decade, the year 2001 – 2010, showed the declining rate of household that might be bankrupt from health expenditure, especially those in less income households.

The government has supported the effort to enable senior citizens to be independent and able to live with dignity by providing the universal monthly allowance for senior citizens who are over 60 year olds. The creation of educational and work opportunity for all, in particular providing the financial fund for new graduates and strengthening the role of women with Thai women

empowerment fund. In addition, the government placed a high priority to promote safety at work and to create environmentally friendly enterprises.

In the future, Thailand will face various risk factors, both domestic and international environment. The two main factors which will be the critical challenges issues of country development are;

Thailand is rapidly moving toward an aging society through change in demographic structure. Therefore Thailand will become the society of a lot of elderly and less children.

In less than two years, ASEAN Community will come into existence. Thai population will become ASEAN citizen.

These factors will affect the country's long-term growth and stability, especially in the vulnerable group. Therefore, **human development throughout their life cycle is the main**

target of government for strengthening quality of life together with improving labour productivity.

The government has set out the Country Strategy by considering the global context in the next 20 years. One of strategies is to reduce economic and social disparity in order to lift up income and quality of life for all as well as to build the equal growth for people from all sectors in Thai society from birth to death

The government has also the intention to create opportunity for people living with poverty and vulnerable groups to get access to the quality social services and enhancing income security. This includes the promotion of social protection for workers in the informal sector . Currently, there are 24 million informal labours or 63 percent of total employed worker.

In order to efficiently and concretely mobilize the strategy into implementation with emphasis on the coordination

among all relevant agencies and parties. On 9 April, the government has launched the One Stop Crisis Center (OSCC). It aims to address and tackle problem of the victims comprehensively in 4 target groups ; teenage pregnancy, violence against women and children, people with disabilities and elderly people, child labour and human trafficking.

Not less than 21 organizations, including government agencies, local government and NGO have collaborated agreed to address the need of the victims promptly and with the same standard. On 9 May, it is the first day of system operation of OSCC in every service units.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The government has been continuously emphasized to Social Protection Floor covering all people. In order to driving the country to be in line with the structure of elderly population and to be able to cope with the rapid and

harmful global change. I would like to give 3 recommendations as followed;

Firstly, budget expenditure for building the social protection system in the Thai context should concentrate primarily on empowerment and creation of opportunity for people living in poverty and vulnerable group. Therefore, they are able to live in the society with dignity, sustainability, and self – reliance in the long run.

Secondly, according to the character of Thai tradition and culture, people are naturally protected under community and family ties or the so-called ‘social capital’. Therefore, the improvement of social welfare systems throughout life cycle, from birth to death should be linked between national, local and community levels with participation from all sectors and institutions, particularly family and community, non-profit organizations, social enterprises,

and socially responsible businesses. These lead to the sustainable social protection floor together with social capital accumulation.

Thirdly, developing a database to ensure coverage and effectiveness of social protection. This will be in line with basic rights, and will link various types of protection to their target groups. It will bring about the design on channel and pattern of addressing target groups to be more effective and coverage access.

Let me now end the speech with emphasizing that the universal social protection system relying on government budget alone would be difficult to implement and existed in the long run. But Thailand should use our traditional strength of social capital as the tool of building and developing various social innovations leading to the design of social protection to suit with the Thai context.

Thank you

